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THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

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MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL at *Dartmouth* in *Devon*.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the principal Matters contained in the Whole.

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CONTENTS.

The FOUNTAIN of LIFE opened up.

Pag.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Wherein four weighty Ends of Chriſt's Humiliation are opened, and particularly applied.

Iſa. liii. 2. "He ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatiſfied," 1

SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Reſurrection of Chriſt, with its Influences upon the Saints Reſurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the firſt Step of his Exaltation.

Matth. xxviii. 6. "He is not here; for he is riſen, as he ſaid: come, ſee the place where the Lord lay," 22

SERMON XL.

Wherein the Aſcenſion of Chriſt is opened, and variouſly improved, being the ſecond Step of his Exaltation.

John xx. 17. "Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God," 38

SERMON XLI.

Wherein Chriſt's ſitting at God's right-hand is explained and applied, being the third Step of his glorious Exaltation.

Heb. i. 3. "——When he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right-hand of the majeſty on high," 43

SERMON XLII.

Wherein Chriſt coming to Judgment, being the fourth and laſt Degree of his Exaltation, is opened and improved.

Acts x. 42. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," 55

Digitized by Google

The METHOD of GRACE in the Goſpel-Redemption.

Pag.

The epiſtle Dedicatory, 95
——— to the Reader, 102

SERMON I.

Opening the general Nature of effectual Application.

1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God "is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctifica- "tion, and redemption," 107

SERMON II.

Wherein the Believer's union with Chriſt is ſtated and opened, as a principal Part of Goſpel-Application.

John xvii. 23. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be "made perfect in one," 127

SERMON III.

Opening the Nature and Uſe of the Goſpel-miniſtry, as an external means of applying Chriſt.

2 Cor. v. 20. "Now then, we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as "though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in "Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God," 144

SERMON IV.

Explaining the Work of the Spirit, as the internal, and moſt effectual Means of the Application of Chriſt.

John vi. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father "which hath ſent me, draw him," 163

SERMON V.

Opening the Work of the Spirit more particularly, by which the Soul is enabled to apply Chriſt.

Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in "treſpaſſes and ſins," 182

SERMON VI.

Deſcribing that Act on our Part, by which we do actually and effectually apply Chriſt to our own Souls.

John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he "power to become the ſons of God; even to them that "believe on his name," 202

SERMON VII.

John i. 12. "But as many as received him," &c. 222

SERMON VIII.

Setting forth the Believer's fellowſhip with Chriſt, the next End of his Application to them.

Pſalm xlv. 7. "——Therefore God thy God, hath anointed "thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows," 234

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Pag.

SERMON IX.

Containing the first general Use of Exhortation, inviting all Men to apply Jesus Christ.

Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are "heavy laden, and I will give you rest," 259

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced, by one Motive drawn from the first Title of Christ.

Matth. ix. 12. "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that "are sick," 294

SERMON XI.

Containing the second Motive to enforce the general Exhortation, from a second Title of Christ.

Luke i. 72. "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, "and remember his holy covenant," 307

SERMON XII.

Containing a third Motive to enliven the general Exhortation, from a third Title of Christ.

Cant. v. Part of Verse 16. "—Yea, He is altogether lovely," 320

SERMON XIII.

Alluring the Hearts of men to come to Christ, by a fourth Motive contained in another Title of Christ.

Haggai ii. 7. "—And the desire of all nations shall come," 332

SERMON XIV.

Containing the fifth Motive to apply Christ, drawn from another excellent Title of Christ.

1 Cor. ii. 8. "Which none of the princes of this world have "known, for had they known him, they would not have "crucified the Lord of glory," 343

SERMON XV.

Opening the sixth Motive to come to Christ, contained in the sixth and last Title of Christ.

Luke ii. 25. "—Waiting for the [Consolation] of Israel," 351

SERMON XVI.

Enforcing the general Exhortation, by a seventh Motive drawn from the first Benefit purchased by Christ.

Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his "grace," 360

SERMON XVII.

Opening the eighth Motive to come to Christ, drawn from the sixth Benefit purchased by Christ for Believers.

Eph. i. 6. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein "he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," 369

Digitized by Google

Pag.

SERMON XVIII.

The Liberty of Believers, opened and ſtated.

John viii. 36. "If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye "ſhall be free indeed," 379

SERMON XIX.

The Saints coming Home to God, by Reconciliation, and Glorification, opened and applied.

1 Pet. iii. 18. "For Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt "for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God," 388

SERMON XX.

The great uſefulneſs of the Law or Word of God, in order to the Application of Chriſt.

Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once; but when "the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died," 397

SERMON XXI.

Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once," &c. 405

SERMON XXII.

The Teachings of God opened, in their Nature and Neceſſity.

John vi. 45. "It is written in the Prophets, And they ſhall be "all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, "and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," 417

SERMON XXIII.

John vi. 45. "It is written in the Prophets," &c. 429

SERMON XXIV.

Of the Manner, and Importance of the Spirit's Indwelling.

1 John iii. 24. "—And hereby we know that he abideth in "us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 440

SERMON XXV.

Of the Nature and Neceſſity of the New Creature.

2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new "creature: old things are paſſed away; behold, all things "are become new," 458

SERMON XXVI.

2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new "creature," &c. 473

SERMON XXVII.

Of the Nature, Principle, and Neceſſity, of Mortification.

Gal. v. 24. "And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the "fleſh, with the affections and luſts," 483

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* *

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Wherein four weighty Ends of CHRIST's Humiliation are opened, and particularly applied.

ISA. liii. 2. *He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.*

WE are now arrived at the last particular which we designed to speak to in Christ's *state of humiliation*, namely, the *designs* and blessed *ends* for which he was so deeply abased. It is inconsistent with the prudence of a common agent, to be at vast expences of time, pains, and cost, and not to propound to himself a design worthy of all those expences. And it is much less imaginable, that Christ should so stupendously abase himself, by stooping from the bosom of his Father to the state of the dead, where our last discourse left him, if there had not been some excellent, and glorious thing in his eye, the attainment whereof, might give him a content and satisfaction, equivalent to all the sorrows, and abasements, he endured for it.

And so much is plainly held forth in this scripture, "He shall "see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." In which words three things fall under our consideration.

First, The travailing pangs of Christ. So the agonies of his soul, and torments of his body are fitly called, not only because of the sharpness and acuteness of them, being in that respect, like birth-pangs of a travailing woman, for so this * word signifies, but also because they fore-run, and make way for the birth, which abundantly recompences all those labours. I shall not here insist upon the pangs and agonies endured by Christ in the garden, or upon the cross, which the prophet stiles "the travail of his "soul," having, in the former sermons, opened it largely in its particulars, but pass to the

* חֶבֶל, *dolor*, This word signifies both the birth and pain attending it. *Strigel.*

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Second Thing conſiderable in theſe words; and that is the *aſſured fruits* and effects of this his travail; *he ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul.* By ſeeing, underſtand the fruition, obtainment, or enjoyment of the end of his ſufferings. He ſhall not ſhed his blood upon an hazard: his deſign ſhall not miſcarry; but he ſhall certainly ſee the ends he aimed at accompliſhed.

And *Thirdly*, This ſhall yield him great ſatisfaction: as a "woman forgets her ſorrow, for joy that a man is born into "the world," John xvi. 21. he ſhall ſee it, and be *ſatisfied.* As God, when he had finiſhed the work of creation, viewed that his work with pleaſure and ſatisfaction; ſo doth our exalted Redeemer, with great contentment, behold the happy iſſues of his hard ſufferings. It affords pleaſure to a man to ſee great affairs, by orderly conduct, brought to happy iſſues. Much more doth it yield delight to Jeſus Chriſt, to ſee the reſults of that moſt profound wiſdom and love, wherein he carried on redemption-work. All runs into this doctrine.

Doct. *That all the bleſſed deſigns and ends for which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt humbled himſelf to the death of the croſs, ſhall certainly be attained, to his full content and ſatisfaction.*

MY preſent buſineſs is not to prove, that Chriſt ſhall certainly obtain what he died for; nor to open the great ſatisfaction and pleaſure which will ariſe to him out of thoſe iſſues of his death, but to point at the principal ends of his death; making ſome brief improvements as we paſs along.

Firſt, Then let us enquire into the deſigns and ends of Chriſt's humiliation, at leaſt the main and principal ones; and we ſhall find, that as the ſprinkling of the typical blood in the Old Teſtament was done for four weighty ends or uſes, anſwerably, the precious and invaluable blood of the Teſtator and ſurety of the New Teſtament is ſhed for four weighty ends alſo.

Firſt, That blood was ſhed and applied to *deliver* from danger; Exod. xii. 13. "And the blood ſhall be to you for a "† token upon the houſes where you are; and when I ſee "the blood, I will paſs over you: and the plague ſhall not be "upon you, to deſtroy you when I ſmite the land of Egypt."

† The Jews implicitly acknowledged by this ceremony, that they were to be liberated from eternal death by the blood of the Meſſiah. *Vatab.*

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Secondly, That blood was ſhed to make an *atonement* betwixt God and the people; Lev. iv. 20. "And he ſhall do with the "bullock as he did with the bullock for a ſin-offering; ſo ſhall "he do with this; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for "them, and it ſhall be forgiven them."

Thirdly, That blood was ſhed to *purify* perſons from their ceremonial pollutions, Lev. xiv. 6. 7. "He ſhall dip the cedar "wood, and ſcarlet, and hyſſop, with the living bird, in the "blood of the bird that was killed over the running water, and "he ſhall ſprinkle upon him that is to be cleanſed from the "leproſy ſeven times*; and ſhall pronounce him clean, and "ſhall let the living bird looſe in the open field."

Fourthly, That † blood was ſhed to *ratify* and confirm the teſtament or covenant of God with the people, Exod. xxiv. 8. "And Moſes took the blood, and ſprinkled it on the people and "ſaid, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath "made with you concerning all theſe words." Theſe were the four main ends for ſhedding, and ſprinkling that typical blood. Suitably, there are four principal ends for ſhedding and applying Chriſt's blood. As that typical blood was ſhed to deliver from danger, ſo this was ſhed to deliver from wrath, *even the wrath to come*. That was ſhed to make an atonement, ſo was this. That was ſhed to purify perſons from uncleanneſs, ſo was this. That was ſhed to confirm the Teſtament, ſo was this. As will appear in the following particulars more at large.

Firſt, One principal deſign and end of ſhedding the blood of Chriſt was *to deliver his people from danger, the danger of that wrath which burns down to the loweſt hell.* So you find, 1 Theſſ. i. 10. "Even Jeſus who delivered us from the wrath to come." Here our miſery is both *ſpecified* and aggravated. Specified, in calling it *wrath*, a word of deep and dreadful ſignification. The damned beſt underſtand the importance of that word. And *aggravated*, in calling it *wrath to come*, or coming wrath. Wrath to come implies both the *futurity* and *perpetuity* of this wrath. It is wrath that ſhall certainly and inevitably come upon ſinners. As ſure as the night follows the day. As ſure as the winter follows the ſummer, ſo ſhall wrath follow ſin, and the pleaſures thereof. Yea, it is not only certainly future, but when

* *Seven times*, Signifies perfect expiation; this number was conſecrated to denote perfection. *Menoch.*

† The *ſhedding* and *ſprinkling* of *blood* ſignifies that the covenant would be ſure and ſtable, even with the hazard of life. *Rivet.*

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it comes it will be abiding wrath, or wrath ſtill coming. When millions of years and ages are paſt and gone, this will ſtill be *wrath to come*. Ever coming as a river ever flowing.

Now, from this *wrath to come*, hath Jeſus delivered his people by his death. For that was the price laid down for their redemption from the wrath of the great and terrible God, Rom. v. 9. "Much more then being juſtified by his blood, we ſhall "be ſaved from wrath through him." The blood of Jeſus was the price that ranſomed man from this wrath. And it was ſhed not only to deliver them from *wrath to come*, but to deliver them freely, fully, diſtinguiſhingly, and wonderfully from it.

Firſt, *Freely*, by his own voluntary interpoſition and ſuſception of the mediatorial office, moved thereunto by his own bowels of compaſſion; which yearned over his elect in their miſery ‡. The ſaints were once a loſt generation, that had ſold themſelves, and their inheritance alſo; and had not wherewithal to redeem either: but they had a near kinſman (even their elder brother by the mother's ſide) to whom the right of redemption did belong; who being a mighty man of wealth, the heir of all things, undertook to be their *Goell*; and out of his own proper ſubſtance to redeem both them and their inheritance. Them to be his own inheritance, Eph. i. 10. And heaven to be theirs, 1 Pet. i. 4. All this he did moſt freely, when none made ſupplication to him. No ſighing of the priſoners came before him. He deſigned it for us before we had a being. And when the purpoſes of his grace were come to their parturient fulneſs, then did he freely lay out the infinite treaſures of his blood to purchaſe our deliverance from wrath.

Secondly, Chriſt by death hath delivered his people *fully*. A full deliverance it is, both in reſpect of *time* and *degrees*. A full deliverance in reſpect of *time*. It was not a *reprieve*, but a *deliverance*. He thought it not worth the ſhedding of his blood to reſpite the execution for a while. Nay, in the procurement of their eternal deliverance from wrath, and in the purchaſe of their eternal inheritance, he hath but an even bargain, not a jot more than his blood was worth. Therefore is he become "the author of (eternal ſalvation) to them that obey him," Heb. v. 9. And as it is full in reſpect of *time*, ſo likewiſe in reſpect of *degrees*. He died not to procure a mitigation or abatement of the rigour or ſeverity of the ſentence, but to reſcue his people fully from all degrees of wrath. So that there

‡ See Mr. Caſe's Mount Piſgah, p. 85.

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is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. All the wrath of God to the last drop, was squeezed out into that bitter cup which Christ drank off, and wrung out the very dregs thereof.

Thirdly, This deliverance obtained for us by the death of Christ, is a *special* and distinguishing deliverance. Not common to all, but peculiar to some; and they by nature no better than those that are left under wrath. Yea, as to natural disposition, moral qualifications, and external endowments, oftentimes far inferior to them that perish. How often do we find a moral righteousness, an harmless innocency, a pretty ingenuity, a readiness to all offices of love; in them that are notwithstanding left under the dominion of other lusts, and under the damning sentence of the law; whilst, on the other side, proud, peevish, sensual, morose, and unpolished natures, are chosen to be the subjects of this salvation. "You see your calling, brethren," 1 Cor. i. 26.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, It is a *wonderful* salvation. It would weary the arm of an angel to write down all the wonders that are in this salvation. That ever such a design should be laid, such a project of grace contrived in the heart of God, who might have suffered the whole species to perish. That it should only concern man, and not the angels, by nature more excellent than us; that Christ should be pitched upon to go forth upon this glorious design. That he should effect it in such a way, by taking our nature and suffering the penalty of the law therein. That our deliverance should be wrought out and finished when the Redeemer and his design seemed both to be lost and perished. These with many more are such wonders as will take up eternity itself to search, admire, and adore them.

Before I part from this first end of the death of Christ, give me leave to deduce two useful corollaries from it, and then proceed to a second.

Coroll. 1. Hath Christ by death delivered his people from the wrath to come? *How ingrate and disingenuous a thing must it be then for those that have obtained such a deliverance as this, to repine and grudge at those light afflictions they suffer for a moment upon Christ's account in this world!*

Alas! What are these sufferings, that we should grudge at them? Are they like those which the Redeemer suffered for our deliverance? Did ever any of us endure for him what he endured for us? Or is there any thing you can suffer for Christ in this world, comparable to this *wrath to come*, which you must

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have endured, had he not, by the price of his own blood rescued you from it.

Compare. Reader, wilt thou but make the comparison in thine own thoughts, in the following particulars, and then pronounce when thou hast duly compared.

The Natures. *First*, What is the wrath of man to the wrath of God? What is the arm of a creature to the anger of a Deity? Can man thunder with an arm like God?

Subjects. *Secondly*, What are the sufferings of the vile body here, to the tortures of a soul and body in hell? The torments of the soul are the very soul of torments.

Duration. *Thirdly*, What are the troubles of a moment to that wrath, which, after millions of years are gone, will still be called *wrath to come?* O what compare betwixt a point of hasty time, and the interminable duration of vast eternity?

Continuity. *Fourthly*, What compare is there betwixt the intermitting sorrows and sufferings of this life, and the continued uninterrupted *wrath to come?* Our troubles here are not constant, there are gracious relaxations, lucid intervals here; but the wrath to come allows not a moment's ease or mitigation.

Designs. *Fifthly*, What light and easy troubles are those, which, being put into the rank and order of adjuvant causes, work under the influence and blessing of the first cause, to the everlasting good of them that love God, compared with that *wrath to come*, out of which no good effects or issues are possible to proceed to the souls on which it lies?

And companions. *Sixthly*, and *Lastly*, How much more comfortable is it, to suffer in fellowship with Christ and his saints for righteousness sake, than to suffer with devils and reprobates for wickedness sake? Grudge not then, O ye that are delivered by Jesus from wrath to come, at any thing ye do suffer, or shall suffer from Christ, or for Christ in this world.

Coroll. 2. If Jesus Christ hath delivered his people from the wrath to come, *how little comfort can any man take in his present enjoyments and accommodations in the world, whilst it remains a question with him, whether he be delivered from the wrath to come?* It is well for the present, but will it be so still? Man is a prospecting creature, and it will not satisfy

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him that his present condition is comfortable, except he have some hope it shall be so hereafter. It can afford a man little content that all is easy and pleasant about him now, whilst such passages and terrible hints of *wrath to come* are given him by his own conscience daily. Oh, methinks such a thought as this, *what if I am reserved for the wrath to come?* should be to him, as the fingers appearing upon the plaister of the wall were to Belteshazzar, in the height of a frolic *. It is a custom with some of the Indians, when they have taken a prisoner (whom they intend not presently to eat) to bring him with great triumph into the village, where he dwelleth that hath taken him; and placing him in the house of one that was slain in the wars, as it were to re-celebrate his funerals, they give him his wives or sisters to attend on him, and use at his pleasure; they apparel him gorgeously, and feed him with all the dainty meats that may be had; affording him all the pleasure that can be devised; when he hath passed certain months in all these pleasures, and (like a capon) is made fat with delicate fare, they assemble themselves upon some festival day, and in great pomp bring him to the place of execution, where they kill and eat him.

Such are all the pleasures and enjoyments of the wicked, which feed them for the day of slaughter. How little stomach can a man have to those dainties that understands the end and meaning of them! Give not sleep therefore to thine eyes, reader, till thou hast got good evidence, that thou art of that number whom *Jesus hath delivered from wrath to come.* Till thou canst say, he is a Jesus to thee. This may be made out to thy satisfaction three ways.

First, *If Jesus have delivered thee from sin, the cause of wrath, thou mayest conclude he hath delivered thee from the wrath, the effect and fruits of sin.* Upon this account the sweet name of Jesus, was imposed upon him, Matth. i. 21. "Thou shalt call his "name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Whilst a man lies under the dominion and guilt of sin, he lies exposed to *wrath to come;* and when he is delivered from the guilt and power of sin, he is certainly delivered from the danger of this coming wrath. Where sin is not imputed, wrath is not threatned.

Secondly, *If thy soul do set an inestimable value on Jesus Christ, and be endeared to him upon the account of that inexpressible grace manifested in this deliverance, it is a good sign thy*

* Sir R. Barkley, on the felicity of Man, p. 12, 13.

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ſoul hath a ſhare in it. Mark what an epithet the ſaints give Chriſt upon this account, Col. i. 12, 13. "Giving thanks to the "Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, "and tranſlated us into the kingdom of his [dear] Son." Chriſt is therefore *dear*, and dear beyond all compare, to his ſaved ones. I remember it is ſtoried of the poor enthralled Grecians, that when † Titus Flaminius had reſtored their ancient liberties, and proclamation was to be made in the market-place by an herald; they ſo preſſed to hear it, that the herald was in great danger of being ſtifled and preſſed to death among the people; but when the proclamation was ended, there were heard ſuch ſhouts and joyful acclamations, that the very birds of the air fell down aſtoniſhed with the noiſe, while they continued to cry, Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, a Saviour, a Saviour; and all the following night they continu-dancing and ſinging about his pavilion.

If ſuch a deliverance ſo endeared them to Titus, how ſhould the great deliverance from wrath to come, endear all the redeemed to love their dear Jeſus? This is the native effect of mercy on the ſoul that hath felt it.

Thirdly, To conclude, *A diſpoſition and readineſs of mind to do, or endure any thing for Chriſt's ſake, upon the account of his deliverance from the wrath to come; is a good evidence you are ſo delivered*, Col. i. 10, 11. "That we may walk worthy of the Lord "to all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work." There is readineſs to do for Chriſt. "Strengthened with all might, "according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-"ſuffering with joyfulneſs." There is a chearful readineſs to endure any thing for Chriſt. And how both theſe flow from the ſenſe of this great deliverance from wrath, the 12th verſe will inform you, which was but now cited. Oh then be ſerious and aſſiduous in the reſolution of this grand caſe. Till this be reſolved, nothing can be pleaſant to thy ſoul.

End 2. As the typical blood was ſhed and ſprinkled to deliver from danger, ſo it was ſhed to make *atonement*, Lev. iv. 20. "He ſhall expiate (we tranſlate, *atone*) the ſin." The word imports both. And the true meaning is, that by the blood of the bullock, all whoſe efficacy ſtood in its relation to the blood of Chriſt, ſignified and ſhadowed by it, the people, for whom it was ſhed, ſhould be reconciled to God, by the expiation and remiſſion of their ſins. And what was ſhadowed in this typical blood, was really deſigned and accompliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſhedding of his blood.

† *Plutarch. in vita T. Flaminii.*

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Reconciliation of the elect to God, is therefore another of those beautiful births which Christ travailed for. So you find it expressly, Rom. v. 10. "If when we were enemies, we were "reconciled to God by the death of his Son." This [if] is not a word of doubting, but argumentation. The apostle supposes it is a known truth, or principle yielded by all Christians, that the death of Christ was to reconcile the elect to God. And again he affirms it with like clearness, Col. i. 20. "And having made "peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things." And that this was a main and principal end designed both by the Father and Son in the humiliation of Christ, is plain from 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world "to himself." God filled the humanity with grace and authority. The spirit of God was in him to qualify him. The authority of God was in him by commission, to make all he did valid. The grace and love of God to mankind was in him, and one of the principal effects in which it was manifested, was this design upon which he came, *viz.* to reconcile the world to God. Upon which ground Christ is called the "propitiation for our "sins," 1 John ii. 2. "† Now *reconciliation* or atonement is "nothing else but the making up of the ancient friendship be-"twixt God and men which sin had dissolved, and so to reduce "these enemies into a state of concord, and sweet agreement." And the means by which this blessed design was effectually compassed, was by the death of Christ, which made compleat satisfaction to God, for the wrong he had done him. There was a breach made by sin betwixt God and angels, but that breach is never to be repaired or made up; since, as Christ took not on him their nature, so he never intended to be a mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and them. That will be an eternal breach. But that which Christ designed, as the end of his death, was to reconcile God and man. Not the whole *species*, but a certain *number*, whose names were given to Christ. Here I must briefly open, 1. How Christ's death reconciles. 2. Why this reconciliation is brought about by his death, rather than any other way. 3. What are the articles according to which it is made. And 4 What manner of reconciliation this is.

First, How Christ reconciles God and man by his death. And it must needs be by the satisfaction his death made to the justice

† *Reconciliare nihil aliud est quam amicitiam offensione aliqua gravi diremptam resarcire, et sic inimicos in pristinam concordiam reducere.* B. Daven in Col. i. 20.

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of God for our sins. And so, reparation being made, the enmity ceases. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 5. "The chastisement of our "peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." That is, (as our English Annotators well explain it) he was chastised to procure our peace, by removal of our sins, that set God and us asunder, the guilt thereof being discharged with the price of his blood.

Now this reconciliation is made and continued betwixt God and us, three ways; namely, by the *oblation* of Christ, which was the price that procured it, and so we were *virtually* or meritoriously reconciled. By the *application* of Christ and his benefits to us through faith, and so we are *actually* reconciled. And by the virtual *continuation* of the sacrifice of Christ in heaven, by his potent and eternal *intercession*, and so our state of reconciliation is *confirmed*, and all future breaches prevented. But all depends, as you see, upon the death of Christ. For had not Christ died, his death could never be applied to us, nor pleaded in heaven for us. How the death of Christ meritoriously procures our reconciliation, is evident from that fore-cited scripture, Rom. v. 10, "When we were enemies, we were re-"conciled to God by the death of his Son," (*i. e.*) Christ's death did meritoriously or virtually reconcile us to God, who, as to our state, were enemies long after that reconciliation was made. That the *application* of Christ to us by faith, makes that virtual reconciliation to become actual, is plain enough from Eph. ii. 16, 17. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one "body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And "came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to "them that were nigh. Now therefore (as it is added, verse "19.) Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-ci-"tizens with the saints," *&c.* And that this state of friendship is still *continued* by Christ's intercession within the vail, so that there can be no breaches made upon the state of our peace, notwithstanding all the daily provocations we give God by our sins, is the comfortable truth which the Apostle plainly asserts, after he had given a necessary caution to prevent the abuse of it, in 1 John ii. 1, 2. "My little children, these things I write un-"to you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Ad-"vocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is "the propitiation," *&c.* Thus Christ reconciles us to God by his death.

Secondly, And if you enquire why this reconciliation was made by the death of Christ, rather than any other way, satisfaction is at hand in these two answers.

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Firſt, That we can imagine no other way by which it could be compaſſed. And,

Secondly, If God could have *reconciled* us as much by another way, yet he could not have *obliged* us ſo much by doing it in another way, as he hath by doing it this way. Surely, none but he that was God manifeſted in our fleſh could offer a ſacrifice of ſufficient value to make God amends for the wrong done him by one ſin, much leſs for all the ſins of the elect. And how God ſhould (eſpecially after a peremptory threatning of death for ſin) re-admit us into favour without full ſatisfaction, cannot be imagined. He is indeed inclined to acts of mercy, but none muſt ſuppoſe him to exerciſe one attribute in prejudice to another. That his *juſtice* muſt be *eclipſed*, whilſt his *mercy ſhines*. But allow the infinite wiſdom could have found out another means of reconciling us as much, can you imagine, that in any other way he could oblige us as much, as he hath done by reconciling us to himſelf by the death of his own Son? It cannot be thought poſſible. This therefore was the moſt effectual, juſt, honourable, and obliging way to make up the peace betwixt him and us.

Thirdly, This reconciliation, purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, is offered unto men by the Goſpel, upon certain articles and conditions; upon the performance whereof, it actually becomes theirs; and without which, notwithſtanding all that Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, the breach ſtill continues betwixt them and God. And let no man think this a derogation from the freeneſs and riches of grace, for theſe things ſerve ſingularly to illuſtrate and commend the grace of God to ſinners.

As he conſulted his own glory, in the terms on which he offers us our peace with him; ſo it is his grace which brings up ſouls to thoſe terms of reconciliation. And ſurely he hath not ſuſpended the mercy of our reconciliation upon unreaſonable or impoſſible conditions. He hath not ſaid, if you will do as much for me, *as you have done againſt me*, I will be at peace with you: But the two grand articles of peace with God, are *repentance* and *faith*. In the firſt, we lay down arms againſt God, and it is meet it ſhould be ſo, before he re-admits us into a ſtate of peace and favour; in the other, we accept Chriſt and pardon through him with a thankful heart, yielding up ourſelves to his government. Which is equally reaſonable.

Theſe are the terms on which we are actually reconciled to God. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will

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" have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly " pardon." So Rom. v. 1. " Being juſtified by faith, we " have peace with God." And ſurely it would not become the holy God to own, as his friend and favourite, a man that goes on perverſely and impenitently in the way of ſin; not ſo much as acknowledging, or once bewailing the wrong he hath done him, purpoſing to do ſo no more; or to receive into amity one that ſlights and rejects the Lord Jeſus, whoſe precious blood was ſhed to procure, and purchaſe peace and pardon for ſinners.

But if there be any poor ſoul, that ſaith in his heart, it repents me for ſinning againſt God, and is ſincerely willing to come to Chriſt, upon goſpel-terms, he ſhall have peace. And that peace,

Fourthly, Is no common peace. The reconciliation which the Lord Jeſus died to procure for broken-hearted believers, it is,

Firſt, A firm well-bottomed reconciliation, putting the reconciled ſoul beyond all poſſibility of coming under God's wrath any more. Iſa. liv. 10. " Mountains may depart, and hills be " removed, but the covenant of this peace cannot be removed." Chriſt is a ſurety, by way of *caution*, to prevent the new breaches, 2 John i. 2.

Secondly, This reconciliation with God, is the fountain out of which all our other comforts flow to us; this is plainly included in thoſe words of Eliphaz to Job, chap. xxii. 21. " Ac- " quaint now thyſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good " ſhall come upon thee." As trade flouriſhes, and riches come in when peace is made betwixt ſtates and kingdoms; So all ſpiritual and temporal mercies flow into our boſoms, when once we are reconciled to God. What the comfort of ſuch a peace will be in a day of ſtraits and dangers, and what it will be valued at in a dying day, who but he that feels it can declare? And yet ſuch an one cannot fully declare it, for it paſſes all underſtanding, Phil. iv. 7. We ſhall now make ſome improvement of this, and paſs on to the third end of the death of Chriſt.

Inf. 1. *If Chriſt died to reconcile God and man; how horrid an evil then is ſin! And how terrible was that breach made betwixt God and the creature by it, which could no other way be made up but by the death of the Son of God!* I remember I have read, that when a great chaſm or breach was made in the earth by an earthquake, and the oracle was conſulted how it might be cloſed; this anſwer was returned, *That breach can never be cloſed, except ſomething of great worth be thrown into it.* Such a breach was that which ſin made, it could never be reconciled but by

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the death of Jesus Christ, the most excellent thing in all the creation.

Infer. 2. *How sad is the state of all such as are not comprised in the articles of peace with God!* The impenitent unbeliever is excepted. God is not reconciled to him: And if God be his enemy, how little avails it, who is his friend? For, if God be a man's enemy, he hath an Almighty enemy in him, whose very frown is destruction, Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. "I lift up my "hand to heaven and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glit-"tering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will "render vengeance to my enemies, and I will reward them that "hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and "my sword shall devour flesh) and that with the blood of the "slain and the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon "the enemy."

Yea, he is an *unavoidable* enemy. Fly to the utmost parts of the earth, there shall his hand reach thee, as it is Psal. cxxxix. 10. The wings of the morning cannot carry thee out of his reach. If God be your enemy, you have an immortal enemy, who lives for ever to avenge himself upon his adversaries. And what wilt thou do when thou art in Saul's case, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. Alas, whither wilt thou turn? To whom wilt thou complain? But what wilt thou do, when thou shalt stand at the bar, and see that God, who is thine enemy, upon the throne? Sad is their case indeed, who are not comprehended in the articles of peace with God.

Infer. 3. If Christ died to reconcile us to God, *give diligence to clear up to your own souls, your interest in this reconciliation.* If Christ thought it worth his blood to purchase it, it is worth your care and pains to clear it. And what can better evidence it, than your conscientious tenderness of sin, lest you make new breaches. Ah, if reconciled, you will say, as Ezra ix. 14. "And now our God, seeing thou hast given us such a delive-"rance as this; should we again break thy commandments?" If reconciled to God, his friends will be your friends, and his enemies your enemies. If God be your friend, you will be diligent to please him, John xv. 10, 14. He that makes not peace with God, is an enemy to his own soul. And he that is at peace, but takes no pains to clear it, is an enemy to his own comfort. But I must pass from this to the third end of Christ's death.

End 3. You have seen two of those beautiful births of Christ's travail, and lo, a third cometh, namely, *The sanctification of his people.* Typical blood was shed, as you heard, to purify them

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that were unclean; and so was the blood of Christ shed to purge away the sins of his people; so speaks the apostle expressly, Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ gave himself for the church, that he "might sanctify and cleanse it." And so he tells us himself, John xvii. 29. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself," *(i. e.)* consecrate or devote myself to death, "That they also might "be sanctified through the truth." Upon the account of this benefit received by the blood of Christ, is that *Doxology*, which, in a lower strain, is now sounded in the churches, but will be matter of the Lamb's song in heaven, Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him "that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own "blood,——be glory and honour for ever." Now, there is a two-fold evil in sin, the *guilt* of it, and the *pollution* of it. Justification properly cures the former, sanctification the latter; but both justification, and sanctification, flow unto sinners out of the death of Christ. And though it is proper to say the Spirit sanctifies, yet, it is certain, it was the blood of Christ that procured for us the Spirit of sanctification. Had not Christ died, the Spirit had never come down from heaven upon any such design.

The pouring forth of Christ's blood for us, obtained the pouring forth of the spirit of holiness upon us. Therefore, the Spirit is said to *come in his name, and to take of his, and shew it unto us.* Hence it is said, 1 John v. 6. "He came both by "blood and by water:" By blood, washing away the guilt; by water, purifying from the filth of sin. Now this fruit of Christ's death, even our sanctification, is a most incomparable mercy. For, do but consider a few particular excellencies of holiness.

First, Holiness is the image and glory of God. His image, Col. iii. 10. and his glory, Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto "thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness:" Now, when the guilt and filth of sin is washed off, and the beauty of God put upon the soul in sanctification, O what a beautiful creature is the soul now! So lovely in the eyes of Christ, even in its imperfect holiness, that he saith, Cant. vi. 5. "Turn away thine eyes from "me, for they have overcome me." So we render it, but the * Hebrew word signifies, "they have made me proud, or puf-"fed me up." It is a beam of divine glory upon the creature, enamouring the very heart of Christ.

Secondly, As it is the soul's highest beauty, so it is the soul's best evidence for heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for

* הרהבני.

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" they shall see God," Mat. v. 8. " And without holiness no " man shall see God," Heb. xii. 14. No gifts, no duties, no natural endowments will evidence a right in heaven, but the least measure of true holiness will secure heaven to the soul.

Thirdly, As holiness is the soul's best evidence for heaven, so it is a continual spring of comfort to it, in the way thither. The purest and sweetest pleasures in this world, are the results of holiness. 'Till we come to live holily, we never live comfortably. Heaven is epitomized in holiness.

Fourthly, And to say no more; it is the peculiar mark, by which God hath visibly distinguished his own, from other men, Psal. iv. 3. " The Lord hath set apart him that is godly, for " himself," *q. d.* this is the man, and that the woman, to whom I intend to be good for ever. This is a man for me. O holiness, how surpassingly glorious art thou?

Inference 1. Did Christ die to sanctify his people, how deep then is the pollution of sin, that nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse it! All the tears of a penitent sinner, should he shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain, since the creation, to this day, cannot wash away one sin. The everlasting burnings in hell, cannot purify the flaming conscience, from the least sin. O guess at the wound by the largeness and length of this tent that follows the mortal weapon, Sin.

Inference 2. Did Christ die to sanctify his people? Behold then the love of a Saviour. " He loved us, and washed us from " our sins in his own blood." He did not shed the blood of beasts, as the priests of old did, but his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. And that not common, but precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 1, 19. The blood of God; one drop of which out-values the blood that runs in the veins of all Adam's posterity. And not some of that blood, but all; to the last drop. He bled every vein dry for us; and what remained lodged about the heart of a dead Jesus, was let out by that bloody spear which pierced the *Pericardium*: so that he bestowed the whole treasure of his blood upon us. And thus liberal was he of his blood to us, when we were enemies. This then is that heavenly Pelican that feeds his young with his own blood. O what manner of love is this! But I must hasten.

End 4. *As Christ died to sanctify his people; so he died also to confirm the New Testament to all those sanctified ones.* So it was in the type, Exod. xxiv. 8. and so it is in the text. " This is " the New Testament in my blood," Matth. xxvi. 28. *(i. e.)* ratified and confirmed by my blood. For, where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, Heb.

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ix. 16. So that now all the blessings and benefits bequeathed to believers in the last will and testament of Christ, are abundantly confirmed and secured to them by his death. Yea, he died on purpose to make that testament in force to them. Men make their wills and testaments, and Christ makes his. What they bequeath, and give in their wills, is a free and voluntary act, they cannot be compelled to do it. And what is bequeathed to us in this testament of Christ, is altogether a free and voluntary donation *. Other testators use to bequeath their estates to their wives and children, and near relations; so doth this testator, all is settled upon his spouse the church, upon believers, his children. A stranger intermeddles not with these mercies. They give all their goods and estates, that can that way be conveyed, to their friends that survive them. Christ giveth to his church, in this New Testament, three sorts of goods.

First, All temporal good things, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Mat. vi. 33. (*i. e.*) the comfort and blessing of all, though not the possession of much. "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Secondly, All spiritual good things are bequeathed to them in this testament, as remission of sin, and acceptation with God, which are contained in their justification, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. Sanctification of their natures, both initial and progressive, 1 Cor. i. 30. Adoption into the family of God, Gal. iii. 26. The ministry of angels, Heb. i. 14. Interest in all the promises, 2 Pet. i. 4. Thus all spiritual good things are in Christ's testament conveyed to them. And as all temporal, and spiritual, so,

Thirdly, All eternal good things. Heaven, glory, and eternal life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. No such bequests as these were ever found in the testaments of princes. That which kings and nobles settle by will upon their heirs, are but trifles to what Christ hath conferred in the New Testament upon his people. And all this is confirmed and ratified by the death of Christ, so that the promise is sure, and the estate indefeasible to all the heirs of promise.

How the death of Christ confirmed the New Testament is worth our enquiry. The Socinians, as they allow no other end of Christ's death, but the confirmation of the New Testament, so they affirm he did it only by way of testimony, or witness-

* *Nullo præsentis metu periculi.* i. e. Without any fear of present danger. *Coke's Instit. l. 3. cap. 10.*

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bearing in his death. But this is a vile derogation from the efficacy of Christ's blood, to bring it down into an equality with the blood of martyrs. As if there were no more in it than was in their blood.

But know, Reader, Christ died not only, or principally, to confirm the testament by his blood, as witness to the truth of those things, but his death ratified it as the death of a testator, which makes the New Testament irrevocable. And so Christ is called in this text. Look as when a man hath made his will, and is dead, that will is presently in force, and can never be recalled. Besides, the will of the dead is sacred with men. They dare not cross it. It is certain the last will and testament of Christ is most sacred, and God will never annul or make it void. Moreover, it is not with Christ as with other testators, who die, and must trust the performance of their wills with their executors, but as he died to put it in force, so he lives again to be the executor of his own testament. And all power to fulfil his will is now in his own hands, Rev. i. 18.

Inference 1. Did Christ die to confirm the New Testament, in which such legacies are bequeathed to believers. How are all believers concerned then to prove the will of a dead Jesus! My meaning is, to clear their title to the mercies contained in this blessed testament. And this may be done two ways. By clearing to ourselves our covenant-relations to Christ. And by discovering those special covenant-impressions upon our hearts, to which the promises therein contained, do belong. *The probate of Christ's last will and testament.*

First, Examine your relations to Christ. Are you his *spouse?* Have you forsaken all for him? Psal. xlv. 10. Are you ready to take your lot with him, as it falls in prosperity or adversity? Jer. ii. 2. And are you loyal to Christ? "Thou shalt be for me, "and not for another," Hos. iii. 3. Do you yield obedience to him as your head and husband? Eph. vi. 24. then you may be confident you are interested in the benefits and blessings of Christ's last will and testament; for can you imagine Christ will make a testament and forget his spouse? It cannot be. If he so loved the church as to give himself for her, much more what he hath is settled on her. Again, are you his spiritual seed, his children by regeneration? Are you born of the Spirit? John iii. Do you resemble Christ in holiness? 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. Do you find a reverential fear of Christ carrying you to obey him in all things? Mal. i. 6. Are you led by the Spirit of Christ? "As many as

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" are so led, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. To conclude, Have you the *spirit of adoption*, enabling you to cry, *Abba Father*? Gal. iv. 6. That is, helping you in a gracious manner, with reverence mixed with filial confidence, to open your hearts spiritually to your Father on all occasions? If so, you are children; and if children, doubt not but you have a rich legacy in Christ's last will and testament. He would not seal up his testament, and forget his dear children.

Secondly, You may discern your interest in the new testament or covenant (for they are substantially the same thing) by the new covenant-impressions that are made on your hearts, which are so many clear evidences of your right to the benefits it contains. Such are spiritual illuminations, Jer. xxxi. 34. gracious softness and tenderness of heart, Ezek. xi. 19. the awful dread and fear of God, Jer. xxxii. 40. the copy or transcript of his laws on your hearts in gracious correspondent principles, Jer. xxxi. 33. These things speak you the children of the covenant, the persons on whom all these great things are settled.

Inference 2. To conclude, It is the indispensible duty of all on whom Christ hath settled such mercies, *to admire his love*, and *walk answerably* to it.

First, Admire the love of Christ. O how intense and ardent was the love of Jesus! who designed for you such an inheritance, with such a settlement of it upon you! These are the mercies with which his love had travailed big from eternity, and now he sees the travail of his soul, and you also have seen somewhat of it this day. Before this love, let all the saints fall down astonished, humbly professing that they owe themselves, and all they are, or shall be worth, to eternity, to this love.

Secondly, And be sure you walk becoming persons for whom Christ hath done such great things. Comfort yourselves under present abasures with your spiritual privileges, James ii. 5. and let all your rejoicing be in Christ, and what you have in him, whilst others are blessing themselves in vanity. Thus we have finished the state of Christ's humiliation, and thence proceed to the second state of his exaltation.

An Introduction to the State of Exaltation.

HAving finished what I designed to speak to, about the work of redemption, so far as it was carried on by Christ in his humble state, we shall now view that blessed work as it is further *advanced*, and *perfected* in *his state of exaltation*.

The whole of that work was not to be finished on earth in

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a ſtate of ſuffering and abaſure, therefore the apoſtle makes his *exaltation*, in order to the finiſhing of the remainder of his work, ſo neceſſary a part of his prieſthood, that without it he could not have been a prieſt, Heb. viii. 4. "If he were on earth he "ſhould not be a prieſt," (*i. e.*) if he ſhould have continued always here, and had not been raiſed again from the dead, and taken up into glory, *he could not have been a compleat and perfect prieſt.*

For look, as it was not enough for the ſacrifice to be ſlain without, and his blood left there; but after it was ſhed without, it muſt be carried within the vail, into the moſt holy place before the Lord, Heb. ix. 7. ſo it was not ſufficient that Chriſt ſhed his own blood on earth, except he carry it before the Lord into heaven, and there perform his *interceſſion-work* for us.

Moreover, God the Father ſtood engaged in a ſolemn covenant, to reward him for his deep humiliation, with a moſt glorious and illuſtrious advancement, Iſa. xlix. 5, 6, 7. And how God (as it became him) made this good to Chriſt, the apoſtle very clearly expreſſes it, Phil. ii. 9.

Yea, juſtice required it ſhould be ſo. For how could our ſurety be detained in the priſon of the grave, when the debt for which he was impriſoned was by him fully diſcharged, ſo that the law of God muſt acknowledge itſelf to be fully ſatisfied in all its claims and demands? His reſurrection from the dead was, therefore, but his diſcharge or acquittance upon full payment. Which could not in juſtice be denied him.

And, indeed, God the Father loſt nothing by it, for there never was a more glorious manifeſtation made of the name of God to the world, than was made in that work. Therefore it is ſaid, Phil. ii. 11., ſpeaking of one of the deſigns of Chriſt's exaltation, it was, (ſaith the apoſtle), "That every tongue ſhould confeſs "that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." O how is the love of God to poor ſinners illuſtriouſly, yea, aſtoniſhingly, diſplayed in Chriſt's exaltation. When, to ſhew the complacency and delight, which he took in our recovery, he hath openly declared to the world, that his exalting Chriſt to all that glory, ſuch as no mere creature ever was, or can be exalted to, was beſtowed upon him, as a reward for that work, that moſt grateful work, of our redemption, Phil. ii. 9. Wherefore, God alſo hath *highly exalted him*; there is an "*emphatical pleonaſm

* Υπερυψωσεν, *Pleonaſmus emphaticus*, Hieron. *Multiplicavit ſublimitatem ejus*, Arab. *Sublimitate ſublimavit eum*, Syr. *Inſigniter*

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" in that word," our Engliſh is too flat, to deliver out the elegancy of the original, it is *ſuper-exaltation*. The Syriac, renders it, " he hath multiplied his ſublimity." The Arabic, " he hath " heightned him with an height." Juſtin, " he hath famouſ- " ly exalted him." Higher he cannot raiſe him, a greater argument of his high ſatisfaction and content, in the recovery of poor ſinners, cannot be given. For this, therefore, God the Father, ſhall have glory and honour aſcribed to him in heaven, to all eternity.

Now this ſingular exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt, as it properly reſpects his human nature, which alone is capable of advancement; for, in reſpect of his divine nature, he never ceaſed to be the Moſt High. So it was done to him as a common perſon, and as the head of all believers, their repreſentative in this, as well as in his other works. God therein ſhewing what, in due time, he intends to do with the perſons of his elect, after they, in conformity to Chriſt, have ſuffered a while. Whatever God the Father intendeth to do in us, or for us, he hath firſt done it to the perſon of our *Repreſentative, Jeſus Chriſt*. And this, if you obſerve, the ſcriptures carry in very clear and plain expreſſions, through all the degrees and ſteps of Chriſt's exaltation, *viz.* his *reſurrection, aſcenſion, ſeſſion* at the right-hand of God, and returning to *judge* the world. Of which I purpoſe to ſpeak diſtinctly in the following ſermons.

He aroſe from the dead, as a common perſon, Col. iii. 1. " If " ye then be riſen with Chriſt," ſaith the apoſtle; ſo that the ſaints have communion and fellowſhip with him in his reſurrection.

He aſcended into heaven, as a common perſon, for ſo it is ſaid in Eph. ii. 6. " He hath raiſed us up," or exalted us together with Chriſt. He ſits at God's right-hand, as a common perſon, for ſo it follows in the next clauſe, " and hath made us ſit toge- " ther in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus." We ſit there in our Repreſentative. And when he ſhall come again to judge the world, the ſaints ſhall come with him. So it is propheſied, Zech. xiv. 5. " The Lord my God ſhall come, and all the ſaints with " thee." And as they ſhall come with Chriſt from heaven, ſo they ſhall ſit on thrones with him, judging by way of ſuffrage. They ſhall be aſſeſſors with the Judge, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This deſerves a ſpecial remark, that all this honour is given to Chriſt, as our Head and Repreſentative, for thence reſults abundance of

ſigniter extulit, Juſtin. M. * *Secundum eandem naturam dicitur exaltatus, ſecundum quam humiliatus fuit.* Zanch.

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comfort to the people of God. Carry it therefore along with you in your thoughts, throughout the whole of Chriſt's advancement. Think when you ſhall hear that Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and is in all that glory and authority in heaven, how ſure the ſalvation of his redeemed is. "For if when we were enemies, we were "reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; much more, being "reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life." Surely, it cannot be ſuppoſed, but "he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all them that "come to God by him; ſeeing he ever lives to make interceſſion," Heb. vii. 25. Think how ſafe the people of God in this world are, whoſe Head is in heaven. It was a comfortable expreſſion of one of the fathers, encouraging himſelf and others with this truth in a dark day; "Come, (ſaid he,) why do we tremble thus, "Do we not ſee our head above water †?" If he live, believers cannot die, John xiv. 19. "Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo."

And let no man's heart ſuggeſt a ſuſpicious thought to him, that this wonderful advancement of Chriſt, may cauſe him to forget his poor people, groaning here below under ſin and miſery. For the temper and diſpoſition of his faithful and tender heart, is not changed with his condition. He bears the ſame reſpect to us, as when he dwelt among us. For indeed he there lives and acts upon our account, Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

And how ſeaſonable and comfortable will the meditations of Chriſt's exaltation be to thee, O believer, when ſickneſs hath waſted thy body, withered its beauty, and God is bringing thee to the duſt of death! Ah! think then, that that "vile body "ſhall be conformed to the glorious body of Chriſt," Phil. iii. 21. As God hath glorified, and highly exalted his Son, "whoſe "form was marred more than any man's;" ſo will he exalt thee alſo. I do not ſay, to a parity, or equality, in glory with Chriſt, for, in heaven he will be diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed, by his peculiar glory, from all the angels and ſaints; as the ſun is known by its excellent glory from the leſſer ſtars. But we ſhall be conformed to this glorious Head, according to the proportion of members. O whither will love mount the believer in that day!

Having ſpoken thus much of Chriſt's exalted ſtate, to caſt ſome general light upon it, and engage your attentions to it, I ſhall now, according to the degrees of this his wonderful exaltation, briefly open it, under the fore-mentioned heads, *viz.* his reſurrection, aſcenſion, ſeſſion at the Father's right-hand, and his return to judge the world.

† *Nonne videmus caput noſtrum ſuper aquas.* Greg.

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SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Reſurrection of CHRIST, with its Influences upon the Saints Reſurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the firſt Step of his Exaltation.

MATTH. XXVIII. 6. *He is not here; for he is riſen, as he ſaid: come, ſee the place where the Lord lay.*

WE have finiſhed the doctrine of Chriſt's humiliation, whereing the Sun of righteouſneſs appeared to you, as a ſetting ſun, gone out of ſight; but as the ſun when it is gone down to us, begins a new day in another part of the world; ſo Chriſt, having finiſhed his courſe and work in this world, riſes again, and that, in order to the acting another glorious part of his work in the world above. In his death, he was upon the matter totally eclipſed; but in his reſurrection, he begins to recover his light and glory again. God never intended, that the darling of his ſoul ſhould be loſt in an obſcure ſepulchre. An angel deſcends from heaven, to roll away the ſtone, and, with it, the reproach of his death. And to be the heavenly herald, to proclaim his reſurrection to the two Mary's, whoſe love to Chriſt had, at this time, drawn them to viſit the ſepulchre, where they lately left him.

At this time (the Lord being newly riſen) the keepers were trembling, and become as dead men. So great was the terrible majeſty, and awful ſolemnity, attending Chriſt's reſurrection: but, to encourage theſe good ſouls, the angel prevents them with theſe good tidings; "He is not here; for he is riſen, as "he ſaid: come, ſee the place where the Lord lay:" *q. d.* Be not troubled, though you have not the end you came for, *one ſight more of your dear, though dead, Jeſus;* yet you have not loſt your labour; for, to your eternal comfort, I tell you, "he "is riſen, as he ſaid." And to put it out of doubt, come hither and ſatisfy yourſelves, "See the place where the Lord lay."

In which words, we have both a declaration, and confirmation of the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead.

Firſt, A declaration of it by the angel, both negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, *He is not here.* Here indeed you laid him, here you left him, and here you thought to find him as you left him; but you are happily miſtaken, *He is not here.*

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However, this giving them no satisfaction, so he might continue dead still, though removed to another place, as indeed they suspected he was, John xx. 13. Therefore his resurrection is declared positively and affirmatively; *He is risen;* ηγερθη, the * word imports, the active power or self-quickening principle, by which Christ raised himself from the state of the dead. Which Luke takes notice of also, Acts i. 3. where he saith, *He shewed,* or presented, *himself alive after his passion.* It was the divine nature, or Godhead of Christ, which revived and raised the manhood.

Secondly, Here is also a plain confirmation of Christ's resurrection, and that, *first,* From Christ's own prediction, *He is risen, as he said.* He foretold that, which I declare to be now fulfilled. Let it not therefore seem incredible to you. *Secondly,* by their own sight, "Come, see the place where the "Lord lay." The grave hath lost its guest; it is now empty; death hath lost its prey. It received, but could not retain him. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Thus the resurrection of Christ is declared, and confirmed. Hence our observation is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, by the almighty power of his own Godhead, revived, and rose from the dead; to the terror and consternation of his enemies, and the unspeakable consolation of believers.*

That our Lord Jesus Christ, though laid, was not lost in the grave; but the third day revived and rose again, is a truth confirmed to us by many infallible proofs, as Luke witnesseth, Acts i. 3. We have testimonies of it, both from heaven and earth, and both infallible. From heaven, we have the testimony of angels, and to the testimony of an angel all credit is due; for angels are holy creatures, and cannot deceive us. The angel tells the two Marys, in the text, "He is risen." We have testimonies of it from men, holy men, who where eye-witnesses of this truth, to whom he shewed himself alive by the space of forty days after his resurrection, by no less than † nine solemn apparitions to them. Sometimes five hundred brethren saw him

* The argument whereby we prove that Christ raised himself by his own power, is drawn from the very activity of his resurrection: *Christus* ηγερθη, i. e. *Christ arose,* Matth. xxviii. 6. παρεστησεν εαυτον ζωντα, Acts i. 3. *Maccov. loc. Com. p.* 874.

† John xx. 14. Mark xvi. 12. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xv. 8. John vii. 26. John xxi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 36.

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at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. These were holy persons, who durst not deceive, and who confirmed their testimony with their blood. So that no point of religion is of more confessed truth, and infallible certainty than this before us.

And blessed be God it is so. For if it were not, then were "the gospel in vain," 1 Cor. xv. 14. seeing it hangs the whole weight of our faith, hope, and salvation, upon Christ as risen from the dead †. If this were not so, then would the holy, and divinely inspired apostles be found *false-witnesses*, 1 Cor. xv. 15. For they all, with one mouth, constantly, and to the death affirmed it. If Christ be not risen, "then are believers "yet in their sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. For our justification is truly ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, Rom. iv. 25. Whilst Christ was dying, and continued in the state of the dead, the price of our redemption was all that while but in paying, the payment was compleated, when he revived and rose again. Therefore for Christ to have continued always in the state of the dead, had been never to have compleatly satisfied; hence the whole force and weight of our justification depends upon his resurrection. Nay, had not Christ risen, "the dead had "perished," 1 Cor. xv. 17. Even the dead who died in the faith of Christ, and of whose salvation there now remains no ground to doubt. Moreover,

Had he not revived, and risen from the dead, how could all the *types* that prefigured it have been satisfied? Surely they must have stood as insignificant things in the scriptures, and so must all the predictions of his resurrection, by which it was so plainly foretold. See Matth. xii. 40. Luke xxiv. 46. Psal. xvi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 4.

To conclude. Had he not risen from the dead, how could he have been installed in that glory whereof he is now possessed in heaven, and which was promised him before the world was, upon the account of his death and sufferings? "For to this "end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might "be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. And that, in this state of dominion and glorious advancement, he might powerfully apply the virtues and benefits of his blood to us, which else had been as a precious cordial spilt upon the ground.

‡ Our deliverance, was in his death, put in motion; or, as they say, *in fieri*, i. e. begun; but was finished in his resurrection, whence it is, that our justification or absolution from debt is justly by the apostle ascribed not to his death but resurrection, &c. Maccov. loc. Com. p. 869.

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So then, there remains no doubt at all of the certainty of Christ's resurrection; it was so, and upon all accounts it must needs be so; for you see how great a weight the scriptures hang upon this nail. And blessed be God it is a nail fastened in a sure place. I need spend no more words to confirm it; but rather choose to explain and open the nature, and manner of his resurrection, which I shall do by shewing you four or five properties of it. And the first is this,

First, Christ rose from the dead with awful majesty. So you find it in Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. "And behold, there was a "great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from "heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, "and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and "his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers "did shake, and became as dead men." Human infirmity was not able to bear such heavenly majesty as attended the business of that morning. Nature sank under it. This earthquake was, as one calls it, *triumphale signum*: a sign of triumph, or token of victory, given by Christ, not only to the keepers, and the neighbouring city, but to the whole world, that he had overcome death in its own dominions, and, like a conqueror, lifted up his head above all his enemies. So when the Lord fought from heaven for his people, and gave them a glorious, though but temporal deliverance; see how the prophetess drives on the triumph in that rhetorical song, Judg. v. 4, 5. Alluding to the most awful appearance of God, at the giving of the law. "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou "marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and "the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The "mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai "from before the Lord God of Israel." Our Lord Jesus went out of the grave, in like manner, and marched out of that bloody field, with a pomp and majesty ‡ becoming so great a conqueror.

Secondly, And to increase the splendor of that day, and drive on the triumph, his resurrection was attended with the resurrection of many of the saints; who had slept in their graves till then, and then were awakened and raised to attend the Lord at his rising. So you read, Mat. xxvii. 52. 53. "And the graves "were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept

‡ *Est incedere cum pompa et majestate. i. e.* It is to march with pomp and majesty.

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" arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection; " and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This wonder was designed, both to adorn the resurrection of Christ, and to give a specimen or pledge of our resurrection; which also is to be in the virtue of his. This indeed was the resurrection of saints, and none but saints, the resurrection of many saints, yet it was but a special resurrection, intended only to shew what God will one day do for all his saints. And, for the present, to give testimony of Christ's resurrection, from the dead. They were seen, and known of many in the city, who doubtless never thought to have seen them any more in this world. To enquire curiously, as some do, who they were, what discourse they had with those to whom they appeared, and what became of them afterwards, is a vain thing. God hath cast a veil of silence, and secrecy upon these things, that we might content ourselves with the written word, and he that " will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will he be- " lieve though one rise from the dead," as these saints did.

Thirdly, As Christ rose from the dead with those *satellites*, or attendants, who accompanied him at his resurrection; so it was by the power of his own Godhead that he quickened and raised himself; and by the virtue of his resurrection were they raised also, who accompanied him. It was not the *Angel* who rolled back the stone that revived him in the sepulchre, but he resumed his own life, so he tells us, John x. 18. " I lay " down my life that I may take it again." Hence 1 Pet. iii. 18. He is said to be put to death in the flesh, but quickned by the Spirit, *(i. e.)* by the power of his Godhead, or divine nature, which is opposed there to flesh, or his human nature. By the eternal Spirit he offered himself up to God, when he died, Heb. ix. 14. *(i. e.)* by his own Godhead, not the third person in the Trinity, for then it could not have been ascribed to him as his own act, that he offered up himself. And by the same Spirit he was quickned again.

And, therefore, the apostle well observes, Rom. i. 4. " That " he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his " resurrection from the dead. Now if he had been raised by the power of the Father, or Spirit only, and not by his own, how could he be declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God? What more had appeared in him than in others? For others are raised by the power of God, if that were all. So that in this respect also it was a marvellous resurrection. Never any did, or shall rise as Christ rose, by a self-quickning principle. For tho' many dead saints rose at that time also, yet it

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was by the virtue of Christ's resurrection that their graves were opened, and their bodies quickned. In which respect, he saith, John xi. 25. when he raised dead Lazarus, "I am the resur-"rection and the life," *(i e.)* the principle of life and quick-ning, by which the dead saints are raised.

Fourthly, And therefore it may be truly affirmed, that though some dead saints are raised to life before the resurrection of Christ, yet that Christ is "the first-born from the dead," as he is called, Col. i. 18. For though Lazarus and others were raised, yet not by themselves, but by Christ. It was by his virtue and power, not their own. And though they were raised to life, yet they died again. Death recovered them again, but Christ dieth no more. "Death hath no dominion over him." He was the first that opened the womb of the earth, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Fifthly, But lastly, Christ rose as a public or common per-son. "As the first fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20. I desire this may be well understood; for upon this account it is that our resurrection is secured to us by the resurrection of Christ; and not a resurrection only, but a blessed and happy one, for the first-fruits, both assured and sanctified the whole crop or harvest.

Now that Christ did rise, as a public person, representing and comprehending all the elect, who are called *the children of the resurrection*, is plain from Eph. ii. 6. Where we are said to be risen with, or in him. So that, we are said to die in Adam, (who also was a common person) as the * branches die in the death of the root; so we are said to be raised from death in Christ, who is the head, root, and representative, of all his e-lect seed. And why is he called the *first-born*, and *first-begot-ten from the dead*, but with respect to the whole number of the elect, that are to be born from the dead in their time and order also, and as sure as the whole harvest follows the first fruits, so shall the general resurrection of the saints to life eternal, follow this birth, of the first-born from the dead.

It shall surely follow it, I say, and that not only as a *conse-quent* follows an *antecedent*, but as an *effect* follows its proper *cause*. Now there is a three-fold casuality, or influence that Christ's resurrection hath upon the saints resurrection, of which it is both the *meritorious*, *efficient*, and *exemplary* cause.

* Mankind putrified in their first parent, as the branches in the root. *Greg.*

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First, The resurrection of Christ, is the *meritorious* cause of the saints resurrection, as it compleated his satisfaction, and finished his payment, and so our justification is properly assigned to it, as before was noted from Rom. iv. 25. This his resurrection was the receiving of the acquittance, the cancelling of the bond. And had not this been done, we had still been in our sins, as he speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 7. and so our guilt had been still a bar to our happy resurrection. But now, the price being paid in his death, which payment was finished when he revived; and the discharge then received for us, now there is nothing lies in bar against our resurrection to eternal life.

Secondly, As it is the meritorious cause of our resurrection, so it is the *efficient cause* of it also. For when the time shall come, that the saints shall rise out of the dust, they shall be raised by Christ, as their head, in whom the *effective principle* of their life is. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," as it is Col. iii. 3. As when a man awakes out of his sleep †, "the "animal spirits seated in the brain, being set at liberty by the "digestion of those vapours that bound them up, do play freely "through every part and member of the body;" so Christ, the believer's mystical-head, being quickned; the spirit of life, which is in him, shall be diffused through all his members to quicken them also in the morning of the resurrection. Hence the warm animating dew of Christ's resurrection is said to be to our bodies, as the dew of the morning is to the withered, languishing plants, which revive by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy dew is as the dew of "herbs;" and then it follows, "the earth shall cast forth her "dead." So that by the same faith we put Christ's resurrection into the *promises*, we may put the believer's resurrection into the *conclusion*. And therefore, the apostle makes them convertibles, reasoning forward, from Christ's to ours; and back again from ours to his, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13. Which is also the sense of that scripture, Rom. viii. 10, 11. "And if Christ be in "you, the body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is "life because of righteousness." (*i. e.*) Though you are really united to Christ by the Spirit, yet your bodies must die as well

† *Proximum instrumentum sive sedes somni est cerebrum, utpote in quo spiritus animales frigefiunt et condensantur, aut etiam resolvuntur et dissipantur, proxime, tanquam in propria spirituum animalium officina, et in quo etiam radices nervorum obstruuntur, per vapores, ne spiritus animales sensui communi servire aut in partes reliquas inferiores corporis propagari libere possint.* Keckerm. Syst. Phys. *p. (mihi)* 441.

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as other mens; but your ſouls ſhall be, preſently, upon your diſſolution, ſwallowed up in life. And then it follows, verſe 11. "But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, "dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall "alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in "you," (*i. e.*) though your bodies muſt die, yet they ſhall live again in the reſurrection; and that by virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth in you; and is the bond of your myſtical union with him your head. You ſhall not be raiſed as others are, by a mere word of power, but by the ſpirit of life dwelling in Chriſt your head, which is a choice prerogative indeed.

Thirdly, Chriſt's reſurrection is not only the meritorious and efficient cauſe, but it is alſo the *exemplary* cauſe, or pattern of our reſurrection. "‡ He being the firſt and beſt, is therefore "the pattern and meaſure of all the reſt." So you read, Phil. iii. 21. "Who ſhall change our vile body that it may be fa-"ſhioned like unto his glorious body." Now the *conformity* of our reſurrection to Chriſt's, ſtands in the following particulars. Chriſt's body was raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame, ſo will ours. His body was raiſed firſt; ſo will ours be raiſed before the reſt of the dead. His body was wonderfully improved by the reſurrection; ſo will ours. His body was raiſed to be glorified; and ſo will ours.

Firſt, Chriſt's body was raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame that it was before; and ſo will ours. Not another, but the ſame body. Upon this very reaſon the apoſtle uſes that identical expreſſion, 1 Cor. xv. 53. "This corruptible muſt put on incorruption, "and this mortal, immortality." Pointing, as it were, to his own body when he ſpake it; the ſame body, I ſay, and that not only *ſpecifically* the ſame, (for indeed no other ſpecies of fleſh is ſo privileged) but the ſame *numerically*, that very body, not a new or another body, in its ſtead. So that it ſhall be both the *what* it was, and the *who* it was. And indeed to deny this, is to deny the reſurrection itſelf. For ſhould God prepare another body to be raiſed inſtead of this; it would not be a reſurrection, but a creation; for *non reſurrectio dici poterit, ubi non reſurgit quod cecidit*. That cannot be called a reſurrection, where one thing falls, and another riſes, as Gregory long ſince pertinently obſerved.

Secondly, His body was raiſed, not by a word of power from the Father, but by his own Spirit. So will ours. Indeed the power of God ſhall go forth to unburrough ſinners, and fetch

‡ *Optimum in unoquoque genere eſt regula et menſura cæterorum.*

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them forcibly out of their graves; but the reſurrection of the ſaints is to be effected another way; as I opened but now to you. Even by his Spirit, which now dwelleth in them. That very Spirit of Chriſt, which effected their ſpiritual reſurrection from ſin, ſhall effect their corporal reſurrection alſo from the grave.

Thirdly, His body was raiſed firſt, he had in this, as well as in other things, the pre-eminence; ſo ſhall the ſaints, in reſpect of the wicked, have the pre-eminence in the reſurrection, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. "The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt." They are to attend the Lord at his coming, and will be brought forth ſooner than the reſt of the world, to attend on that ſervice. As the *ſheriff*, with his men, goes forth to meet the judge, before the jaylor brings forth his priſoners.

Fourthly, Chriſt's body was marvellouſly improved by the reſurrection, and ſo will ours. It fell in weakneſs, but was raiſed in power; no more capable of ſorrows, pains and diſhonours. In like manner our bodies are "ſown in weakneſs, but raiſed "in ſtrength, ſown in diſhonour, raiſed in glory. Sown natu- "ral bodies, raiſed ſpiritual bodies," as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. Spiritual bodies, not *properly*, but *analogically*. No diſtempers hang about glorified bodies, nor are they henceforth ſubject to any of thoſe natural neceſſities, to which they are now tied. There are no flaws, defects, or deformities, in the children of the reſurrection. What members are now defective or deformed, will then be reſtored to their perfect being and beauty; "for, if the univerſal death of all parts be reſcinded "by the reſurrection, how much more the partial death of any "ſingle member?" ‖ As Tertullian ſpeaks, and from thenceforth they are free from the law of mortality, "they can die no more," Luke xx. 35, 36. Thus ſhall they be improved by their reſurrection.

Fifthly, To conclude, Chriſt's body was raiſed from the dead to be glorified, and crowned with honour. Oh it was a joyful day to him, and ſo will the reſurrection of the ſaints be to them, the day of the gladneſs of their hearts. It will be ſaid to them in that morning, "Awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt," as Iſa. xxvi. 19. O how comfortable will be the meeting betwixt the glorified ſoul, and its new raiſed body. Much more comfortable than that of Jacob's and Joſeph's, after twenty years

‖ *Membri detruncatio vel obtuſio nonne mors membri eſt? Si univerſalis mors reſurrectione reſcinditur, quanto magis portionalis!* Tertull. de Reſur.

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abſence, Gen. xlvi. 29. Or that of David's with Jonathan, when he came out of the cave to him, 1 Sam. xx. 41. Or that of the father of the prodigal with his ſon, who "was dead and is a-"live, was loſt, and is found." As he ſpeaks, Luke xv. And there are three things will make it ſo.

Firſt, The gratifications of the ſoul, by the ſatisfaction of its natural appetite of union with its own body. For even glorified ſouls in heaven have ſuch an appetition and deſire of re-union. Indeed, the angels, who are pure ſpirits, as they never had union with, ſo they have no inclination to matter; but ſouls are otherwiſe tempered and diſpoſed. We are all ſenſible of its affection to the body now, in its compounded ſtate, we feel the tender care it hath for the body, the ſympathy with it, and lothneſs to be ſeparated from it. It is ſaid, 1 Cor. v. 6. "To be at "home in the body." And had not God implanted ſuch an inclination to this its tabernacle, in it, it would not have paid that due reſpect it owes the body while it inhabited in it, nor have regarded what became of it when it left it. This inclination remains ſtill with it in heaven, it reckons not itſelf compleatly happy till its old dear companion and partner be with it, and in that ſenſe ſome underſtand thoſe words, Job. xiv. 14. "All the "days of my appointed time," *i. e.* of the time appointed for my body to remain in the grave, *will I wait till my change (viz.* that which will be made by the reſurrection) *come*; for it is manifeſt enough he ſpeaks there of the reſurrection. Now, when this its inclination to its own body, its longings and hankerings after it, are gratified with a ſight and enjoymeet of it again, oh what a comfortable meeting will this make it! eſpecially if we conſider,

Secondly, The excellent temper and ſtate in which they ſhall meet each other. For, as the body ſhall be raiſed with all the improvements and endowments imaginable, which may render it amiable, and every way deſirable, ſo the ſoul comes down immediately from God out of heaven, ſhining in its holineſs and glory. It comes perfumed out of thoſe ivory palaces, with a ſtrong ſcent of heaven upon it. And thus it re-enters its body, and animates it again. But,

Thirdly, And principally, that wherein the chief joy of this meeting conſiſts, is the end for which the glorified ſoul comes down to quicken and repoſſeſs it, namely. *to meet the Lord*, and *ever to be with the Lord.* To receive a full reward for all the labours and ſervices it performed to God in this world. This muſt needs make that day, a day of triumph and exultation. It comes out of the grave, as Joſeph out of his priſon, to be ad-

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vanced to the higheſt honour. O do but imagine what an extaſy of joy, and raviſhing pleaſure it will be, for a ſoul thus to reſume its own body, and ſay as it were, unto it, come away, my dear, my ancient friend, who ſervedſt and ſufferedſt with me in the world; come along with me to meet the Lord, in whoſe preſence I have been ever ſince I parted with thee. Now thy bountiful Lord hath remembred thee alſo, and the day of thy glorification is come. Surely it will be a joyful awaking. For, do but imagine, what a joy it is for dear friends to meet after long ſeparation, how do they uſe to give demonſtrations of their love and delight in each other, by embraces, kiſſes, tears, *&c.* Or frame but to yourſelves a notion of perfect health, when a ſprightly vivacity runs through every part, and the ſpirits do, as it were, dance before us, when we go about any buſineſs; eſpecially to ſuch a buſineſs as the buſineſs of that day will be, to receive a crown, and a kingdom. Do but imagine, then, what a ſun-ſhine morning this will be, and how the pains and agonies, cold ſweats, and bitter groans at parting will be recompenſed by the joy of ſuch a meeting?

And thus I have ſhewed you the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, the nature and properties of it, the threefold influence it hath on the ſaints reſurrection, and the conformity of ours unto his, in theſe five reſpects. His body roſe ſubſtantially the ſame, ſo ſhall ours; his body was raiſed by the Spirit, ſo ſhall ours. Not by the Godhead of Chriſt, as his was, but by the Spirit, who is the bond of our union with Chriſt. He was raiſed as the firſt-begotten from the dead, ſo the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. His body was improved by the reſurrection, ſo ſhall ours. From the conſideration of all which,

Inference 1. *We infer, that if Chriſt was thus raiſed from the dead, then death is fairly overcome, and ſwallowed up in victory* *: were it not ſo, it had never let Chriſt eſcape out of the grave. The prey of the terrible had never been thus reſcued out of its paws. *Death* is a dreadful enemy, it defies all the ſons and daughters of Adam. None durſt cope with this king of ter-

* How far ſhort do we come of the primitive Chriſtians, whoſe faith in the reſurrection, and contempt of death, Cyprian thus expreſſes: With a ſound mind, firm faith, and undaunted courage, we are ready to ſubmit to the whole will of God, all fear of death being excluded; we think on the immortality which follows; and when the ſet time of God's ſending for us approaches, we come to him at his call willingly and without delay. *Cypr. ſect.* 5. *de Lapſ.* But when we come to die, we paſs into immortality by death: This is not a coming to our end but a tranſlating of us. *Cypr. ubi ſupra.*

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rors but Christ, and he, by dying, went into the very den of this dragon, fought with it, and foiled it in the grave, its own territories and dominions, and came off a conqueror. For, as the apostle speaks, Acts ii. 24. "It was impossible it should hold "or detain him." Never did death meet with its over-match before it met with Christ, and he conquering it for us, and in our names, rising as our representative, now every single saint triumphs over it as a vanquished enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O "death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through "our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, like Joshua, they set the foot of faith upon the neck of that king, and, with an holy scorn, deride its power. "O death, where is thy sting?" If it be objected that it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that is to "be destroyed is death." And if so, then it should seem the victory is not yet atchieved, and so we do but boast before the victory; it is at hand to reply, that the victory over death, obtained by Christ's resurrection, is twofold, either *personal* and *incompleat*, or *general* and *compleat*. He actually overcame it at his resurrection, in his own person, perfectly and virtually for us, as our head; but at the general resurrection of the saints (which his resurrection, as the first-fruits, assures them of) then it will be utterly vanquished and destroyed. Till then, it will exercise some little power over the bodies of the saints, in which respect it is called the *last enemy*. For sin, the chief enemy that let it in, that was conquered utterly and eradicated when they died; but death holds their bodies in the grave till the coming of Christ, and then it is utterly to be vanquished. For after that they can die no more, Luke xx. 35. "And then shall be brought to pass "that saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victo-"ry †." *Then* and not till then, will that conquest be fully compleated in our persons, though it be already so in Christ's; now incompleatly in ours, and then compleatly and fully for ever. For the same word which signifies *victory* doth also signify *perpetuity*, and in this place, a final or perpetual conquest. And, indeed, now it smites only with its dart, not with its sting, and that but the believer's body also, and the body but for a time remains under it neither. So that there is no reason why a believer should stand in a slavish fear of it.

Inference 2. Is Christ, and hath his resurrection such a po-

† *Absorpta est mors* εις νικος *in perpetuam, ex Hebræo* נצח *quod et victoriam significat et perpetuitatem.* Glass. Rhet. sac. p. 408.

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tent and comfortable influence into the resurrection of the saints? *Then it is the duty, and will be the wisdom of the people of God, so to govern, dispose, and employ their bodies, as become men and women, that understand what glory is prepared for them at the resurrection of the just.* Particularly,

First, Be not fondly tender of them, but employ and use them for God here. How many good duties are lost and spoiled by sinful indulgence to our bodies? Alas! we are generally more solicitous to live long, than to live usefully. How many saints have active, vigorous bodies, yet God hath little service from them. If your bodies were animated by some other souls that love God more than you do, and burn with holy zeal to his service, more work would be done for God by your bodies in a day, than is now done in a month. To have an able, healthy body, and not use it for God, for fear of hurting it, is as if one should give you a strong and stately horse, upon condition you must not work or ride him. Wherein is the mercy of having a body, except it be employed for God? Will not its reward at the resurrection be sufficient for all the pains you now put it to in his service?

Secondly, See that you preserve the due honour of your bodies. "Possess them in sanctification and honour," 1 Thes. iv. 4. O let not these eyes be now defiled with sin, by which you shall see God. Those ears be inlets to vanity, which shall hear the *Allelujahs* of the blessed. God hath designed honour for your bodies, O make them not either the instruments or objects of sin. There are sins against the body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Preserve your bodies from those defilements, for they are the temples of God: "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God de-"stroy," 1 Cor. iii. 17.

Thirdly, Let not the contentment and accommodation of your bodies draw your souls into snares, and bring them under the power of temptations to sin. This is a very common case. O how many thousands of precious souls perish eternally, for the satisfaction of a vile body for a moment? Their souls must, because their bodies cannot, suffer. It is recorded to the immortal honour of those worthies in Heb. xi. 35. "That they ac-"cepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better resur-"rection‡." They might have had a temporal resurrection from death to life, from reproach to honour, from poverty to

‡ No man can rejoice both in this life and that which is to come, but he must necessarily let go the one, who would enjoy the other. *Aug.*

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riches, from pains to pleasure; but upon such terms they judged it not worth acceptance. They would not expose their souls to secure their bodies. They had the same natural affections that other men have. They were made of as tender flesh as we are, but such was the care they had of their souls, and the hope of a better resurrection, that they listned not to the complaints and whinings of their bodies. O that we were all in the same resolutions with them.

Fourthly, With-hold not, upon the pretence of the wants your own bodies may be in, that which God and conscience bid you to communicate for the refreshment of the saints, whose present necessities require your assistance. O be not too indulgent to your own flesh, and cruel to others. Certainly, the consideration of that reward which shall be given you at the resurrection, for every act of Christian charity, is the greatest spur and incentive in the world to it. And to that end it is urged as a motive to charity, Luke xiv. 13, 14. "When thou makest a "feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou "shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee, for thou "shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." It was the opinion of an eminent modern divine ‖, that no man living, fully understands and believes that scripture, Mat. xxv. 40. "In as much as you have done it to one of the least of these "my brethren, ye have done it unto me." How few saints would be exposed to daily wants and necessities, if that scripture were but fully understood and believed?

Inference 3. Is Christ risen from the dead, and that as a public person and representative of believers? *How are we all concerned, then, to secure to ourselves an interest in Christ, and, consequently, in this blessed resurrection?* What consolation would be left in this world, if the hope of the resurrection were taken away? It is this blessed hope, that must support you under all the *troubles* of life, and in the *agonies* of death. The securing of a blessed resurrection to yourselves, is, therefore the most deep concernment you have in this world. And it may be secured to yourselves, if upon serious heart-examination, you can discover the following evidences.

Evidence 1. *First, If you are regenerated creatures*, brought forth in a new nature to God, for we are "begotten again to "a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the "dead." Christ's resurrection is the ground-work of our hope. And the new birth is our title or evidence of our interest in it,

‖ Mr. Marshal.

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So that until our ſouls are partakers of the ſpiritual reſurrection from the death of ſin, we can have no aſſurance our bodies ſhall be partakers of that bleſſed reſurrection to life.

" Bleſſed and holy, (ſaith the Spirit,) is he that hath part in " the firſt reſurrection, on ſuch the ſecond death hath no pow- " er," Rev. xx. 6. Never let unregenerated ſouls expect a comfortable meeting with their bodies again. Riſe they ſhall by God's terrible citation, at the ſound of the laſt trump, but not to the ſame end that the ſaints ariſe, nor by the ſame principle. They to whom the ſpirit is now a principle of *ſanctification*, to them he will be the principle of a joyful *reſurrection*. See then that you get gracious ſouls now, or never expect glorious bodies then.

Evidence 2. " If you be dead with Chriſt, you ſhall live a- " gain by the life of Chriſt. If we have been planted together " in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of " his reſurrection," Rom. vi. 5. συμφυτοι, *planted together*. Some refer it to believers themſelves; Jews and Gentiles are planted together in Chriſt. So * Eraſmus, " Believers grow " together like branches upon the ſame root." which ſhould powerfully enforce the great goſpel-duty of unity among themſelves. But I would rather underſtand it, with reference to Chriſt and believers, with whom believers are, in other ſcriptures, ſaid to ſuffer together, and be glorified together; to die together, and live together; to be crucified together, and buried together; all noting the communion they have with Chriſt, both in his death, and in his life. Now, if the power of Chriſt's death *(i. e.)* the mortifying influence of it, have been upon our hearts, killing their luſts, deading their affections, and flatting their appetites to the creature, then the power of his life, or reſurrection, ſhall come (like the animating dew) upon our dead withered bodies, to revive and raiſe them up to live with him in glory.

Evidence 3. *If your hearts and affections be now with Chriſt in heaven, your bodies in due time ſhall be there alſo*, and conformed to his glorious body. So you find it, Phil. iii. 20, 21. " For our converſation is in heaven, from whence we look for " the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall change our vile " body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his own glorious bo- " dy †." " The body is here called vile, or the body of our " vileneſs." Not as God made it, but as ſin hath marred it,

* *In unum contreſcere vel coaleſcere.*

† Το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως.

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Not *abſolutely*, and in itſelf, but *relatively*, and in compariſon of what it will be, in its ſecond edition, at the reſurrection. Then thoſe ſcattered bones and diſperſed duſt, like pieces of old broken battered ſilver, will be new caſt, and wrought in the beſt and neweſt faſhion, even like to Chriſt's glorious body. Whereof we have this evidence, that our converſation is already heavenly. The temper, frame, and diſpoſition of our ſouls is already ſo; therefore the frame and temper of our bodies in due time ſhall be ſo.

Evidence 4. *If you ſtrive now by any means to attain the reſurrection of the dead, no doubt but you ſhall then attain what you now ſtrive for.* This was Paul's great ambition, "that by any "means he might attain the reſurrection of the dead," Phil. iii. 11. He means not ſimply a reſurrection from the dead, for that all men ſhall attain, whether they ſtrive for it or no. But by a *metonymy* of the *ſubject* for the *adjunct*, he intends that complete holineſs and perfection, which ſhall attend the ſtate of the reſurrection, ſo it is expounded, ver. 12. So then, if God have raiſed in your hearts a vehement deſire, and aſſiduous endeavour after a perfect freedom from ſin, and full conformity to God, in the beauties of holineſs; that very love of holineſs, your preſent pantings, and tendencies after perfection, ſpeak you to be the perſons deſigned for it.

Evidence 5. *If you are ſuch as do good in your generation.* If you be fruitful and uſeful men and women in the world, you ſhall have part in this bleſſed reſurrection, John v. 28, 29. "All "that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice and ſhall come forth; "they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life." Now it is not every act *materially* good, that entitles a man to this privilege; but the ſame requiſites that the ‡ ſchoolmen aſſign to make a good prayer, are alſo neceſſary to every good work. The perſon, matter, manner, and end, muſt be good. Nor is it any ſingle good act, but a *ſeries* and *courſe* of holy actions, that is here meant. What a ſpur ſhould this be to us all, as (indeed, the apoſtle makes it, cloſing up the doctrine of the reſurrection, with this ſolemn exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58. with which I alſo cloſe mine) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, "unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, "for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in "the Lord."

Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift.

‡ *Si bonus bona facit bene ad bonum.* i. e. If one is good, he does what is good, in a good manner, and for a good end.

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SERMON XL.

Wherein the ASCENSION of CHRIST is opened, and variously improved, being the second Step of his EXALTATION.

John xx. 17. *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

IN all the former sermons we have been following Christ thro' his humiliation, from the time that he left the blessed bosom of the Father: And now having finished the whole course of his obedience on earth, and risen again from the dead; we must, in this discourse, follow him back again into heaven, and lodge him in that bosom of ineffable delight and love, which for our sakes, he so freely left. For it was not his end in rising from the dead, to live such a low animal life as this is, but to live a most glorious life, as an enthroned King in heaven; upon which state he was now ready to enter, as he tells Mary in the text, and bids her tell it to the disciples, "Go, tell my brethren, "that I ascend to my Father," *&c.*

In the former verses you find Mary waiting at Christ's sepulchre, in a very pensive frame; exceedingly troubled, because she knew not what was become of Christ, ver. 15. In the next verse, Christ calls her by her name, *Mary;* she knowing the voice, turned herself, and answered, *Rabboni.* And as a soul transported with joy*, rushes into his arms, as desirous to clasp and embrace him. But Jesus said, "Touch me not," *&c.*

In which words we have Christ's inhibition, "Touch me "not:" Strange that Christ, who rendred himself so kind and tender to all, that not only admitted, but commanded Thomas to put his finger into his wounds, should forbid Mary to touch him; but this was not for want of love to Mary; for he gives another reason for it presently, "I am not yet ascended;" *i. e.* say some, the time for embracing will be when we are in heaven. Then and there shall be the place and time, we shall embrace one another for evermore. So Augustin. Or, thou dotest too

* Mary would embrace Christ, out of her great love to him, and joy that she had seen him again in the flesh. *Bucer. on the place.*

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much upon my present state, as if I had now attained the very ἀκμὴν, culminating point of my exaltation. When as yet I am not ascended; so Cameron and Calvin expound it. Or lastly, Christ would signify hereby, that it was not his will and pleasure in so great a juncture of things as this, to spend time now in expressing (this way) her affections to him; but rather to shew it by hasting about his service. Which is

The *second* thing observable, *viz.* his injunction upon Mary, to carry the tidings of his resurrection to the disciples. In which injunction we have,

First, The persons to whom this message was sent, *my brethren*, so he calls the disciples. A sweet compellation, and full of love. Much like that of Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 4. save only that there is much more tenderness in this than that; for he twits them in the same breath with what they had done against him; "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold;" but in this it is, "Go, tell my brethren," without the least mention of their cowardice or unkindness. And,

Secondly, The message itself. "Tell my brethren, I ascend "to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God;" ἀναβαίνω, *I ascend.* It is put in the present tense, as if he had been ascending; though he did not ascend in some weeks after this; but he so expresses it, to shew what was the next part of his work, which he was to act in heaven for them; and how much his heart was set upon it, and longed to be about it, "I "ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your "God." Not our Father, or God in common; but mine and yours in a different manner. Your's by right of donation, mine in a different manner. Your's by right of dominion, mine (in reference to my human nature) not only by right of creation, though so too; but also by special covenant and confederation. * By predestination of my manhood, to the grace of personal union, by designation of me, to the glorious office of Mediator. *My Father*, as I am God, by eternal generation. As man, by collation of the grace of union. And your Father by spiritual adoption and regeneration. Thus he is my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. This is the substance of that comfortable message, sent by Mary to the pensive disciples. Hence the observation is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, did not only rise from the*

* Mr. Henry Jeanes's Second part of the mixture of scholastical and practical divinity, *p.* 273.

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dead, but alſo aſcended into heaven; there to diſpatch all that remained to be done for the compleating the ſalvation of his people.

So much the apoſtle plainly witneſſeth, Eph. iv. 10. "He "that deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above "all heavens," *(i. e.)* all the aſpectable heavens. A full and faithful account whereof the ſeveral evangeliſts have given us, Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. This is ſometimes called his *going away*, as John xvi. 7. Sometimes his *being exalted*, Acts ii. 33. Sometimes his *being made higher than the heavens*, Heb. vii. 26. And ſometimes his *entering within the veil*, Heb. vi. 19, 20. All which are but ſo many *ſynonymous* phraſes, expreſſing his aſcenſion, in a very pleaſant variety.

Now for the opening this act of Chriſt, we will bind up the whole in the ſatisfaction of theſe ſix queſtions 1. Who aſcended? 2. Whence did he aſcend? 3. Whither? 4. When? 5. How? 6. and laſtly, Why did he aſcend? And theſe will take in what is needful for you to be acquainted with in this point.

Firſt, Who aſcended? This the apoſtle anſwers, Eph. iv. 10. "the ſame that deſcended," *viz.* Chriſt. And himſelf tells us in the text, "I aſcend." † "And though the aſcenſion "were of Chriſt's whole perſon, yet it was but a figurative "and improper expreſſion, with reſpect to his divine nature, "but it agrees moſt properly to the humanity of Chriſt, which "really changed places and conditions by it." And hence it is that it is ſaid, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, "and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and "go to my Father." He goes away, and we ſee him no more. As God he is ſpiritually with us ſtill; even to the end of the world. But as man, "the heavens muſt contain him till the "reſtitution of all things," Acts iii. 21.

Secondly, Whence Chriſt aſcended?

I anſwer, more generally, he is ſaid to aſcend from this world, to leave the world. That is the *terminus a quo*, John xvi. 28. But more particularly, it was from Mount Olivet, near unto Jeruſalem. The very place where he began his laſt ſorrowful tragedy. There, where his heart began to be ſadded, there is it now made glad. O what a difference was there betwixt the

* *Aſcenſio totius fuit perſonæ, naturæ tamen divinæ non convenit niſi figurate. Sed humanæ naturæ maxime proprie convenit*, &c. Ameſ. Med. p. 114.

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frame Christ was in, in that mount before his passion, and this he is now in, at his ascension! But,

Thirdly, Whither did he ascend?

It is manifest it was into the third heavens: the throne of God, and place of the blessed: where all the saints shall be with him for ever. It is said to be far above all heavens; that is the heavens which we see, for they are but the pavement of that stately palace of the great King. He is gone (saith the apostle) *within the veil*, (i. e.) into the most holy place. And into his Father's house, John xiv. 2. And he is also said to go to the "place where he was before," John vi. 62. back again to that sweet and glorious bosom of delight and love, from whence at his incarnation he came.

Fourthly, When did Christ ascend? Was it presently as soon as he rose from the dead?

No, not so, for "after his resurrection (saith Luke) he was "seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining "to the kindom of God." And truly the care and love of Christ to his people was very manifest in this his stay with them ‡. He had ineffable glory prepared for him in heaven, and awaiting his coming, but he will not go to possess it, till he had settled all things for the good of his church here. For in this time he confirmed the truth of his resurrection, gave charge to the apostles concerning the discipline and order of his house or kingdom: which was but needful, since he intended that their Acts should be rules to future churches. So long it was necessary he should stay. And when he had set all things in order, he would stay no longer, "lest he should seem to affect a terrene life ‖." And besides, he had work of great concernment to do for us in the other world. He desired to be no longer here, than he had work to do for God, and souls. A good pattern for the saints.

Fifthly, How did Christ ascend into heaven?

Here it is worthy our observation, that Christ ascended as a *public person* or forerunner, in our names, and upon our accounts *.

‡ The weakness of his disciples required the delay of his separation from them. *Amef.*

‖ *Ne terrenam vitam videretur meditare.* Amef.

* He by his entrance into heaven gives us the strongest consolation, for as he came down from heaven, not on his own but our account, so he hath taken possession of heaven to prepare a place and habitation there for us. *Pareus on the place.*

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So it is said expressly, Heb. vi. 20. speaking of the most holy place within the veil: *whither* (saith he) *the forerunner is for us entred.* His entring into heaven as our forerunner implies both his *public capacity*, and *precedency*.

First, His *public capacity*, as one that went upon our business to God. So he himself speaks, John xiv. 2. "I go before "to prepare a place for you." To take possession of heaven in our names. The *forerunner*, hath respect to others that were to come to heaven after him, in their several generations; for whom he hath taken up mansions, which are kept for them against their coming.

Secondly, It notes *precedency*, he is our *forerunner*, but he himself had no *forerunner*. Never any entred into heaven before him, but such as entred in the name, and through the virtue of his merits. He was the first, that ever entred heaven *directly, immediately*, in his own name, and upon his own account. But all the fathers who died before him, entred in his name. To the holiest of them all, God would have said as Elisha to Jehoram, 2 Kings iii. 14. Were it not that I had respect to the person of my son, in whose name and right you come, I would not look upon you. You must go back again, heaven were no place for you. No not for you, Abraham, nor for you, Moses.

Secondly, He ascended *triumphantly* into heaven. To this, good expositors * refer that which in the *type* is spoken of David, when he lodged the *ark* in its own place, with musical instruments and shoutings; but to Christ, in the *antitype*, when he was received up *triumphantly* into glory, Psal. xlvii. 5. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a "trumpet; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises un-"to our king, sing praises."

A cloud is prepared, as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion †. "A cloud received him "out of their sight," Luke xxiv. 51. And then a royal guard of mighty angels surround the chariot, if not for support, yet for greater state and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And oh what jubilations of the blessed angels were heard in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! For look as when "he brought his first-begotten into the world, "he said, let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. So at his return thither again, when he had finished redempti-

* Molerus in loc. Geirus. Aynsworth.
† Mr. Case in his Pisgah.

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on-work, there were no leſs demonſtrations given by thoſe bleſſed creatures of their delight and joy in it. The very heavens echoed and reſounded on that account. Yea, the triumph is not ended at this day, nor never ſhall.

It is ſaid, Dan. vii. 13, 14. "I ſaw, (ſaith the prophet), in "the night viſions, and behold one like the Son of man came "with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, "and they brought him near to him. And there was given "him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, "nations and languages ſhould ſerve him." This viſion of Daniel's was accompliſhed in Chriſt's aſcenſion, when *they*, *i. e.* the angels, brought him to the *Ancient of days*, *i. e.* to God the Father, who, to expreſs his welcome to Chriſt, gave him glory, and a kingdom. And ſo it is and ought to be expounded *. The Father received him with open arms, rejoicing exceedingly to ſee him again in heaven; therefore God is ſaid to "receive him up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. For that which, with reſpect to Chriſt is called *aſcenſion*, is, with reſpect to the Father, called *aſſumption*. He went up, and the Father received him. Yea, received ſo as none ever was received before him, or ſhall be received after him.

Thirdly, Chriſt aſcended *munificently*, ſhedding forth, abundantly, ineſtimable gifts upon his church at his aſcenſion. As in the Roman triumphs they did *ſpargere miſſilia* †, beſtow their largeſt promiſes upon the people: ſo did our Lord when he aſcended; "wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on "high, he led captivity captive; and gave gifts unto men." The place to which the apoſtle refers, is Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18. where you have both the triumph and munificence, with which Chriſt went up, excellently ſet forth together.

"The chariots of God, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt), are twenty "thouſand, even thouſands of angels; the Lord is among "them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou haſt aſcended "on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received "gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious alſo, that God might "dwell among them." Which words in their literal ſenſe, are a celebration of that famous victory and triumph of David over the enemies of God, recorded 2 Sam. viii. Theſe con-

* See Deodat. and Engliſh Annot. *&c.*

† Princes, when triumphing after victory, uſe to diſperſe great preſents, and ſums of money among the people, congratulating their triumph with joyous ſhouts.

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quered enemies bring him several sorts of presents, all which he dedicated to the Lord. The spiritual sense is, that just so our Lord Jesus Christ, when he had overcome by his death on the cross, and now triumphed in his ascension, he takes the parts and gifts of his enemies, and gives them, by their conversion to the church, for its use and service: thus he received gifts, even for the *rebellious* *, *i. e.* sanctifies the natural gifts and faculties of such as hated his people before, dedicating them to the Lord, in his peoples service. Thus, (as one observes), Tertullian, Origen, Austin, and Jerome, came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold. Meaning they came into the church richly laden with natural learning and abilities. Austin was a Manichee, Cyprian a magician, learned Bradwardine a scornful proud naturalist, who once said, when he read Paul's epistles, *Dedignabar esse parvulus;* he scorned such childish things, but afterwards became a very useful man in the church of God. And even Paul himself was as fierce an enemy to the church as breathed on earth, till Christ gave him into its bosom by conversion, and then no mere man ever did the Lord and his people greater service than he. Men of all sorts, greater and smaller lights, have been given to the church. Officers of all sorts, were given it by Christ. Extraordinary and temporary, as prophets, apostles, evangelists; ordinary and standing, as pastors and teachers, which remain to this day, Eph. iv. 8, 9. And those stars are fixed in the church-heaven by a most firm establishment, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Thousands now in heaven, and thousands on earth also, are blessing Christ at this day for these his ascension-gifts.

Fourthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended most comfortably, for whilst he was blessing his people, he was parted from them, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Therein making good to them what is said to him, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own, he loved them to "the end." There was a great deal of love manifested by Christ in this very last act of his in this world. The last sight they had of him in this world was a most sweet and encouraging one. They heard nothing from his lips but love, they saw nothing in his face but love, till he mounted his triumphant chariot, and was taken out of their sight.

Surely these blessings at parting were sweet and rich ones. For the matter of them, they were the mercies which his blood

* Thou dost raise up teachers of thy church, among those who hate and persecute thy people; and, from time to time, bring many of thy enemies to this thy kingdom. *Mol. on the place.*

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had so lately purchased for them. And for their extent, they were not only intended for them, who had the happiness to be upon the place with him from whence he ascended; but they reach us as well as them; and will reach the last saint that shall be upon the earth, till he come again. For they were but representatives of the future churches, Matth. xxviii. 20.; and in blessing them, he blessed us also. And by this we may be satisfied that Christ carried an heart full of love to his people away with him to heaven; since his love so abounded in the last act that ever he did in this world: and left such a demonstration of his tenderness with them at parting.

Fifthly, He ascended, as well as rose again, by his own power. He was not merely passive in that his ascension, but it was his own act. *He went to heaven.* Therefore it is said, Acts i. 10. *He went up, viz.* by his own divine power †. And this plainly evinceth him to be God, for no mere creature ever mounted itself from earth, far above all heavens, as Christ did.

Sixthly, and lastly, Why did Christ ascend?

I answer: his ascension was necessary upon many and great accounts. For,

First, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have interceded, as now he doth in heaven, for us. And do but take away Christ's intercession, and you starve the hope of the saints. For what have we to succour ourselves with, under the daily surprises of sin, but this, "That if any man sin, we have an "advocate [with the Father]:" mark that, *with the Father:* a friend upon the place: one that abides there, on purpose to transact all our affairs, and as a surety for the peace betwixt God and us.

Secondly, If Christ had not ascended, you could not have entered into heaven when you die. For he went to "prepare a "place for you," John xiv. 2. He was, as I said before, the first that entred into heaven directly, and in his own name; and had he not done so, we could not have entered, when we die, in his name. The Forerunner made way for all that are coming on, in their several generations, after him. Nor could your bodies have ascended after their resurrection, but in the virtue of Christ's ascension. For he ascended, as was said before, in the capacity of our head and representative; to his Father, and our Father: For us and himself too.

† His divine power was the cause of his ascension.——but that which likewise contributed to it, was the condition of his glorified body, which can move upwards, as well as downwards. *Amef.*

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Thirdly, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have been inaugurated, and installed in the glory he now enjoys in heaven. This world is not the place where perfect felicity and glory dwell. And then, how had the promise of the Father been made good to him? Or our glory, (which consists in being with, and conformed to him), where had it been? "Ought not "Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 25.

Fourthly, If Christ had not ascended, how could we have been satisfied, that his payment on the cross made full satisfaction to God, and that now God hath no more bills to bring in against us? How is it that the Spirit convinceth the world of righteousness, John xvi. 9. 10., but from Christ's going to the Father, and returning hither no more? which gives evidence of God's full content and satisfaction, both with his person and work.

Fifthly, How should we have enjoyed the great blessings of the Spirit and ordinances, if Christ had not ascended? And surely we could not have been without either. If Christ had not gone away, "the comforter had not come," John xvi. 7. he begins where Christ finished. For he takes of his, and shews it to us, John xvi. 14. And therefore it is said, John xvii. 39. "The holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet "glorified." He was then given as a sanctifying spirit; but not given in that measure, as afterwards he was, to furnish and qualify men with gifts, for service. And indeed, by Christ's ascension, both his sanctifying, and his ministring gifts were shed forth, more commonly and more abundantly, upon men. These fell from him when he ascended, as Elijah's mantle did from him, so that whatsoever good of conversion, edification, support, or comfort you receive from spiritual ordinances, he hath shed forth that, which you now see and feel. *It is the fruit of Christ's ascension.*

Sixthly, and *lastly*, If Christ had not ascended, how had all the types and prophecies, that prefigured and foretold it, been fulfilled? "And the scriptures cannot be broken," John x. 35. So that, upon all these accounts, it was expedient that he should go away. It was for his glory, and for our advantage. Though we lost the comfort of his bodily presence by it, yet if "we "loved him, we would rejoice he went to the Father," John xiv. 28. We ought to have rejoiced in his advancement, though it had been to our loss; but when it is so much for our benefit, as well as his glory, it is matter of joy on both sides, that he is ascended to his Father, and our Father; to his God, and to our God. From the several blessings flowing to us out of Christ's

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aſcenſion, it was that he charged his people not to be troubled at his leaving of them, John xiv. And hence learn,

Inference 1. *Did Chriſt aſcend into heaven? is our Jeſus, our treaſure, indeed there? Where then ſhould the hearts of believers be, but in heaven, where their Lord, their life, is?* Surely, ſaints, it is not good that your love, and your Lord ſhould be in two ſeveral countries, ſaid one that is now with him. Up, and haſten, after your lover, that he and you may be together. Chriſtians, you aſcended with him, virtually, when he aſcended; you ſhall aſcend to him, perſonally, hereafter; Oh that you would aſcend to him, ſpiritually, in acts of faith, love, and deſires daily. *Surſum corda*, up with your hearts, was the form uſed by the ancient church at the ſacrament. How good were it, if we could ſay with the apoſtle, Phil. iii. 20. "Our converſation is "in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour." An heart aſcendant, is the beſt evidence of your intereſt in Chriſt's aſcenſion.

Inference 2. Did Chriſt go to heaven, as a forerunner? *What haſte ſhould we make to follow him?* He ran to heaven; he ran thither before us. Did he run to glory, and ſhall we linger? did he flee as an eagle towards heaven, and we creep like ſnails? Come Chriſtians, "Lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth "ſo eaſily beſet you, and run with patience the race ſet before "you, looking unto Jeſus," Heb. xii. 1, 2. The captain of our ſalvation is entered within the gates of the new Jeruſalem, and calls to us out of heaven to haſten to him; propoſing the greateſt encouragements to them that are following after him, ſaying, "He that overcomes ſhall ſit with me in my throne, as I alſo o-"vercame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 22. How tedious ſhould it ſeem to us, to live ſo long at a diſtance from our Lord Jeſus!

Inference 3. Did Chriſt aſcend ſo triumphantly; leading captivity captive? *How little reaſon then have believers to fear their conquered enemies?* Sin, Satan, and every enemy, were, in that day, led away in triumph, dragged at Chriſt's chariot wheels, brought after him as it were in chains. It is a lovely ſight to ſee the necks of thoſe tyrants under the foot of our Joſhua. He made, at that day, "an open ſhew of them," Col. ii. 15. Their ſtrength is broken for ever. In this he ſhewed himſelf more than a conqueror; for he *conquered and triumphed too.* Satan was then trod under his feet, and he hath promiſed to tread him under our feet alſo, and that ſhortly, Rom. xvi. 20. ſome power our enemies yet retain, the ſerpent may bruiſe our heel, but Chriſt hath cruſhed his head.

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Inference 4. Did Christ ascend so munificently, shedding forth so many mercies upon his people? mercies of inestimable value, reserved on purpose to adorn that day? *O then see that you abuse not those precious ascension-gifts of Christ, but value and improve them, as the choicest mercies.* Now, the ascension-gifts, as I told you, are either the ordinances and officers of the church, (for he then gave them pastors and teachers), or the Spirit that furnished the church with all its gifts. Beware you abuse not either of these.

First, Abuse not the ordinances and officers of Christ. This is a sin that no nation is plunged deeper into the guilt of, than this nation, and no age more than this. Surely God hath *written to us the great things of his law, and we have accounted them small things.* We have been loose, wanton, sceptical professors, for the most part, that have had nice and coy stomachs, that could not relish plain, wholesome truths, except so and so modified to our humours. For this the Lord hath a controversy with the nation, and, by a sore judgment, he hath begun to rebuke this sin already. And I doubt not, before he make an end, plain truths will down with us, and we shall bless God for them.

Secondly, But in the next place, see that you abuse not the Spirit, whom God sent from heaven, at his ascension, to supply his bodily absence among us, and is the great pledge of his care for, and tender love to his people. Now take heed that you do not vex him by your disobedience; nor grieve him by your unkindnesses; nor quench him by your sinful neglects of duty, or abuse of light. O deal kindly with the Spirit, and obey his voice: comply with his designs, and yield up yourselves to his guidance and conduct. Methinks, to be intreated by the love of the Spirit, Rom. xv. 30., should be as great an argument as to be intreated for Christ's sake. Now, to persuade all the saints to be tender of grieving the Spirit by sin, let me urge a few considerations proper to the point under hand.

Consid. 1. *First, He was the first and principal mercy that Christ received for you at his first entrance into heaven.* It was the first thing he asked of God when he came to heaven. So he speaks, John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he "shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with "you." No sooner had he set foot upon the place, but the first thing, the great thing, that was upon his heart to ask the Father for us was, that the Spirit might forthwith be dispatched, and sent down to his people. So that the Spirit is *the first-*

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born of mercies: and deſerves the firſt place in our hearts and eſteems.

Conſid. 2. *Secondly, The Spirit comes not in his own name to us,* (though, if ſo, he deſerves a dear welcome for his own ſake, and for the benefits we receive by him, which are ineſtimable), *but he comes to us in the name, and in the love, both of the Father, and the Son.* As one authorized and delegated by them; bringing his credentials under both their hands and ſeals, John xv. 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend to you "from the Father;" Mark, I will ſend him from the Father; and in John xiv. 26. the Father is ſaid to "ſend him in Chriſt's "name." So that he is the meſſenger that comes from both theſe great and holy perſons. And if you have any love for the God that made you, any kindneſs for the Chriſt that died for you, ſhew it by your obedience to the Spirit that comes from them both, and in both their names to us, and who will be both offended and grieved, if you grieve him. O therefore give him an entertainment worthy of one that comes to you in the name of the Lord. In the Father's name, and in the Son's name.

Conſid. 3. *Thirdly,* But that is not the only conſideration that ſhould cauſe you to beware of grieving the Spirit, becauſe he is ſent in the name of ſuch great and dear perſons, to you, but he *deſerves better entertainment than any of the ſaints give him, for his own ſake, and upon his own account,* and that upon a double ſcore, *viz.* of his nature and office.

Firſt, On the account of his nature; for he is God co-equal with the Father and Son in nature and dignity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 23. "The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his word was in my "tongue; the God of Iſrael ſaid; the rock of Iſrael ſpake to "me." So that you ſee he is God. The Rock of Iſrael. God *omnipotent*, for he created all things, Gen. i. 2. God *omnipreſent*, filling all things, Pſal. cxxxix. 7. God *omniſcient*, who knows your hearts, Rom. ix. 1. Beware of him therefore, and grieve him not, for in ſo doing you grieve God.

Secondly, Upon the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him. We are obliged, even on the ſcore of gratitude and ingenuity, to obey him; for he is ſent in the quality of an advocate to help us to pray; to indite our requeſts for us; to teach us what and how to aſk of God, Rom. viii. 26. He comes to us as a Comforter, John xiv. 16. And none like him. His work is to take of Chriſt's *and ſhew it to us* *, *i. e.* to take of

* John xvi. 14.

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his death, resurrection, ascension, yea, of his very present intercession in heaven, and shew it to us. He can be with us in a moment, he can, (as * one well observes), tell you what were the very last thoughts Christ was thinking in heaven about you. It was he that formed the body of Christ in the womb, and so prepared him to be a sacrifice for us. He filled that humanity with his unexampled fulness †. So fitting and anointing him for the discharge of his office.

It is he that puts efficacy into the ordinances, and without him they would be but a dead letter. It was he that blessed them to your conviction and conversion ‡. For if angels had been the preachers, no conversion had followed without the Spirit. It is he that is the *vinculum unionis*, bond of union betwixt Christ and your souls, without which you could never have had interest in Christ, or communion with Christ. It was he that so often hath helped your infirmities, when you knew not what to say; comforted your hearts when they were overwhelmed within you, and you knew not what to do; preserved you many thousand times from sin and ruin, when you have been upon the slippery brink of it in temptations. It is he, (in his sanctifying-work), that is the best evidence your souls have for heaven. It were endless to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, reader, dost thou not blush to think how unworthy thou hast treated such a friend? For which of all these his offices or benefits dost thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent as soon as ever he came to heaven, in his Father's name, and in his own name, to perform all these offices for you.

Infer. 5. Is Christ ascended to the Father as our forerunner? *Then the door of salvation stands open to all believers, and by virtue of Christ's ascension, they also shall ascend after him, far above all visible* ‖ *heavens*. O my friends, what place hath Christ prepared and taken up for you! what a splendid habitation hath he provided for you! "God is not ashamed to be "called your God; for he hath prepared for you a city," Heb. xi. 16. In that city Christ hath provided mansions, and resting-places for your everlasting abode, John xiv. 2., and keeps them

* Mr. Tho. Goodwin. † Luke i. 35. Isa. lxi. 1. Col. i. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. ix. 6. John xvi. 9. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 John iii. 24. Rom. viii. 9, 26. John xiv. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 17.

‖ The hope of future inheritance is most fully secured to us in our Head, and we are set down together with him in heaven, Eph. ii. 6. *Synopsis purioris Theol. Disp.* 28. *p.* 342.

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for you till your coming. O how auguſt and glorious a dwelling is that, where ſun, moon, and ſtars, ſhall ſhine as much below your feet, as they are now above your heads? Yea, ſuch is the love Chriſt hath to the believer, that, as one ſaith, if thou only hadſt been the choſen of God, Chriſt would have built that houſe for himſelf and thee. Now it is for himſelf, for thee, and for many more, who ſhall inherit with thee. God ſend us a joyful meeting within the veil with our Forerunner, and ſweeten our paſſage into it, with many a foreſight and foretaſte thereof. And, in the mean time, let the love of a Saviour enflame our hearts, ſo that whenever we caſt a look towards that place, where our Forerunner is for us entered, our ſouls may ſay, with melting affections, *Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt*; and again, *Bleſſed be God for his unſpeakable gift.*

SERMON XLI.

Wherein CHRIST's ſitting at GOD's right-hand is explained and applied, being the third Step of his glorious EXALTATION.

HEB. i. 3. —*When he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right-hand of the majeſty on high.*

CHRIST being returned again to his Father, having finiſhed his whole work on earth, is there bid by the Father to ſit down in the ſeat of honour and reſt. A ſeat prepared for him at God's right-hand, that makes it honourable; and all his enemies as a footſtool under his feet that makes it eaſy. How much is the ſtate and condition of Jeſus Chriſt changed in a few days! Here he groaned, wept, laboured, ſuffered, ſweat, yea, ſwear blood, and found no reſt in this world, but when he comes to heaven, there he enters into reſt. Sits down for ever in the higheſt and eaſieſt throne, prepared by the Father for him, when he had done his work. "When he had by himſelf purged our "ſins, he ſat down," *&c.*

The ſcope of this epiſtle is to demonſtrate Chriſt to be the fulneſs of all legal types and ceremonies, and that whatever light glimmered to the world through them, yet it was but as the light of the day-ſtar, to the light of this ſun.

In this chapter, Chriſt the ſubject of the epiſtle, is deſcribed,

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and particularly, in this third verſe, he is deſcribed three ways.

Firſt, By his eſſential and primeval glory and dignity, he is ἀπαύγασμα, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, the very ſplendor of glory, the very refulgency of that ſon of glory. "* The primary reaſon of that appellation is with reſpect to "his eternal and ineffable generation, light of light, as the "Nicene creed expreſſes it. As a beam of light proceeding from "the ſun. And the ſecondary reaſon of it, is with reſpect to "men," for look as the ſun communicates its light and influence to us, by its beams, which it projects; ſo doth God communicate his goodneſs, and manifeſt himſelf to us, by Chriſt. "Yea, "he is the *expreſs image*, or character of his perſon. Not as "the impreſſed image of the ſeal upon the wax, but as the en-"graving in the ſeal itſelf †." Thus he is deſcribed by his eſſential glory.

Secondly, He is deſcribed by the work he wrought here on earth, in his humbled ſtate, and it was a glorious work, and that wrought out by his own ſingle hand, "when he had by "himſelf purged our ſins." A work that all the angels in heaven could not do, but Chriſt did it.

Thirdly, and laſtly, He is deſcribed by his glory, the which (as a reward of that work) he now enjoys in heaven. "When "he had by himſelf purged our ſins, he ſat down on the right-"hand of the majeſty on high," *i. e.* the Lord cloathed him with the greateſt power, and higheſt honour, that heaven itſelf could afford; for ſo much this phraſe of "ſitting down on the "right-hand of the majeſty" imports, as will appear in the explication of this point, which is the reſult of this clauſe, *viz.*

Doct. *That when our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had finiſhed his work on earth, he was placed in the ſeat of the higheſt honour, and authority; at the right-hand of God in heaven.*

This truth is transformingly glorious. Stephen had but a glimpſe of Chriſt at his Father's right-hand, and it cauſed "his "face to ſhine, as it had been the face of an angel," Acts vii. 56. This, his high advancement, was foretold and promiſed

* *Ratio appellationes primaria eſt reſpectu Patris cœleſtis à quo ab æterno, per ineffabilem generationem inſtar luminis, de lumine reſplenduit, ſecundaria reſpectu hominum*, &c. Glaſſ. Rhet. p. 174.

† Χαρακτὴρ *inſculpere dicitur, non tam imaginem ex ſigillo cera impreſſam, quam ipſum ſigillum denotare*, Glaſſ. Rhet. ſac. p. 159.

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before the work of redemption was taken in hand, Pſal. cx. 1. "The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right-hand, "until I make thine enemies thy footſtool." And this promiſe was punctually performed to Chriſt, after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, in his ſupreme exaltation, far above all created beings, in heaven and earth, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. We ſhall here open two things in the doctrinal part, *viz.* What is meant by God's right-hand, and what is implied in Chriſt's ſitting there, with his enemies for a footſtool.

Firſt, What are we to underſtand here by God's right-hand? † It is obvious enough, that the expreſſion is not proper, but figurative and borrowed. God hath no hand, right or left; but it is a condeſcending expreſſion, wherein God ſtoops to the creature's underſtanding, and by it he would have us to underſtand honour, power, and nearneſs.

Firſt, The right-hand is the hand of honour, the upper hand, where we place thoſe whom we highly eſteem and honour. So Solomon placed his mother in a ſeat, at his right-hand, 1 Kings ii. 19. So, in token of honour, God ſets Chriſt at his right-hand; which, on that account, in the text is called the right-hand of *Majeſty*. God hath therein expreſſed more favour, delight, and honour, to Jeſus Chriſt, than ever he did to any creature. "To which of the angels ſaid he "at any time, ſit thou on my right-hand?" Heb. i. 13.

Secondly, The right-hand is the hand of power: we call it the *weapon hand*, and the *working hand*. And the ſetting of Chriſt there, imports his exaltation to the higheſt authority, and moſt ſupreme dominion. Not that God the Father hath put himſelf out of his authority, and advanced Chriſt above himſelf; no, "for in that he ſaith he hath put all things un-"der him, it is manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all "things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 27. But to ſit as an enthroned king at God's right-hand, imports power, yea, the moſt ſovereign and ſupreme power; and ſo Chriſt himſelf calls the right-hand at which he ſits, Mat. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter ye "ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right-hand of pow-"er."

Thirdly, And as it ſignifies honour and power, ſo nearneſs in

† The right hand of God denotes divine honour and glory, on which the Son of God, who exiſted before all ages, as God, in the higheſt, co-eſſential with the Father, and incarnate in the latter times, ſat down with his glorified body. *Damaſc. lib. 4. c. 2. de orth. fide.*

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place, as we use to say *at one's elbow*, and so it is applied to Christ, in Psal. cx. 5. "The Lord at thy right-hand, shall "strike through kings in the day of his wrath;" that is, the Lord, who is very near thee, present with thee, he shall subdue thine enemies. This then is what we are to understand by God's right-hand, honour, power, and nearness.

Secondly, In the next place let us see what is implied in Christ's sitting at God's right-hand, with his enemies for his foot-stool. And, if we attentively consider, we shall find that it implies and imports divers great and weighty things in it. As,

First, It implies the compleating and perfecting of Christ's work, that he came into the world about. After his work was ended, then he sat down and rested from those labours, Heb. x. 11, 12. "Every priest standeth daily ministring, and offering "oftentimes the same sacrifices; which can never take away "sins: but this man when he had once offered one sacrifice for "sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God." Here he assigns a double difference betwixt Christ, and the Levitical priests; they stand, which is the posture of servants; he sits, which is the posture of a Lord. They stand daily, because their sacrifices cannot take away sin; he did his work fully, by one offering; and after that sits, or rests for ever in heaven. And this (as the accurate and judicious Dr. Reynolds * observes) was excellently figured to us in the ark, which was a lively type of Jesus Christ, and particularly in this, it had rings by which it was carried up and down, till at last it rested in Solomon's temple, with glorious and triumphal solemnity, Psal. cxxxii. 8, 9. 2 Chron. v. 13. So Christ, while he was here on earth, being anointed with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, went about doing good, Acts x. 38. and having ceased from his works, did at last enter into his rest, Heb. v. 10. which is the heavenly temple, Rev. xi. 19.

Secondly, His † sitting down at God's right-hand, notes the high content and satisfaction of God the Father in him, and in his work. "The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right-"hand;" the words are brought in as the words of the Father, welcoming Christ to heaven; and (as it were) congratulating the

* Dr. Edward Reynolds, on Psalm cx. p. 35, 36.

† They are said to sit down, who rest from their labour, and thereby refresh themselves, Gen. xviii. 1. in which sense some understand what is said of Christ. To sit at God's right-hand, *i. e.* in the heavens, to rest in that eternal blessedness with God, from these labours and miseries to which he voluntarily subjected himself for us. *Ravan. on the word* to sit.

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happy accomplishment of his most difficult work. And it is as if he had said, "O my Son, what shall be done for thee this day? "Thou hast finished a great work, and in all the parts of it ac- "quitted thyself as an able and faithful servant to me; what "honours shall I now bestow upon thee? The highest glory in "heaven is not too high for thee; come sit at my right-hand." O how well is he pleased with Christ, and what he hath done! He delighted greatly to behold him here in his work on earth, and by a voice from the excellent glory he told him so, when he spake from heaven to him, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, "in whom I am well pleased," 2 Pet. i. 17. And himself tells us, John x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because "I lay down my life," *&c.* for it was a work that the heart of God had been upon from eternity. He took infinite delight in it.

Thirdly, Christ's sitting down at God's right-hand in heaven, notes the advancement of Christ's human nature to the highest honour; even to be the object of adoration to angels and men. For it is properly his human nature that is the subject of all this honour and advancement; and being advanced to the right-hand of Majesty, it is become an object of worship and adoration. Not simply, as it is flesh and blood, but as it is personally united to the second person, and enthroned in the supreme glory of heaven.

O here is the mystery, that flesh and blood should ever be advanced to the highest throne of majesty, and being there installed in that glory, we may now direct our worship to him as *God-man*; and to this end was his humanity so advanced, that it might be adored and worshipped by all. "The Father hath committed "all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, "even as they honour the Father." And the Father will accept of no honour divided from his honour. Therefore it is added in the next clause, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth "not the Father which hath sent him," John v. 22, 23. Hence the apostles, in the salutations of their epistles, beg for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ; and in their *valedictions*, they desire the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the churches.

Fourthly, It imports the sovereignty and supremacy of Christ over all. The investiture of Christ, with authority over the empire of both worlds: For this belongs to him that sits down upon his throne. When the Father said to him *, Sit at my

* Therefore this sitting down of Christ at the Father's right-hand, does

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right-hand, he did therein deliver to him the *dispensation* and *oeconomy* of the kingdom. Put the awful sceptre of government into his hand, and so the apostle interprets and understands it, 1 Cor. xv. 25. "He must reign, till he have put all his ene-"mies under his feet." And to this purpose, the same apostle accommodates, (if not expounds) the words of the Psalmist, "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels," (*i. e.*) in respect of his humbled state on earth, "thou crownedst him with "glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy "hands, thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," Heb. ii. 7, 8. He is over the spiritual kingdom, the Church, absolute Lord there, Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. He also is Lord over the providential kingdom, the whole world, Psal. cx. 2. and this providential kingdom, being subordinate to his spiritual kingdom; he orders and rules this, for the advantage and benefit thereof, Eph. i. 22.

Fifthly, To sit at God's right-hand with his enemies for a footstool, *implies Christ to be a conqueror over all his enemies.* To have his enemies under his feet, notes perfect conquest and compleat victory. As when Joshua set his foot upon the necks of the kings: So Tamerlane made proud Bajazet his footstool *. They trampled his name, and his saints, under their feet, and Christ will tread them under his feet. It is true indeed this victory is yet incompleat, and inconsummate; for now "we see "not yet all things put under him, (saith the apostle) but we see "Jesus crowned with glory and honour," and that is enough. Enough to shew the power of his enemies, is now broken; and though they make some opposition still, yet it is to no purpose at all; for he is so infinitely above them, that they must fall before him; it is not with Christ as it was with Abijah, against whom Jeroboam prevailed, because he was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them. His *incapacity* and *weakness*, gave the watchful enemy, an advantage over him. I say, it is not so with Christ, he is at God's right-hand. And all

does not signify properly that glory and essential kingdom which was common to the Son of God with the Father from eternity, for in this respect even the Holy Spirit sits at the right-hand of God; but the oeconomical and voluntary kingdom, over which he is appointed as Θανθρωπος, *i. e.* God-man and Mediator by the Father, for the gathering in and defending of his church. *Synops. pur. Theol. Disp.* 28. *p.* 343.

* The man who so often terrified the city Constantinople, was a dog and a footstool under Tamerlane. *Aurel. Vict.*

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the power of God ſtands ready bent to ſtrike through his enemies, as it is Pſal. cx. 5.

Sixthly, Chriſt's ſitting in heaven notes to us the great and wonderful change, that is made upon the ſtate, and condition of Chriſt, ſince his aſcention into heaven. Ah, it is far otherwiſe with him now, than it was in the days of his humiliation here on earth. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Oh what a wonderfull change hath heaven made upon him! It were good (as a † Worthy of ours ſpeaks) to compare in our thoughts the abaſement of Chriſt, and his exaltation together; as it were in columns, one over againſt the other. He was born in a ſtable, but now he reigns in his royal palace. Then he had a *manger* for his cradle, but now he ſits on a chair of ſtate. Then oxen and aſſes were his companions, now thouſands of ſaints, and ten thouſand of angels miniſter roun about his throne. Then, in contempt, they called him the *Carpenter's Son*, now he obtains a more excellent name than *angels*. Then he was led away into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil, now it is proclaimed before him; "let all the angels of God worſhip him." Then he had not a place to lay his head on, now he is exalted to be heir of all things. In his ſtate of humiliation, "he endured the contradiction of ſinners;" in his ſtate of exaltation, "he is adored and admired by ſaints and angels." Then "he "had no form or comlineſs; and when we ſaw him, there was "no beauty, why we ſhould deſire him:" Now the beauty of his countenance ſhall ſend forth ſuch glorious beams, as ſhall dazzle the eyes of all the celeſtial inhabitants round about him, *&c.*

O what a change is this! Here he ſweated, but there he ſits. Here he groaned, but there he triumphs. Here he lay upon the ground, there he ſits in the throne of glory. When he came to heaven, his Father did, as it were, thus beſpeak him.

My dear Son, *what an hard travail hiſt thou had of it? What a world of woe haſt thou paſſed through, in the ſtrength of thy love to me, and mine elect? Thou haſt been hungry, thirſty, weary; ſcourged, crucified, and reproached: Ah what bad uſage haſt thou had in the ungrateful world! Not a day's reſt for comfort ſince thou wenteſt out from me; but now thy ſuffering days are accompliſhed; now thy reſt is come, reſt for evermore. Henceforth ſit at my right-hand. Henceforth thou ſhalt groan, weep, or bleed no more. Sit thou at my right-hand.*

* Mr. T. Caſe, Piſgah, part 3. p. 21.

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Seventhly, Christ's sitting at God's right-hand, *implies the advancement of believers to the highest honour:* For this session of Christ's, respects them, and there he sits as our representative, in which regard we are made to sit with him in heavenly places, as the apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 6. How secure may we be (saith Tertullian) who do now already possess the kingdom? meaning in our head, Christ. This (saith another) is all my hope, and all my confidence, namely, that we have a proportion in that flesh and blood of Christ, which is so exalted, and therefore where he reigns, we shall reign; where our flesh is glorified, we shall be glorified. Surely, it is matter of exceeding joy, to believe that Christ our head, our flesh, and blood, is in all this glory at his Father's right-hand. *Thus we have opened the sense and importance of Christ's sitting at his Father's right-hand.* Hence we infer,

Inference 1. Is this so great an honour to Christ, to sit enthroned at God's right-hand? *What honour then is reserved in heaven for those that are faithful to Christ, now on the earth?* Christ prayed, and his prayer was heard, John xvii. 24. "That we may be "with him to behold the glory that God hath given him;" and what heart can conceive the felicity of such a sight? It made Stephen's face shine as the face of an angel, when he had but a glimpse of Christ at his Father's right-hand. "Thine eyes shall see the "king in his beauty," Isa. xxxiii. 17. which respected Hezekiah in the *type*, *Christ* in the *truth*. But this is not all, though this be much, to be spectators of Christ in his throne of glory; we shall not only see him in his throne, but also sit with him enthroned in glory. To behold him is much, but to sit with him is more. I remember it was the saying of a heavenly christian, now with Christ, *I would far rather look but through the hole of Christ's door, to see but one half of his fairest and most comely face, [for he looks like heaven] suppose I should never win to see his excellency and glory to the full; than to enjoy the flower, the bloom and chiefest excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds.* And you know how the Queen of the South fainted at the sight of Solomon in his glory. But this sight you shall have of Christ, will change you into his likness. "We shall "be like him (saith the apostle) for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. He will place us as it were in his own throne with him. So runs the promise, Rev. iii. 21. "To him that "overcometh, I will grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I "also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne;" and so 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we suffer with him, we shall also "reign with him." The Father set Christ on his right-hand,

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and Christ will set the saints on his right-hand. So you know the sheep are placed by the angels, at the great day, Matth. xxv. and so the church, under the figure of the daughter of Egypt, whom Solomon married, is placed "on the king's right-hand, "in gold of Ophir," Psal. xlv. This honour have all the saints. O amazing love! What, we set on thrones, while as good as we by nature howl in flames! O what manner of love is this! These expressions indeed do not intend, that the saints shall be set in higher glory than Christ; or that they shall have a parity of glory with Christ, for in all things he must have the pre-eminence: But they note the great honour that Christ will put upon the saints; as also, that his glory shall be their glory in heaven. "As the glory of the husband redounds to the wife;" ‡ and again, their glory will be his glory, 2 Thes. i. 10. and so it will be a social glory. O it is admirable to think, whither free grace hath already mounted up poor dust and ashes!

To think how nearly we are related now to this royal, princely Jesus! But how much higher are the designs of grace, that are not yet come to their parturient fulness, they look beyond all this that we now know! "Now are we the sons of God, "but it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" 1 John iii. 2. Ah what reason have you to honour Christ on earth, who is preparing such honours for you in heaven.

Infer. 2. *Is Christ Jesus thus enthroned in heaven, then how impossible is it, that ever his interest should miscarry or sink on earth?* The church hath many subtle and potent enemies. True, but as Haman could not prevail against the Jews, whilst Esther their friend spake for them to the king, no more can they, whilst our Jesus sits at his, and our Father's right-hand. Will he suffer his enemies that are under his feet, to rise up and pull out his eyes, think you? Surely they that touch his people, "touch the very apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. "He must reign "till all his enemies are put under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25. The enemy under his feet, shall not destroy the children in his arms. He sits in heaven on purpose to manage all to the advantage of his church, Eph. i. 22. Are our enemies powerful; lo our king *sits on the right-hand of power.* Are they subtle and deep in their contrivance; he that sits on the throne, overlooks all they do. Heaven overlooks hell. "He that sits in heaven beholds," and derides their attempts, Psal. ii. 4. He may permit his enemies to straiten them in one place, but it shall be for their en-

‡ *Uxor splendescit in radiis mariti.*

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largement in another. For it is with the church, as it is with the sea; what it loses in one place, it gets in another; and so really loses nothing. He may suffer them also to distress us in outwards, but that shall be recompensed with inward and better mercies; and so we shall lose nothing by that. A footstool you know is useful to him that treads on it, and serves to lift him up higher; so shall Christ's enemies be to him, and his; albeit they think not so. What singular benefits the oppositions of his enemies, occasion to his people; I have ‖ elsewere discovered, to which I refer my reader; and pass to

Infer. 3. Is Christ set down on the right-hand of the Majesty in heaven? *O with what awful reverence should we approach him in the duties of his worship!* Away with light, and low thoughts of Christ. Away with formal, irreverent, and careless frames in praying, hearing, receiving, yea, in conferring and speaking of Christ. Away with all deadness, and drowsiness in duties; for he is a *great King* with whom you have to do. A King, to whom the kings of the earth, are but as little bits of clay. Lo the angels cover their faces in his presence. He is an adorable Majesty.

When John had a vision of this enthroned king, about sixty years after his ascension; such was the over-powering glory of Christ, *as the sun when it shineth in its strength;* that when he saw him, he fell at his feet as dead, and died it is like he had, if Christ had not laid his hand on him, and said, "Fear not, I am "the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, "and behold I am alive for evermore," Rev. i. 17, 18. When he appeared to Saul in the way to Damascus, it was in glory above the glory of the sun, which over-powered him also, and laid him as one dead upon the ground.

O that you did but know, what a glorious Lord you worship, and serve. Who makes the very *place of his feet glorious*, wherever he comes. Surely *He is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* There is indeed a παρρησια boldness or free liberty of speech allowed to the saints, Eph. iii. 12. But no rudeness or irreverance. We may indeed come, as the children of a king come to the father, who is both their awful sovereign, and tender father; which double relation causes a due mixture of love, and reverence in their hearts, when they come before him. You may be *free*, but not *rude*, in his presence. Though he be your Father, brother, friend; yet the distance betwixt him and you is *infinite*.

‖ A Saint indeed.

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Inference 4. *If Christ be so gloriously advanced in the highest throne* *, *then none need to reckon themselves dishonoured, by suffering the vilest things for his sake* †. The very chains and sufferings of Christ have a glory in them. Hence Moses "e-"steemed the very reproaches of Christ greater riches than the "treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. He saw an excellency in the very worst things of Christ, his reproaches, and sufferings, as made him leap out of his honours, and riches into them. He did not (as one saith) only *endure the reproaches of Christ*, but counted them *treasures*. To be reckoned among his honours and things of value. So Thuanus reports of Ludovicus Marsacus, a noble knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs, that were bound with cords, to execution; and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, give me my chain too, let me be a knight of the same order ‡. Disgrace itself is honourable, when it is endured for the *Lord of Glory*. And surely there is (as one phraseth it) a little paradise, a young heaven, in sufferings for Christ. If there were nothing else in it, but that they are endured on his account, it would richly reward all we can endure for him; but if we consider how exceeding kind Christ is to them, that count it their glory to be abased for him; that though he be always kind to his people, (yet if we may so speak) he overcometh himself in kindness, when they suffer for him; it would make men in love with his reproaches.

Infer. 5. *If Christ sat not down to rest in heaven, till he had finished his work on earth; then it is in vain for us to think of rest, till we have finished our work, as Christ also did his.*

How willing are we to find rest here! To dream of that, which Christ never found in this world, nor any ever found before us. O think not of resting, till you have done working and done sinning. Your life and your labours must end together. "Write (saith the spirit) blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, "for they rest from their labours," Rev. xiv. 13. Here you must have the *sweat*, and there the *sweet*. It is too much to have two heavens. Here you must be content to dwell in the *tents of Kedar*, hereafter you shall be *within the curtains of Solomon*. Heaven is the place of which it may be truly said, that *there the weary be at rest*. O think not of sitting down on this

* It is no disgrace for us to suffer what Christ suffered, nor is it any glory for you to do what Judas did. *Hieronym.*

† Dr. Manton on Jam. p. 228.

‡ *Cur et non me quoque torque donas? Et insignis hujus ordinis militem creas?* Thuan. Hist.

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ſide heaven. There are four things will keep the ſaints from ſitting down on earth, to reſt, *viz.* grace, corruption, devils and wicked men.

Firſt, Grace will not ſuffer you to reſt here. Its tendencies are beyond this world. It will be looking and longing for the bleſſed hope. A gracious perſon takes himſelf for a pilgrim, ſeeking a better country, and is always ſuſpicious of danger in every place and ſtate. It is ſtill beating up the ſluggiſh heart with ſuch language as that, Mic. ii. 10. "Ariſe, depart, this "is not thy reſt, for it is polluted." Its further tendencies and continual jealouſies, will keep you from ſitting long ſtill in this world.

Secondly, Your *corruptions* will keep you from reſt here. They will continually exerciſe your ſpirits, and keep you upon your watch. Saints have their hands filled with work by their own hearts every day. Sometimes to prevent ſin; and ſometimes to lament it. And always to watch and fear to mortify and kill it. Sin will not long ſuffer you to be quiet, Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23, 24. And if a bad heart will not break your reſt here, then

Thirdly, There is a buſy devil will do it. He will find you work enough with his temptations, and ſuggeſtions, and except you can ſleep quietly in his arms, as the wicked do, there is no reſt to be expected. "Your adverſary, the devil, goeth about as "a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour; whom reſiſt," 1 Pet. v. 8.

Fourthly, Nor will his ſervants and inſtruments let you be quiet on this ſide heaven. ‖ Their very name ſpeaks their turbulent diſpoſition. "My ſoul (ſaith the holy man) is among lions, and "I lie even among them that are ſet on fire, even the ſons of "men, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows," Pſal. lvii. 4. Well then, be content to enter into your reſt, as Chriſt did into his. He ſweat, then ſat, and ſo muſt you.

‖ שׁעי *Inquietum eſſe. Turbulentus.*

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SERMON XLII.

Wherein CHRIST coming to Judgment, being the fourth and last Degree of his Exaltation, is opened and improved.

Acts x. 42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

CHRIST enthroned in the highest glory in heaven, is there to abide for the effectual and successful government, both of the world, and of the church, until the number given him by the Father, before the world was, and purchased by the blood of the cross, be gathered in; and then cometh the judgment of the great day, which will perfectly separate the precious from the vile; put the redeemed in full possession of the purchase of his blood in heaven, and "then shall he deliver "up the kingdom to his Father, that God may be all in all."

This last act of Christ, namely, his judging the world, is a special part of his exaltation and honour, bestowed upon him, "because he is the Son of man," John v. 27. In that day shall his glory, as king, and absolute Lord, shine forth as the sun when it shineth in its strength. O what an honour will it be to the man Christ Jesus, who stood arraigned and condemned at Pilate's bar, to sit upon the great white throne, surrounded with thousands, and ten thousands of angels! men and devils waiting upon him to receive their final sentence from his mouth. In this will the glory of Christ's sovereignty and power, be eminently and illustriously displayed, before angels and men *. And this is that great truth, which he commanded to be preached and testified to the people; namely, that it is "he which is "ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead."

Wherein we have four things to be distinctly considered, *viz.* The subject, object, fountain and truth of the supreme judiciary authority.

First, The subject of it, Christ, it is he that is ordained to be judge. Judgment is the act of the whole undivided trinity. The Father and Spirit judge, as well as Christ, in respect of

* To the royal dignity, doth belong that power, or authority, by which Christ is made the judge of all men and angels. *Amef. Med.* p. 117.

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authority and consent, but it is the act of Christ, in respect of visible management and execution, and so it is his *per proprietatem*, by *propriety*, the Father having conferred it upon him, as the Son of man; but not his *per appropriationem*, so as to exclude either the Father or Spirit from their authority, for they judge by him.

Secondly, The *object* of Christ's judiciary authority. The *quick and dead*, (i. e.) all that at his coming do live, or ever had lived. This is the *Object personal*. All the men and women that ever sprang from Adam; all the apostate spirits that fell from heaven, and are reserved in chains to the judgment of this great day. And in this personal object, is included the *real object*, viz. all the actions, both secret and open, that ever they did, 2 Cor. v. 5. Rom. ii. 16.

Thirdly, the *Fountain* of this delegated authority, which is God the Father; for he hath ordained Christ to be the Judge, "He is appointed †," as the Son of man, to this honourable office and work. The word notes, a firm establishment of Christ in that office by his Father. He is now, by right of redemption, Lord and King. He enacts laws for government, then he comes to judge of mens obedience and disobedience to his laws.

Fourthly, And lastly, here is the infallible truth, or unquestionable certainty of all this. "He gave us commandment to "preac hand testify it to the people." We had it in charge from his own mouth; and dare not hide it. Hence the point of doctrine is plainly this.

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ is ordained by God the Father, to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

This truth stands upon the firm basis of scripture authority. You have it from his own hand, John v. 22. "The Father judg-"eth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," *viz.* in the sense before given. And so the apostle, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world "in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; where-"of he hath given assurance," *&c.* And again Rom. ii. 16. "In "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus "Christ." Three things will be opened here. *First*, The certainty of a judgment to come. *Secondly*, The quality and nature of it. *Thirdly*, That it is a special part of Christ's exaltation to be appointed Judge in this day.

† Ὡρισμένος. *Definitus seu constitutus.*

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First, The certainty of a judgment. This is a truth of firmer eſtabliſhment than heaven and earth. It is no deviſed fable, no cunning artifice to keep the world in awe: but a thing as confeſſedly true as it is awfully ſolemn. For, *The certainty of a judgment.*

First, As the ſcriptures aforementioned (with theſe, 2 Cor. v. 10. Eccleſ. xii. 14. Mat. xii. 36. and many other, the true and faithful ſayings of God) do very plainly reveal it; ſo the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God require it ſhould be ſo. For the judge of all the earth will do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now righteouſneſs itſelf requires that a difference be made betwixt the righteous and the wicked: "Say ye to the righteous, it "ſhall be well with him; woe to the wicked, it ſhall be ill with "him," Iſa. iii. 10. But no ſuch diſtinction is generally, and fully made betwixt one another in this world. Yea, rather the wicked proſper, and the righteous periſh, "There is a juſt man "that periſheth in his righteouſneſs, and there is a wicked man "that prolongeth his life in his wickedneſs," Eccleſ. vii. 15. Yea, not only in, but for his righteouſneſs, as it may be fairly rendered.

Here the "wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous "than himſelf," Hab. i. 13. As the fiſhes of the ſea, where the great and ſtrong ſwallow up the ſmall and weak. And even in courts of judicature, where the innocent might expect relief; there they often meet with the worſt oppreſſions. How fairly and juſtly therefore doth a wiſe man infer a judgment to come from this conſideration, Eccleſ. iii. 16, 17. "I ſaw under the ſun the "place of judgment, that wickedneſs was there, and the place "of righteouſneſs, that iniquity was there; I ſaid in my heart, "God ſhall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a "time there for every purpoſe, and for every work," *q. d.* the judgment to come, is the only relief and ſupport, left to poor innocents, to quiet and comfort themſelves withal *. To the ſame purpoſe alſo is that, Jam. v. 6, 7. "Ye have condemned "and killed the juſt; and he doth not reſiſt you; be patient "therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." It is confeſſed, that ſometimes God vindicates his providence againſt

* In conſidering ſo great injuſtice, I have betaken myſelf to the judgment of God, who will declare who are guilty. *Druſius.* I have applied this remedy to this evil. *Merc.* I have comforted myſelf againſt this injuſtice, with the thought that God judgeth all. *Geirus.*

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the Atheism of the world, by particular strokes upon the wicked; but this is but rare. And as the Father well observes, "† if no sin were punished here, no providence would be believed; again, if every sin were openly punished here, no "judgment hereafter could be expected." Besides,

Secondly, Man is a reasonable being, and every reasonable being, is an accountable being. He is a subject capable of moral government. His actions have a relation to a law. He is swayed by rewards and punishments. He acts by counsel, and therefore of his actions, he must expect to give an account, as it is Rom. xiv. 12. "So then every one of us, shall give an account of himself to God." Especially if we add, that all the gifts of body, mind, estate, time, *&c.* are so many talents, concredited and betrusted to him by God, and every one of us hath one talent at least; therefore a time to render an account for all these talents will come, Mat. xxv. 14, 15. We are but stewards, and stewards must give an account, in order whereto, there must be a great *audit* day.

Thirdly, And what need we seek evidence of this truth, further than our own conscience? Lo, it is a truth engraven legibly upon every man's own breast. Every one hath a kind of little tribunal, or privy sessions in his own conscience, which both accuses, and excuses for good and evil, which it could never do, were there not a future judgment, of which it is now conscious to itself. In this court, records are now kept of all we do, even of our secret actions and thoughts, which never yet took air; but if no judgment, what need of records? Nor let any imagine, that this may be but the fruit of education and discourse. We have heard of such things, and so are scared by them. For if so, how comes it to obtain so universally? Who could be the author of such a common deception?

Reader, bethink thyself a little; if thou hadst a mind (as ‡ one saith) to impose a lie upon all the world, what course wouldest thou take? How wouldest thou lay the design? Or why dost thou in this case imagine what thou knowest not how to imagine? It is evident that the very consciences of the Heathens, have these offices of accusing and excusing, Rom. ii. 15. And it is hard to imagine, (as an ingenious author ‖ speaks) that

† *Si nullum peccatum manifesta plecteretur pœna; nullam esse divinam providentiam crederetur. Rursum si omne peccatum aperte puniretur, nullum fore judicium crederetur.* Aug.

‡ Mr. Howe's Blessedness of the Righteous, *p.* 343.

‖ Sir Charles Woolsely's Unreasonableness of Atheism, *p.* 76.

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a general cheat ſhould bow down the backs of all mankind, and induce ſo many doubts and fears, and troubles, amongſt them; and give an interruption to the whole courſe of their corrupt living, and that there ſhould be no account of it? And therefore it is undoubted that ſuch a day will come. But I ſhall rather chuſe, in the

Second Place, to open the nature, and manner of this judgment, than to ſpend more time in proving a truth, that cannot be denied without violence offered to a man's own light. If then the queſtion be, what manner of judgment will this be? I anſwer,

The quality of the judgment.

Firſt, It will be a great and awful day. It is called the "judgment of the great day," Jude 6. Three things will make it ſo, the manner of Chriſt's coming. The work he comes about. And the iſſues, or events of that work. The manner of Chriſt's coming, will be awfully ſolemn; "For the "Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the "voice of the archangel, with the trump of God; and the dead "in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we which are alive and remain, "ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet "the Lord in the air," *&c.* 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. Here Chriſt breaks out of heaven, with the ſhouts of angels ἐν κελεύσματι, it ſignifies ſuch a ſhout (* ſaith one) as is to be heard among ſea men, when after a long and dangerous voyage, they firſt deſcry land, crying aloud, with united voices, *a ſhore, a ſhore.* As the poet deſcribes the Italians when they ſaw their native country, "lift-"ing up their voices, and making the heavens ring again with "† Italy, Italy; or as armies ſhout when the ſignal of battle "is given." Above all which (as ſome expound it) ſhall the voice of the Archangel be diſtinctly heard. And after this ſhout, *the trump of God* ſhall ſound. By this tremendous blaſt, ſinners will be affrighted out of their graves, but to the ſaints, it will carry no more terror, than the roaring of cannons, when armies of friends approach a beſieged city, for the relief of them that are within it. The dead being raiſed, they ſhall be gathered before the great throne on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in his glory; and there be divided exactly to the right and left-hand of Chriſt, by the angels. Here will be the greateſt aſſembly that ever met. Where Adam may ſee his numerous offspring, even as the

* Caſe's Piſgah.

† *Italiam, Italiam, laeto clamore ſalutant.* Virgil. Æneid.

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ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, which no man can number. And never was there ſuch a perfect diviſion made, (how many diviſions ſoever have been in the world) none was ever like it. The ſaints in this great *Oecumenical aſſize* (as the author ſtiles it) ſhall meet the Lord in the air, and there the Judge ſhall ſit upon the throne, and all the ſaints ſhall be placed upon bright clouds, as on ſeats or ſcaffolds round about him; the wicked remaining below upon the earth, there to receive their final doom and ſentence.

Theſe preparatives will make it awful; and much more will the work itſelf, that Chriſt comes about, make it ſo. For it is "to judge the ſecrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. To ſever the tares from the wheat; to make every man's whites and blacks appear; and according as they are found in that trial, to be ſentenced to their everlaſting and immutable ſtate. O what a ſolemn thing is this!

And no leſs will the execution of the ſentence on both parts make it a great and ſolemn day. The heart of man cannot conceive what impreſſions the voice of Chriſt, from the throne, will make, both upon believers, and unbelievers.

Imagine Chriſt upon his glorious throne, ſurrounded with myriads and legions of angels, his royal guard; a poor unbeliever trembling at the bar; an exact ſcrutiny made into his heart and life; the dreadful ſentence given; and then a cry; and then his delivering him over to the executioners of eternal vengeance, never, never; to ſee a glimpſe of hope, or mercy any more.

Imagine Chriſt, like the general of an army, mentioning with honour, on the head of all the hoſts of heaven and earth, all the ſervices that the ſaints have done for him in this world: then ſententially juſtifying them by open proclamation; then mounting with him to the third heavens, and entering the gates of that city of God, in that noble train of ſaints and angels intermixed; and ſo for ever to be with the Lord. O what a great day muſt this be!

Secondly, As it will be an awful and ſolemn judgment, ſo it will be a critical and exact judgment, every man will be weighed to his ounces and drams. The name of the Judge is Καρδιογνωστης, the ſearcher of hearts. The Judge hath eyes as flames of fire, which pierce to the dividing of the heart and reins. It is ſaid, Matth. xii. 36. That men ſhall then "give an account of every "idle word that they ſhall ſpeak." It is a day that will perfectly ſan the world. No hypocrite can eſcape; Juſtice holds the ballances in an even hand: Chriſt will go to work ſo exactly, that ſome divines of good note think, the day of judgment will laſt

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as long as this day of the gospel's administration hath lasted, or shall last.

Thirdly, It will be an universal judgment, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We "must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And Rom. xiv. 12. "Every one of us shall give an account of him- "self to God." Those that were under the law, "and those "that having no law, were a law to themselves," Rom. ii. 12. Those that had many talents, and he that had but one talent, must appear at this bar; those that were carried from the cradle to the grave, with him that stooped for age: the rich, and poor; the father, and the child; the master, and servant; the believer, and the unbeliever, must stand forth in that day. "I saw the "dead, both small and great, stand before God, and the books "were opened," Rev. xx. 12.

Fourthly, It will be a judgment full of convictive clearness. All things will be so sifted to bran, (as we say,) that the sentence of Christ, both on saints and sinners, shall be applauded. "Right- "teous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus." His judgments will be as the light that goeth forth. So that those poor sinners whom he will condemn, shall be first αυτοκαταχριτοι self-condemned. Their own consciences shall be forced to confess, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that sea of wrath, into which they are to be cast.

Fifthly, and lastly, It will be a supreme and final judgment, from which lies no appeal. For it is the sentence of the highest, and only Lord. "For as the ultimate resolution of faith is in- "to the word, and truth of God, so the ultimate resolution of "justice is into the judgment of God*." This judgment is supreme and imperial. For Christ is the *only Potentate*, 1 Tim. vi. 5., and therefore the sentence once passed, its execution is infallible. And so you find it in that judicial process, Matth. xxv. *ult.*; just after the sentence is pronounced by Christ, it is immediatly added, "these shall go away into everlasting punish- "ment, but the righteous into life eternal." This is the judgment of the great day.

Thirdly, In the last place, I must inform you, that God, in ordaining Christ to be the Judge, has very highly exalted him. This will be very much for his honour: for in this, Christ's royal dignity will be illustrated, beyond whatever

That this judgment makes for Christ's honour.

* *Ad Dei verbum sit ultima resolutio fidei, ad Dei tribunal ultima resolutio judicii.*

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it was since he took our nature, till that day; now he will appear in his glory. For,

First, This act of judging pertaining properly to the kingly office, Christ will be glorified as much in his kingly office, as he hath been in either of the other. We find but some few glimpses of the kingly office, breaking forth in this world; as, his riding with Hosannahs into Jerusalem; his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple; his title upon the cross, *&c.* But these were but faint beams: Now that office will shine in its glory, as the sun in the midst of the heavens. For what were the Hosannahs of little children, in the streets of Jerusalem, to the shouts and acclamations of thousands of angels, and ten thousands of saints? what was his whipping the prophane out of the temple, to his turning the wicked into hell, and sending his angels to gather out of his kingdom every thing that offendeth? what was a title written by his judge, and fixed on the ignominious tree, to the name that shall now be seen on his vesture, and on his thigh, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Secondly, This will be a display of his glory in the highest, before the whole world. For there will be present at once, and together, all the inhabitants of heaven, and earth, and hell; angels must be there to attend and minister; those glittering courtiers of heaven must attend his person; so that heaven will, for a time, be left empty of all its inhabitants: men and devils must be there to be judged: and before this great assembly will Christ appear in royal Majesty. He will, (to allude to that text, Isa. xxiv. 23.), reign before his ancients gloriously. "For he will "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them "that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. The inhabitants of the three regions, heaven, earth, and hell, shall then rejoice, or tremble before him, and acknowledge him to be supreme Lord and King.

Thirdly, This will roll away for ever the reproach of his death: for Pilate and the high-Priest, that judged him at their bars, shall now stand quivering at his bar; with Herod that set him at nought, the soldiers and officers that traduced and abused him: there they that reviled him on the cross, wagging their heads, will stand, with trembling knees, before his throne. For "every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him," Rev. i. 7. O what a contemptible person was Christ in their eyes once? As a worm, and no man. Every vile wretch could freely tread and trample on him; but now such will be the brightness of his glory, such the awful beams of majesty, that the wicked shall not stand in his presence, or "be able to rise up," (as that

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† word imports, Pſal. i. 5.), "before him." So that this will be a full and univerſal vindication of the death of Chriſt, from all that contempt and ignominy that had attended it. We next improve it.

Inference 1. Is Jeſus Chriſt ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead? *Great then is the ſecurity believers have, that they ſhall not be condemned in that day.* Who ſhall condemn, when Chriſt is Judge? If believers be condemned in judgment, Chriſt muſt give ſentence againſt them: yea, and they muſt condemn themſelves too. I ſay, Chriſt muſt give ſentence, for that is the proper and peculiar office of Chriſt. And, to be ſure, no ſentence of condemnation ſhall, in that day, be given Chriſt againſt them. For,

Firſt, He died to ſave them, and he will never croſs and overthrow the deſigns and ends of his own death. That cannot be imagined. Nay,

Secondly, They have been cleared, and abſolved already. And being once abſolved by divine ſentence, they can never be condemned afterward. For one divine ſentence cannot croſs and reſcind another. He juſtified them here in this world by faith: Declared in his word, (which ſhall then be the rule of judgment, Rom. ii. 16.), that "there is no condemnation to them that are "in Chriſt," Rom. viii. 1. And ſurely he will not retract his own word, and give a ſentence quite croſs to his own ſtatute-book, out of which he hath told us that they ſhall be judged. Moreover,

Thirdly, The far greateſt part of them will have paſſed their particular judgment, long before that day, and being therein acquitted by God, the Judge of all; and admitted into heaven upon the ſcore and account of their juſtification; it cannot be imagined that Chriſt ſhould now condemn them with the world. Nay,

Fourthly, He that judged them is their head, huſband, friend, and brother: who loved them, and gave himſelf for them: O then, with what confidence may they go, even unto his throne? and ſay, with Job, "Though he try us as fire, we know we ſhall "come forth as gold." We know that we ſhall be juſtified. Eſpecially, if we add, that they themſelves ſhall be the aſſeſſors with Chriſt in that day. And, (as a judicious author pertinently obſerves), not a ſentence ſhall paſs without their votes. "So "as that they may by faith not only look upon themſelves as al-"ready in heaven, ſitting with Chriſt, as a common perſon, in

† לא יקמו ‡ Goodwin's Triumph, p. 146.

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" their right; but they may look upon themſelves as judges al-
" ready. So that if any ſin ſhould ariſe to accuſe, or condemn,
" yet it muſt be with their votes. And what greater ſecurity
" can they have than this, that they muſt condemn themſelves,
" if they be condemned." No, no, it is not the the buſineſs of that day to condemn, but to abſolve, and pronounce them pardoned and juſtified, according to the ſentence of Acts iii. 19. and Mat. xii. 32. So that it muſt needs be a time of refreſhing, (as all ſcriptures call it), to the people of God. You that now believe, ſhall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. You that now judge yourſelves ſhall not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

Inference 2. If Chriſt be ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, *how miſerable a caſe will Chriſtleſs ſouls be in at that day!* They that are Chriſtleſs now, will be ſpeechleſs, helpleſs, and hopeleſs then. How will their hands hang down, and their knees knock together! O what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and roaring conſciences will be among them in that day! O dreadful day! O aſtoniſhing ſight! to ſee the world in a dreadful conflagration, the elements melting, the ſtars falling, the earth trembling, the judgment ſet, the priſoners brought forth; O who ſhall endure in this day, but thoſe that by union with Chriſt are ſecured againſt the danger and dread of it! Let me demand of poor Chriſtleſs ſouls, whom this day is like to overtake unawares.

Firſt, Do you think it poſſible to avoid appearing, after what terrible citation is given to the world by the trump of God? Alas, how can you imagine it? is not the ſame power that reviv-ed your duſt, able to bring you before the bar? There is a neceſſity that you muſt come forth, 2 Cor. v. 10. " We [muſt]
" all appear." It is not at the ſinner's choice, to obey the ſummons or not.

Secondly, If you muſt appear, are there no accuſers, nor witneſſes, that will appear againſt you, and confront you in the court? What think you, was Satan ſo often a tempter to you here, and will he not be an accuſer there? Yes, nothing ſurer; for that was the main deſign of all his temptations. What think you of your own conſciences? are they not privy to your ſecret wickedneſs; do not they now whiſper ſometimes in your ears, what you care not to hear of? If they whiſper now, they will thunder then, Rom. ii. 15, 16. Will not the Spirit accuſe you, for reſiſting his motions, and ſtifling thouſands of his convictions? Will not your companions in ſin accuſe you? who drew, or were drawn by you to ſin? Will not your teachers be your

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accuſers? How many times have you made them complain, *Lord, they are iron and braſs, they have made their faces harder than a rock; they refuſe to return.* Will not your very relations be your accuſers, to whom you have failed in all your relational duties? Yea, and every one whom you have tempted to ſin, abuſed, defrauded, over-reached; all theſe will be your accuſers. So that it is without diſpute, you will have accuſers enough to appear againſt you.

Thirdly, Being accuſed before Jeſus Chriſt, what will you plead for yourſelves: will you confeſs, or will you deny the charge? If you confeſs, what need more? "Out of thine own mouth "will I judge thee," ſaith Chriſt, Luke xix. 22. If you deny, and plead not guilty; thy Judge is the ſearcher of hearts, and knows all things. So that it will not at all help thee to make a lie thy laſt refuge. This will add to the guilt, but not cover it.

Fourthly, If no defence or plea be left thee, then what canſt thou imagine ſhould retard the ſentence? Why ſhould not Chriſt go on to that dreadful work? "Muſt not the Judge of all the "earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. Muſt not he render to every man according to his deeds? 2 Cor. v. 10. Yes, no queſtion but he will proceed to that ſentence, how terrible ſoever it be to you to think on it now, or hear it then.

Fifthly, To conclude, if ſentence be once given by Chriſt againſt thy ſoul, what in all the world canſt thou imagine ſhould hinder the execution? Will he alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth? No, Pſal. lxxxix. 34. Doſt thou hope he is more merciful and pitiful than ſo? Thou miſtakeſt, if thou expecteſt mercy out of that way in which he diſpenſes it. There will be thouſands, and ten thouſands that will rejoice in, and magnify his mercy then; but they are ſuch as obey his call, repented, believed, and obtained union with his perſon here; but for unbelievers, it is againſt the ſettled law of Chriſt, and conſtitution of the goſpel, to ſhew mercy to the deſpiſers of it. But it may be, you think your tears, your cries, your pleadings with him, may move him; theſe, indeed, might have done ſomewhat in time, but they come out of ſeaſon now. Alas, too late. What the ſucceſs of ſuch pleas and cries will be, you may ſee, if you will but conſult two ſcriptures, Job xxvii 8, 9. "What "is the hope of the hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when "God taketh away his ſoul? Will God hear his cry when "trouble cometh upon him?" No, no: And Mat. vii. 22. "Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

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" propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out de-
" vils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And
" then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart
" from me ye that work iniquity."

And muſt it come to this diſmal iſſue with you indeed? God forbid it ſhould. Oh then,

Inference 3. If Chriſt be appointed of God to be the Judge of all, *how are all concerned to ſecure their intereſt in him, and therein an eternity of happineſs to their own ſouls, by the work of regeneration?* Of all the buſineſs that men and women have in this world, there is none ſo ſolemn, ſo neceſſary, and important, as this. O my brethren, this is a work, able to drink up your ſpirits, while you do but think of the conſequence of it.

Summon in then thy ſelf-reflecting, and conſidering powers: get alone, reader, and, forgetting all other things, ponder with thyſelf this deep, dear, eternal concernment of thine. Examine the ſtate of thy own ſoul. Look into the ſcriptures, then into thine own heart, and then to heaven, ſaying, *Lord, let me not be deceived in ſo great a concernment to me as this.* O let not the trifles of time wipe off the impreſſions of death, judgment, and eternity, from thy heart. O that long word [*Eternity,*] that it might be night and day with thee. That the awe of it may be ſtill upon thy ſpirit. A gentlewoman of this nation, having ſpent the whole afternoon, and a great part of the evening at cards, in mirth and jollity, came home late at night, and finding her waiting gentlewoman reading, ſhe looked over her ſhoulder upon the book, and ſaid, Poor melancholy ſoul, why doſt thou ſit here poring ſo long upon thy book? That night ſhe could not ſleep, but lay ſighing and weeping; her ſervant aſked her once and again what ailed her; at laſt ſhe burſt out into tears, and ſaid, O! it was one word that I caſt my eye upon in thy book, that troubles me; there I ſaw that word *Eternity.* How happy were I, if I were provided for eternity! Sure it concerns us, ſeeing we look for ſuch things, to be diligent that we may be found of him in peace. O let not that day come by ſurprizal upon you. Remember that as death leaves, ſo judgment will find you.

Infer. 4. Is Jeſus Chriſt appointed Judge of quick and dead, *then look to it,* all you that hope to be found of him in peace, *that you avoid thoſe ſins, and live in the daily practice of thoſe duties, which the conſideration of that day powerfully perſuades you to avoid or practiſe.* For it not only preſſes to holineſs *in actu primo,* in the being of it; but *in actu ſecundo,* in the daily exerciſe

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and practice of it. Do you indeed expect such a day? Oh, then,

First, See you be meek and patient under all injuries and abuses for Christ's sake. Avenge not yourselves, but leave it to the Lord, who will do it. Do not anticipate the work of God. "Be patient my brethren, to the coming of the Lord," James v. 7, 8, 9.

Secondly, Be communicative, public-hearted Christians, studying and devising liberal things, for Christ's distressed members. And you shall have both an honourable remembrance of it, and a full reward of it in that day, Mat. xxv. 34, 35.

Thirdly, Be watchful, and sober, keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all your affections; and see that you be not over-charged with the cares and love of this present life, Luke xxi. 34, 35. Will you that your Lord come, and find you in such a posture? "O let your moderation be known unto all, "the Lord is at hand," Phil. iv. 5.

Fourthly, Improve all your Master's talents, diligently and carefully. Take heed of the napkin, Mat. xxv. 14, 18. Then must you make up your account for them all.

Fifthly, But above all, be sincere in your profession. Let your hearts be found in God's statutes, that you may never be ashamed; for this day will be the day of manifestation of all hidden things. And nothing is so secret, but that day will reveal it, Luke xii. 1, 2, 3. "Beware of hypocrisy, for there is "nothing covered, which shall not be revealed; neither hid, "that shall not be made known."——Thus I have finished, through divine aids, the whole doctrine of the impetration of redemption by Jesus Christ; we shall wind up the whole in a general exhortation, and I have done.

The General USE.

The general use of the whole, pressing to holiness, which is the main scope of the doctrine of redemption

AND now, to close up all, let me persuade all those for whom the dear Son of God came from the blessed bosom of the Father; assumed flesh, brake, by the strength of his own love, through all discouragements and impediments, laid down his own life a ransom for their souls; for whom he lived, died, rose, ascended, and lives for ever in heaven to intercede; to live wholly to Christ, as Christ lived, and died wholly for them.

O brethren, never was the Heathen world acquainted with

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ſuch arguments to deter them from ſin; never acquainted with ſuch motives to urge them to holineſs, as I ſhall this day acquaint you with. My requeſt is, to give up both your hearts and lives to glorify the Father, Son, and Spirit, whoſe you are, by the holineſs and heavenlineſs of them. Other things are expected from you, than from other men. See that you turn not all this grace that hath ſounded in your ears, into wantonneſs. Think not becauſe Chriſt hath done ſo much for you, you may ſit ſtill; much leſs indulge yourſelves in ſin, becauſe Chriſt hath offered up ſuch an excellent ſacrifice for the expiation of it. No, no, though Chriſt came to be a curſe, he did not come to be a cloak for your ſins. "If one died for all, then were all "dead; that they that live, ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves; but to him that died for them," 2 Cor. v. 15. O keep your lives pure and clean. Do not make freſh work for the blood of Chriſt every day. "If you live in the Spirit, ſee "that you walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. That is, (ſaith * Cornelius a Lapide very ſolidly) "Let us ſhape and order "our lives and actions according to the dictates, inſtinct, and "impulſes of the Spirit, and of that grace of the Spirit put "within us, and planted in our hearts, which tendeth to practical holineſs." O let the grace which is in your hearts, iſſue out into all your religious, civil, and natural actions. Let the faith that is in your hearts appear in your prayers; the obedience of your hearts in hearing; the meekneſs of your hearts in ſuffering; the mercifulneſs of your hearts in diſtributing; the truth and righteouſneſs of your hearts in trading; the ſobriety and temperance of your hearts in eating and drinking. Theſe be the fruits of Chriſt's ſufferings indeed, they are ſweet fruits. Let grace refine, ennoble, and elevate all your actions; that you may ſay, "Truly our converſation is in heaven." Let grace have the ordering of your tongues, and of your hands; the moulding of your whole converſation. Let not humility appear in ſome actions, and pride in others. Holy ſerioufneſs in ſome companies, and vain frothineſs in others. Suffer not the fountain of corruption to mingle with, or pollute the ſtreams of grace. Write as exactly as you can after your copy, Chriſt. O let there not be (as † one well expreſſes it) here a line and there a blank; here a word, and there a blot. One word of God, and two of the world. Now a ſpiritual rapture, and then

* *Secundum dictamen, inſtinctum, impulſum Spiritus eo gratiæ tramiſſæ, et inditæ nobis a Spiritu Sancto.*

† R. A. *Vindiciæ Pietatis.*

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a fleshly frolic. This day an advance towards heaven, and to-morrow a slide back again towards hell. But *be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Let there be a due proportion betwixt all the parts of your conversation. Approve yourselves the servants of Christ in all things. "By pureness, by know-"ledge, long-suffering, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, "by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of "righteousness, on the right-hand, and on the left," 2 Cor. vi. 6. See then how accurately you walk.——Cut off occasion from them that desire occasion; and in well-doing commit yourselves to God, and commend religion to the world. That this is your great concernment and duty, I shall evidence to your consciences, by these following considerations. That of all persons in the world the redeemed of the Lord, are most obliged to be holy; most assisted for a life of holiness; and that God intends to make great use of their lives, both for the conviction, and conversion of others.

Consider, *First*, God hath more obliged them to live pure and strict lives. I know the command obliges all men to it, even those that cast away the cords of the commands, and break Christ's bonds asunder, are yet bound by them; and cannot plead a dispensation to live as they do. Yea, and it is not unusual for them to feel the obligations of the command upon their consciences, even when their impetuous lusts hurry them on to the violation of them; but there are special ties upon your souls, that oblige you to holiness more than others. Many special and peculiar engagements you are under. *First*, from *God.* *Secondly*, from *yourselves.* *Thirdly*, from your *brethren.* *Fourthly*, from your *enemies.*

First, God hath peculiarly obliged you to purity and strictness of life. Yea, every Person in the blessed Trinity hath cast his cord over your souls, to bind up your hearts and lives to the most strict and precise obedience of his commands. *The Father* hath obliged you, and that not only by the common tie of *creation*, which is yet of great efficacy in itself; for, is it reasonable, that God should create and form so excellent a piece, and that it should be employed against him? That he should plant the tree, and another eat the fruit of it? But, besides this common engagement, he hath obliged you to holiness of life. *Obligations from the Father.*

First, By his wise and merciful designs and counsels for your recovery and salvation by Jesus Christ. It was he that laid the corner-stone of your salvation with his own hands. The first

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motion ſprang out of his breaſt. If God had not deſigned the Redeemer for you, the world had never ſeen him; he had never left that ſweet Boſom for you. It was the act of the Father to give you to the Son to be redeemed, and then to give the Son to be a Redeemer to you. Both of them ſtupendous and aſtoniſhing acts of grace. And in both God acted as a moſt free Agent. When he gave you to Chriſt before the beginning of time, there was nothing out of himſelf that could in the leaſt move him to it. When the Father, Son, and Spirit ſat (as I may ſay) at the counſel table, contriving and laying the deſign for the ſalvation of a few out of many of Adam's degenerate offspring, there was none came before him to ſpeak one word for thee; but ſuch was the divine Pleaſure to inſert thy name in that catalogue of the ſaved. Oh how much oweſt thou to the Lord for this! And what an engagement doth it leave upon thy ſoul to obey, pleaſe, and glorify him?

Secondly, By *his bountiful remunerations of your obedience, which have been wonderful.* What ſervice didſt thou ever perform for him, for which he hath not paid thee a thouſand times more than it is worth? Didſt thou ever ſeek him diligently, and not find him a bountiful rewarder; none ſeek him in vain, unleſs ſuch only as ſeek him vainly, Heb. xi. 6. Didſt thou ever give a cup of cold water in the name of a diſciple, and not receive a diſciple's reward? Mat. x. 42. Haſt thou not found inward peace and comfort flowing into thy ſoul, upon every piece of ſincere obedience! Oh what a good maſter do ſaints ſerve? You that are remiſs and unconſtant in your obedience, you that are heartleſs and cold in duties; hear how your God expoſtulates with you, Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a wilder-"neſs to Iſrael, or a land of darkneſs?" *q. d.* Have I been a hard Maſter to you? Have you any reaſon to complain of me? To whomſoever I have been ſtreight-handed, ſurely I have not been ſo to you. Are fruits of ſin like the fruits of obedience? Do you know where to find a better Maſter? Why then are you ſo ſhuffling and unconſtant, ſo ſluggiſh and remiſs in my work? Surely God is not behind-hand with any of you. May you not ſay with David, Pſal. cxix. 56. "This I had, becauſe "I kept thy precepts." There are fruits in holineſs, even preſent fruit. It is a high favour to be employed for God. Reward enough that he will accept any thing thou doſt. But to return every duty thou preſenteſt to him with ſuch comforts, ſuch quickenings, ſuch inward and outward bleſſings into thy boſom, ſo that thou mayeſt open the treaſury of thine own experiences, view the variety of encouragements, and tokens of

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his love, at several times received in duties; and say, this I had, and that I had, by waiting on God, and serving him. Oh what an engagement is this upon thee, to be ever abounding in the work of the Lord! Though thou must not work for *wages*; yet God will not let thy work go unrewarded. For *he is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.*

Thirdly, Your *Father* hath further obliged you to his holiness and purity of life, *by signifying to you* (as he hath frequently done) *the great delight and pleasure he hath therein.* He hath told you, "that such as are upright in the way are his de-"light," Prov. xi. 20. That he would not have you "forget "to do good, and to communicate, for with such sacrifices he "is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16. You know you cannot "walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, (except) ye be "fruitful in every good word and work," Col. i. 10. And oh what a bond is this upon you to live holy lives! Can you please yourselves in displeasing your Father? If you have the hearts of children in you, sure you cannot. O you cannot grieve his spirit by loose and careless walking, but you must grieve your own spirits too. How many times hath God pleased you, gratified and contented you, and will you not please and content him? This mercy you have asked of him, and he gave it, that mercy, and you were not denied; in many things the Lord hath wonderfully condescended to please you, and now there is but one thing that he desires of you, and that most reasonable, yea, beneficial for you, as well as pleasing to him, Phil. i. 27. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Jesus "Christ." This is the one thing, the great and main thing, he expects from you in this world, and will not you do it? Can you expect he should gratify your desires, when you make no more of grieving and displeasing him? Well, if you know what will please God, and yet resolve not to do it, but will rather please your flesh, and gratify the devil, than him; pray pull off your vizards, fall into your own rank among hypocrites; and appear as indeed you are.

Fourthly, The Father hath further obliged you to strictness and purity of conversation, by his gracious promises made to such as so walk. He hath promised to do great things for you, if you will but do this one thing for him. If you will "order your "conversation aright," Psal. l. *ult.* He will be *your sun and shield*, if you walk before him and be upright, Gen. xv. 1. "He "will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold "from him that walketh uprightly," Psal. lxxxiv. 11. And he promises no more to you than he hath made good to others,

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that have thus walked, and ſtands ready to perform to you alſo. If you look to enjoy the good of the promiſe, you are obliged by all your expectations and hopes, to order your lives purely and uprightly. This hope will ſet you on work to purge your lives, as well as your hearts, from all pollutions, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God."

Fifthly, Yea, *He hath yet more obliged you to ſtrict and holy lives, by his confidence in you, that you will thus walk and pleaſe him.* He expreſſeth himſelf in ſcripture, as one that dares truſt you with his glory, knowing that you will be tender of it, and dare do no otherwiſe. If but a man repoſe confidence in you, and truſt you with his concerns, it greatly obliges you to be faithful. What an engagement was that upon Abraham to walk uprightly, when God ſaid of him, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord," *q. d.* as for this wicked generation, whom I will ſpeedily conſume in my wrath, I know they regard not my laws, they will trample my commands under their feet, they care not how they provoke me, but I expect other things from Abraham, and I am confident he will not fail me. *I know him*, he is a man of another ſpirit, and what I promiſe myſelf from him, he will make good. And to the like purpoſe, is that in Iſa. lxiii. 7. "I will mention the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, and "the praiſes of the Lord; according to all that the Lord hath "beſtowed on us, and the great goodneſs towards the houſe of "Iſrael, which he hath beſtowed on them; according to his "mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindneſſes. For he ſaid, ſurely they are my people, children that "will not lie, (or fail me) ſo he was their Saviour." Here you have an ample account of the endearing mercies of God to that people, ver. 7. and the Lord's confident expectations of ſuitable returns from them, ver. 8. I ſaid, (*i. e.*) (ſpeaking after the manner of men in like caſes) I made a full account, that after all theſe endearments, and favours, beſtowed upon them, they would not offer to be diſloyal and falſe to me. I have made them ſure enough to myſelf, by ſo many bonds of love. Like to which is that expreſſion, Zeph. iii. 7. "I ſaid, ſurely thou wilt fear "me, thou wilt receive inſtruction." Oh! how great are the expectations of God from ſuch as you! I know Abraham, there is no doubt of him. And again, they are children that will not lie, (*i. e.*) they will not *fallere fidem datam*, break their covenant

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with me. Or they are my people that will not ſhrink, as Mr. Coverdale well tranſlates, *filii non negantes*, ſuch as will be true to me, and anſwer their covenant-engagements. And again, ſurely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive *inſtruction*. And ſhall not all this engage you to God? What! Neither the ancient and bountiful love of God, in contriving your redemption from eternity, nor the bounty of God, in rewarding all, and every piece of ſervice you have done for him. Nor yet the pleaſure he takes in your obedience and upright walking: Nor the encouraging promiſes he hath made thereto, nor yet his confident expectations of ſuch a life from you, whom he hath ſo many ways obliged, and endeared to himſelf? Will you forget your ancient friend, contemn his rewards, take no delight or care to pleaſe him? Slight his promiſes, and deceive and fail his expectations? "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be horribly afraid." Conſider how God the Father hath faſtned this five-fold cord upon your ſouls, and ſhew yourſelves chriſtians; yea, to uſe the prophet's words, Iſa. xlvi. 8. "Remember this, "and ſhew yourſelves men."

Secondly, You are yet further engaged to this preciſe and holy life, by what the Son hath done for you; is not this pure and holy life the very aim, and next end of his death? Did he not ſhed his blood to "redeem you from your vain converſa"tions?" 1 Pet. i. 18. Was not this the deſign of all his ſufferings? "That being delivered out of the hands of your enemies, "you might ſerve him in righteouſneſs and holineſs all the days "of your life," Luke i. 74, 75. And is not the apoſtle's inference, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. highly reaſonable? "If on died for all, "then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which "live, ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves, but to him that "died for them." Did Chriſt only buy your perſons, and not your ſervices alſo? No, no, whoever hath thy time, thy ſtrength, or any part of either; I can aſſure thee, chriſtian, that Chriſt hath paid for it, and thou giveſt away what is none of thine own to give. Every moment of thy time, is his. Every talent, whether of grace or nature, is his. And doſt thou defraud him of his own? O how liberal are you of your precious words and hours, as if Chriſt had never made a purchaſe of them! O think of this, when thy life runs muddy and foul. When the fountain of corruption flows out at thy tongue, in idle frothy diſcourſes; or at thy hand, in ſinful unwarrantable actions? Doth this become the redeemed of the Lord? Did Chriſt come from the

Obligations from the Son.

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bosom of his Father for this? Did he groan, sweat, bleed, endure the cross, and lay down his life for this? Was he so well pleased with all his sorrows and sufferings, his pangs and agonies, upon the account of that satisfaction he should have in seeing the travail of his soul? Isa. liii. 11. as if he had said, "Welcome death, "welcome agonies, welcome the bitter cup, and heavy burthen; "I chearfully submit to all this. These are travailing pangs, "indeed, but I shall see the beautiful birth at last. These throws "and agonies shall bring forth many lovely children to God; I "shall have joy in them, and glory from them, to all eternity. "This blood of mine, these sufferings of mine, shall purchase to "me, the persons, duties, services, and obedience of many thou-"sands that will love me, and honour me, serve me, and obey "me, with their souls and bodies which are mine." And doth not this engage you to look to your lives, and keep them pure? Is not every one of Christ's wounds, a mouth open to plead for more holiness, more service, and more fruit from you? Oh! what will engage you if this will not? But,

Engagements from the Spirit.

Thirdly, This is not all; as a man when he weigheth a thing, casteth in weight after weight, till the scales are counterpoised; So doth God cast in engagement, after engagement, and argument upon argument, till thy heart, christian, be weighed up, and won to this heavenly life. And therefore, as Elihu said to Job, chap. xxxvi. 22. "Suffer me a little, and I "will shew thee what I have yet to speak on God's behalf." Some arguments have already been urged on the behalf of the Father and Son, for purity and cleanness of life; and next I have something to plead on the behalf of the Spirit. I plead now on his behalf, who hath so many times helped you to plead for yourselves with God. He that hath so often refreshed, quickened, and comforted you, he will be quenched, grieved, and displeased, by an impure, loose, and careless conversation; and what will you do then? Who shall comfort you, when the comforter is departed from you? When he that should relieve your souls, is far off? O grieve not the holy Spirit of God, by which you are sealed, to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. There is nothing grieves him more than impure practices; for he is a holy Spirit. And look, as water damps and quenches the fire, so doth sin quench the spirit, 1 Thes. v. 19. Will you quench the warm affections and burning desires which he hath kindled in your bosoms? If you do, it is a question, whether ever you may recover them again to your dying day. The spirit hath a delicate sense. It is the most tender thing in the whole world. He feels the least

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touch of sin, and is grieved, when thy corruptions within, are stirred by temptations, and break out to the defiling of thy life; then is the holy Spirit of God, as it were, made sad, and heavy within thee. As that word μη λυπειτε, Eph. iv. 30. may be rendered. For thereby thou resistest his motions, whereby in the way of a loving constraint, he would lead and guide thee in the way of thy duty; yea, thou not only resistest his motions, but crossest his grand design, which is to purge and sanctify thee wholly, and build thee up more and more to the perfection of holiness. And when thou thus forsakest his conduct, and crossest his design in thy soul, then doth he usually withdraw as a man thatis grieved by the unkindness of his friend. He draws in the beams of his evidencing and quickening grace. Withholds all his divine cordials, and faith, as it were, to the unkind and disingenuous soul,

The Spirit's expostulation with careless Christians.

" Hast thou thus requited me, for all
" the favours and kindnesses thou hast
" received from me? Have I quickened
" thee, when thou wast dead in transgressions? Did I descend upon thee in
" the preaching of the gospel, and communicate life, even the
" life of God, to thee; leaving others in the state of the dead?
" Have I shed forth such rich influences of grace and comfort
" upon thee? Comforting thee in all thy troubles, helping
" thee in all thy duties; satisfying thee in all thy doubts and
" perplexities of soul; saving thee, and pulling thee back from
" so many destructive temptations and dangers? What had
" been thy condition, if I had not come unto thee? Could the
" word have converted thee without me? Could ministers,
" could angels, have done that for thee which I did? And when
" I had quickened thee, and made thee a living soul, what couldst
" thou have done, without my exciting and assisting grace?
" Couldest thou go on in the way of duty, If I had not led
" thee? How wouldest thou have waded through the deeps of
" spiritual troubles, if I had not borne thee up? Whither had
" the temptations of satan and thine own corruptions, carried
" thee before this day, If I had not stood thy friend, and come
" in for thy rescue in the time of need? Did I ever fail thee
" in thy extremities? Did I ever leave thee in thy dangers?
" Have I not been tender over thee, and faithful to thee? And
" now, for which of all these kindnesses, dost thou thus wrong
" and abuse me? Why hast thou wounded me thus by thy un-
" kindness? Ah! thou hast ill requited my love! And now thou

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" ſhalt eat the fruit of thy doings. Let thy light now be dark-
" neſs; thy ſongs turned into howlings; the joy of thine heart,
" the light of thine eyes, the health of thy countenance, even
" the face of thy God, and the joy of ſalvation be hid from thee."

This is the fruit of careleſs and looſe walking. To this ſad iſſue it will bring thee at laſt, and when it is come to this, thou ſhalt go to ordinances, and duties, and find no good in them; no life-quickening comfort there. When thy heart which was wont to be enlarged, and flowing, ſhall be clung up and dry; when thou ſhalt kneel down before the Lord, and cry, as Eliſha, when with the mantle of Elijah, he ſmote the water, " Where " is the Lord God of Elijah?" So thou, where is the God of prayer? where is the God of duties? But there is no anſwer: When like Samſon, thou ſhalt go forth and ſhake thyſelf, as at other times; but thy ſtrength is gone; then tell me, what thou haſt done in reſiſting, quenching, and grieving the holy Spirit of God by impure and offenſive practices? And thus you ſee what engagements lie upon you from the Spirit alſo to walk uprightly, and keep the iſſues of life pure. I could willingly have enlarged myſelf upon this laſt branch, but that * a judicious hand hath lately improved this argument, to which I ſhall refer the reader. Thus God hath obliged you to circumſpect and holy lives.

Secondly, You are under great engagements to keep your lives pure, even from yourſelves, as well as from your God. As God hath bound you to purity of converſation, ſo you have bound yourſelves. And there are ſeveral things in you, and done by you, which wonderfully increaſe, and ſtrengthen your obligations to practical holineſs.

Firſt, Your *clearer illumination* is a ſtrong bond upon your ſouls, Eph. v. 8. " Ye were ſometimes darkneſs but now ye " are light in the Lord; walk as children of the light." You cannot pretend, or plead ignorance of your duty. You ſtand convinced in your own conſciences before God, that this is your unqueſtionable duty. Chriſtians, will you not all yield to this? I know you readily yield it. We live, indeed, in a contentious, diſputing age. In other things, our opinions are different. One Chriſtian is of this judgment, another of that; but doth he deſerve the name of a Chriſtian that dare once queſtion this truth? In this we all meet and cloſe in oneneſs of mind and judgment, *that it is our indiſputable duty, to live pure, ſtrict, and clean lives.* " The grace of God, which hath appeared to

* Mr. Polewheil's treatiſe of quenching the Spirit.

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" you, hath taught you this truth clearly, and convincingly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. " You have received how you ought to walk, " and to pleaſe God," 1 Theſ. iv. 1. Well then, this being yielded, the inference is plain and undeniable; that you cannot walk as others, in the vanity of their mind; but you muſt offer violence to your own light. You cannot ſuffer the corruptions of your hearts to break forth into practice, but you muſt ſlight, and put by the notices and rebukes of your own conſciences, Jam. iv. 17. " He that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to " him it is ſin." Yea, ſin with a witneſs. Aggravated ſin. Sin of a deeper tincture than that of Heathens. Sin that ſadly waſtes and violates conſcience. Certainly whoever hath, you have no cloak for your ſin. Light and luſt ſtruggling together, great light, and ſtrong luſts: theſe make the ſoul a troubled ſea that cannot reſt. O but when maſterleſs luſts over-bear conſcience, this impreſſes horror upon the ſoul. This brake David's heart, Pſal. li. 6. " Thou haſt put knowledge in my inner " parts," *q. d.* Ah, Lord! I went againſt the rebukes of conſcience, to the commiſſion of this ſin. I had a watchful light ſet up within me. I knew it was ſin. My light endeavoured lovingly to reſtrain me, and I thruſt it aſide. Beſides, what pleaſure in ſin can you have? Indeed, ſuch as, for want of light know not what they do, or ſuch, whoſe conſciences are ſeared, and paſt feeling; they may ſeek a little pleaſure (ſuch as it is) out of ſin: but what content or pleaſure can you have, ſo long as your light is ever breaking in upon you, and ſmiting you for what you do? This greatly increaſes your obligation to a preciſe, holy life. Again,

Secondly, You are profeſſors of holineſs. You have given in your names to Chriſt, to be his diſciples; and by this your engagements to a life of holineſs, are yet further ſtrengthened, 2 Tim. ii. 19. " Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, " depart from iniquity." The name of Chriſt is called upon you, and it is, a *worthy name*, Jam. ii. 7. It is called upon you, as the name of the huſband is called upon his wife, Iſa. iv. 1. " Let thy name be called upon us." Or, as the name of a Father is called upon his child, Gen. xlviii. 16. " Let my name " be called on them, and the name of my fathers." Well then, you bear the name of Chriſt as his ſpouſe or children; and will you not live ſuitably to your name? Every place and relation, every title of honour and dignity hath its decorum, and becomingneſs. O how will that worthy name of Chriſt be blaſphemed through you, if you adorn it not with becoming deportments? Better you had never profeſſed any thing, than to ſet

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yourſelves by your profeſſion in the eye and obſervation of the world; and then to pour contempt on Jeſus Chriſt, by your ſcandalous converſations, before the eyes of the world; who will laugh at it. I remember it was a *memento* given to one of his name by Alexander, *recordare nominis Alexandri.* Remember (ſaid he) thy name Alexander, and do nothing unworthy of that name. O that is a heavy charge, Rom. ii. 24. "Through "you is the name of God blaſphemed among the Heathens." Unhappy man that ever thou ſhouldeſt be a reproach to Chriſt! The herd of wicked men, they are *ignota capita*; men of no note, or obſervation. They may ſin, and ſin again; drink, ſwear, and tumble in all uncleanneſs; and it paſſes away ſilently; the world takes little notice of it. Their wicked actions make but little noiſe in the world; but the miſcarriages of profeſſors, are like a *blazing comet*, or an eclipſed ſun, which all men gaze at, and make their obſervations upon; oh then, what manner of perſons ought you to be, who bear the worthy name of Chriſt upon you!

Thirdly, But more than this, *You have obliged yourſelves to this life of holineſs by your own prayers.* How many times have you lifted up your hands to heaven, and cried with David, Pſal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſta-"tutes. Order my ſteps in thy word, and let no iniquity have "dominion over me," ver. 133. Were you in earneſt with God, when you thus prayed? Did you mean as you ſaid? Or did you only compliment with God? If your hearts and tongues agreed in this requeſt, doubtleſs it is as much your duty to endeavour, as to deſire thoſe mercies; and, if not, yet do all thoſe prayers ſtand on record before the Lord, and will be produced againſt you as witneſſes to condemn you, for your hypocriſy and vanity. How often alſo have you in your prayers lamented, and bewailed your careleſs and uneven walkings? You have ſaid with Ezra, Chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I am aſhamed and even "bluſh to look up unto thee." And do not your confeſſions oblige you to greater circumſpection, and care for time to come? Will you confeſs, and ſin? And ſin, and confeſs? Go to God and bewail your evils, and when you have bewailed them, return again to the commiſſion of them? God forbid, you ſhould thus diſſemble with God, play with ſin, and dye your iniquities with a deeper tincture.

Fourthly, and laſtly, to add no more, *You have often reproved or cenſured others for their miſcarriages and falls, which adds to your own obligation, to walk accurately, and evenly.* Have you not often reproved your erring brethren? or at leaſt privately

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cenſured them, if not duly reproved them, (for to theſe left-handed blows of ſecret cenſurings, we are more apt, than to the fair and open ſtrokes of juſt and due reproofs) and will you practiſe the ſame things, you criminate and cenſure others for? "Thou that teacheſt another, (ſaith the apoſtle) teacheſt thou "not thyſelf?" Rom. ii. 21. So ſay I, thou that cenſureſt or rebukeſt another, condemneſt thou not thyſelf? Will your rebukes ever do good to others, whilſt you allow in yourſelves what you condemn in them? And as theſe reproofs, and cenſures can do them no good, ſo they do you much evil, by reaſon of them you are αυτοκαταχριτοι, ſelf-condemned perſons; and out of your own mouths God will judge you. For you need no other witneſs, than yourſelves in this caſe. Your own tongues will fall upon you. Your cenſures and reproofs of others, will leave you without plea, or apology, if you look not to your lives with greater care. And yet will you be careleſs ſtill? Fear you not the diſpleaſure of God? Nor the wounding and diſquieting your own conſciences? Surely, theſe things are of no light value with you, if you be Chriſtians indeed.

Thirdly, You are yet further engaged to practical holineſs upon the account of your brethren, who are not a little concerned, and intereſted therein. For if, through the neglect of your hearts, your lives be defiled and polluted, this will be thrown in their faces, and many innocent and upright ones, both reproached, and grieved upon your account. This miſchievous effect holy David earneſtly deprecated, Pſal. lxix. 5, 6. "O God, thou knoweſt my fooliſhneſs, and my ſins are not hid "from thee; let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of "hoſts, be aſhamed for my ſake. Let not them that ſeek thee, "be confounded for my ſake, O God of Iſrael," *q. d.* Lord, thou knoweſt what a weak and fooliſh creature I am. And how apt to miſcarry, if left to myſelf, and ſhould I, through my fooliſhneſs, act unbecoming a ſaint; how would this ſhame the faces, and ſad the hearts of thy people! They will be as men confounded at the report of my fall. The fall of one Chriſtian, is matter of trouble and ſhame to all the reſt; and, when they ſhall hear the ſad and unwelcome news of your ſcandalous miſcarriages, (which will certainly be the effect of a neglected heart and life) they will ſay as David concerning Saul and Jonathan, "tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon," *&c.* Or as Tamar concerning Amnon, "and we, whither ſhall "we cauſe our ſhame to go?" And for them, they ſhall be as fools in Iſrael. Thy looſe and careleſs life will cauſe them to eſtrange themſelves from thee, and look ſhy upon thee, as being

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aſhamed to own thee, and canſt thou bear that? will it not grieve and pierce your very hearts to ſee a cloud of ſtrangeneſs and trouble over the countenances of your brethren? To ſee yourſelves diſowned and lightly eſteemed by them? This very conſideration ſtruck a great favourite in the Perſian court to the very heart. * It was Uſtazanes, who had been governor to Sapores in his minority. And this man for fear denied the Chriſtian faith; and complied with the idolatrous worſhip of the king. And one day (ſaith the hiſtorian) ſitting at the court-gate, he ſaw Simon, the aged archbiſhop of Seleucia, drawing along to priſon, for his conſtancy in the Chriſtian faith, and though he durſt not openly own the Chriſtian faith he had baſely denied, and confeſs himſelf a Chriſtian, yet he could not chuſe but riſe, and expreſs his reverence to this holy man, in a reſpective and honourable ſalutation: but the zealous good man frowned upon him, and turned away his face from him; as thinking ſuch an *apoſtate* unworthy of the leaſt reſpect from him; this preſently ſtruck Uſtazanes to the heart, and drew from him many tears and groans; and thus he reaſoned with himſelf: Simon will not own me, and can I think but that God will diſclaim me, when I appear before his tribunal? Simon will not ſpeak unto me, will not ſo much as look upon me, and can I look for ſo much as a good word or look from Jeſus Chriſt, whom I have ſo ſhamefully betrayed, and denied? Hereupon he threw off his rich courtly robes, and put on mourning apparel, and profeſſed himſelf a Chriſtian and died a martyr. O it is a piercing thing to an honeſt heart, to be caſt out of the favour of God's people. If you walk looſely, neither God nor his people will look kindly upon you.

Fourthly, and laſtly, *Your very enemies engage you to this pure and holy life upon a double ground.* You are obliged by them two ways, *viz.* as they are your *bold cenſurers*, and your *watchful obſervers*. They cenſure you as hypocrites, and will you give them ground and matter for ſuch a charge? They ſay, only your tongues are more holy than other mens, and ſhall they prove it from your practice? They alſo obſerve you diligently; lie at catch, and are highly gratified by your miſcarriages. If your lives be looſe and defiled, you will not only be a ſhame to your friends, but the ſong of your enemies. You will make mirth in hell; and gratify all the enemies of God. This is that they watch for. They are curious obſervers of your goings. And that which makes them triumph at your falls and miſcar-

* Sozomen. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 8.

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ringes, is not only that deep rooted enmity betwixt the two seeds, but because all your miscarriages and evils are so many absolutions to their consciences, and justifications (as they think) of their ways and practices. For look, as your strictness and holiness doth, as it were, cast and condemn them, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. by his practice, condemned the world, their consciences fly in their faces, when they see your holy and pure conversations. It lays a damp upon them. It works upon their consciences, and causes many smart reflections. So when you fall, you, as it were, absolve their consciences, loose the bonds of conviction you had made fast upon them, and now there is matter of joy put before them.

Oh, say they, whatever these men talk; we see they are no better than we. They can do as we do. They can cozen and cheat for advantage. They can comply with any thing for their own ends; it is not conscience, as we once thought, but mere stomach and humour, that made them so precise. And oh, what a sad thing is this! hereby you shed soul-blood. You fasten the bonds of death upon their souls. You kill those convictions, which, for any thing you know, might have made way to their conversion. When you fall, you may rise again; but they may fall at your example, and never rise more. Never have a good opinion of the ways of God, or of his people any more. Upon this consideration, David begs of God, Psal. v. 8. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of my "enemies;" (or, as the Hebrew) *my observers, make thy way straight before my face.* And thus you see how your very enemies oblige you to this holy and pure conversation also.

Now put all this together, and see to what these particulars will amount. You have heard how God the Father hath engaged you to this purity of conversation, by his designment of your salvation; rewarded your obedience; his pleasure in it; his promises to it; and his great confidence in you, that you will thus walk before him. The Lord Jesus hath also engaged you thereunto by his death and sufferings, whereby you were redeemed from your vain conversations. The Spirit hath engaged you, by telling you plainly how much you will grieve and wrong him, resist and quench him, if you do not keep yourselves pure. Yea, you are obliged further, by yourselves; your clear illumination; your high profession; your many prayers and confessions; your many censures and reprehensions of others; do all strengthen your obligation to holiness. Yea, you are obliged further to this holy life, by the shame, grief, and trouble,

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your looſe walking will bring upon your friends; and the mirth it will make for, and miſchief it will do to your enemies; who, thereby, may be made utterly to fall, where, it may be, you only have ſtumbled: who are juſtified and abſolved, (as before you heard), by your miſcarriages. And now, what think you of all this? Are you obliged or not, to this purity of life? Are all theſe bonds ſo tied, that you can get looſe, and free yourſelves at pleaſure from them? If all theſe things are of no force with you, if none of theſe bonds can hold you, may it not be queſtioned, (notwithſtanding your profeſſion), whether any ſpiritual principle, any fear of God, or love to Chriſt, be in your ſouls or no? O you could not play faſt and looſe with God; if ſo, you could not, as Samſon, ſnap theſe bonds aſunder at your pleaſure.

Conſid. 2. *Secondly*, As you are more obliged to keep the iſſues of life pure than others are, ſo God hath given you greater aſſiſtances and advantages for it, than others have. God hath not been wanting to any in helps and means. Even the Heathen, who are without the goſpel, will be yet ſpeechleſs and inexcuſable before God: But how much more will you be ſo? Who, beſides the light of nature, and the general light of the goſpel, have, *Firſt*, ſuch a principle put within you. *Secondly*, ſuch patterns ſet before you. *Thirdly*, ſuch an aſſiſtant ready to help you. *Fourthly*, ſo many rods to quicken you and prevent your wandering: if notwithſtanding all theſe helps, your life be ſtill unholy.

Firſt, Shall men of ſuch principles walk as others do? Shall we lament for you, as David once did for Saul, ſaying, "There "the ſhield of the mighty was vilely caſt away, the ſhield of "Saul; as though he had not been anointed with oil." There the honour of a Chriſtian was vilely caſt away, as though he had not been anointed with the Spirit? "You have received an unc-"tion from the holy One, which teacheth you all things," 1 John ii. 20. another Spirit, far above that which is in other men, 1 Cor. ii. 12. And as this ſpirit which is in you, is fitted for this life of holineſs, "(for ye are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt "Jeſus to good works," Epheſ. ii. 10.); ſo this holy ſpirit or principle, infuſed into your ſouls, hath ſuch a natural tendency to this holy life, that if you live not purely and ſtrictly, you muſt offer violence to your own principles, and new nature. A twofold help this principle affords you for a life of holineſs.

1. *Firſt*, it pulls you back from ſin, as in Joſeph; "How can "I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" And it alſo

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inclines you powerfully to obedience. It is a curb to sin, and a spur to holiness. It is impossible for all others to live spiritually and heavenly, because they have no new nature to incline them hereunto. And, methinks, it should be hard for you to live carnally, and sensually; and therein cross the very bent and tendency of the new creature, which is formed in you. How can you neglect prayer, as others do, whilst the Spirit, by divine pulsations, is awaking and rousing up your sluggish hearts with such inward motions, and whispers, as that, Psal. xxvii. 8. "Seek my "face." Yea, whilst you feel, (during your omissions of duty), something within that bemoans itself, and, as it were, cries for food, pains and gripes you, like an empty stomach, and will not let you be quiet, till it be relieved. How can you let out your hearts to the world, as other men do; when all that while your spirit is restless, and akes like a bone out of joint? And you can never be at ease, till you come back to God, and say, as Psal. cxvi. "Return to thy rest, O my soul." Is it not hard, yea, naturally impossible to fix a stone, and make it abide in the fluid air? Doth not every creature, in a restless motion, tend to its proper centre, and desire its own perfection? So doth this new creature also. You see how the rivers in their course will not be checked, but bear down all the obstacles in their way, *et fevior ab obice ibit*; a stop doth but make them rage the more, and run the swifter afterwards.

There is a central force in these natural motions, which cannot be stopped. And the like may you observe, in the motions of a renewed soul, John iv. 14. "It shall be in him as a well of "water springing up." And is it not hard for you to keep it down, or turn its course? How hard did Jeremy and David find that work? If you do not live holy lives, you must cross your own new nature, and violate the law that is written in your own hearts, and engraven upon your own bowels. To this purpose a late * writer speaks; Till you were converted, (saith he), the flesh was predominant, and therefore it was impossible for you to live any other than a fleshly life; for every thing will act according to its predominant principle. Should you not therefore live a spiritual life? Should not the law of God written in your hearts, be legible in your lives? O should not your lives be according to the tendency of your hearts? Thus he: Doubtless this is no small advantage to practical holiness. But,

Secondly, Besides this principle within, you have no small as-

* Mr. T. Mall's Exhortation to holy living.

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ſiſtance for the purity of life, by theſe excellent patterns before you. The path of holineſs, is no untrodden path to you. Chriſt and his ſervants have beaten it before you. The life of Chriſt is your copy, and it is a fair copy indeed, without a blot. Oh! what an advantage is this, to draw all the lines of your actions according to his example! This glorious grand example, is often preſſed upon you for imitation, Heb. xii. 2. *Looking to Jeſus*, he hath left you *an example, that ye ſhould tread in his ſteps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. His life is a living rule to his people; and beſides Chriſt's example, (for you may ſay, who can live as Chriſt did? his example is quite above us) you have *a cloud of witneſſes*. A cloud for its directive uſe, and theſe men of like paſſions, temptations, and conſtitutions with you; who have gone before you in exemplary holineſs. The Holy Ghoſt (intending therein your ſpecial help and advantage) hath ſet many induſtrious pens to work, to write the lives of the ſaints, and preſerve for your uſe, their holy ſayings, and heavenly actions. He bids you "take them for an example," James v. 10. Oh! what excellent men are paſſed on before you! what renowned Worthies have led the way! Men, whoſe converſations were in heaven, whilſt they tabernacled on earth. Whilſt this lower world had their bodies, the world above had their hearts, and their affections. Their actions, and their deſigns were all for heaven. Men that improved troubles and comfort; loſſes and gains; ſmiles and frowns, and all for heaven. Men that did extract heaven out of ſpirituals, out of temporals, out of all things; their hearts were full of heavenly meditations, their mouths of heavenly communications, and their practices of heavenly inclinations: O what ſingular help is this! Where they followed Chriſt, and kept the way, they are propounded for your imitation; and where any of them turned aſide, you have a mark ſet upon that action, for your caution and prevention. Doth any ſtrange or unuſual trial befal you, in which you are ready to ſay with the church, Lam. i. 12. "Was there ever any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow?" Here you may ſee "the ſame "affliction accompliſhed in your brethren," 1 Pet. v. 9. Here is ſtore of good company to encourage you. Do the world and the devil endeavour to turn you from your duty, by loading it with ſhameful ſcoffs, or ſufferings? In this caſe you may look to Jeſus, who deſpiſed the ſhame; and to your brethren, "who counted it their honour to be diſhonoured for the name "of Chriſt *," as the original of the text, Acts v. 41. may be

* Ὅτι ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι.

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translated. Is it a dishonour to thee, to be ranked with Abraham, Moses, David, and such as were the glory of the ages they lived in? Art thou at any time under a faint fit of discouragement; and ready to despond under any burden? Oh how mayest thou be animated by such examples, when such a qualm comes over thy heart? Some sparks of their holy courage cannot chuse but steal into thy breast, whilst thou considerest them. In them, God hath set before thee the possibility of overcoming all difficulties, thou seest men of the same mould, who had the same trials, discouragements and fears, that now thou hast, and yet overcame all. How is thy unbelief checked, when thou sayest, *Oh! I shall never reach the end*, I shall one day utterly perish! Why dost thou say so? Why may not such a poor creature as thou art, be carried through as well as they? Had not they the same temptations and corruptions with you? Were they not all troubled with a naughty heart, an ensnaring world, and a busy devil, as well as you? Alas! when they put on the divine, they did not put off the human nature; but complained, and feared, as you do; and yet were carried through all.

O what an advantage have you this way! They that first trusted in Christ, had not such helps as you. You stand upon their shoulders. You have the benefit of their experiences. You that are fallen into the last times, have certainly the best helps to holiness; and yet, will not you live strictly and purely? Will you put on the name and profession of Christians, and yet be lofty in your spirits; earthly in your designs; neglective of duty; frothy in your communications? Pray, from which of all the saints did you learn to be proud? Did you learn that from Christ, or any of his? From which of his saints did you learn to be earthly and covetous, passionate or censorious, over-reaching and crafty? If you have read of any such evils committed by them, have you not also read of their shame and sorrow, their repentance and reformations? If you have found any such blots in their lives, it was left there designedly, to prevent the like in yours. O what an help to holiness is this!

Thirdly, And this is not all. You have not only a principle within you, and a pattern before you, but you have also an omnipotent assistant to help, and encourage you throughout your way. Are you feeble and infirm? and is every temptation, even the weakest, strong enough to turn you out of the way of your duty? Lo, God hath sent his Spirit to help your infirmities, Rom. viii. 26. no matter then how weak you are, how many and mighty your difficulties and temptations are, as long

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as you have such an assistant to help you. Great is your advantage for a holy life this way also. For,

(1.) *First*, When a temptation to sin presses sore upon you, he pleads with your consciences within, whilst Satan is tempting without. How often hath he brought such scriptures to your remembrance, at the very opportunity, as have saved you out of the temptation? If you attend his voice, you may hear such a voice within you, as that, Jer. xliv. 4. "O do not this abominable thing which I hate!" What mighty strivings were there in the heart of Spira, as himself relates? He heard, as it were, a voice within him, saying, *Do not write, Spira, do not write.* To this purpose is that promise, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. "Thine eyes "shall behold thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word "behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye "turn to the right-hand, and when ye turn to the left." Here you have a two-fold help to holiness, the outward teaching of the word, ver. 20. and the inward teachings of the Spirit, ver. 21. He shall say *this is the way*, when ye are turning aside to the right-hand, or to the left. Alluding to a shepherd, saith one, who driving his sheep before him; whistles them in, when he sees them ready to stray.

(2.) *Secondly*, When ye walk holily and closely with God in your duties, and the Spirit encourages you to go on, by those inward comforts, sealings, and joys, you have from him at such times; how often does he entertain your souls in public ordinances, in private duties, with his hidden Manna, with marrow and fatness, with incomparable and unspeakable comforts, and all this to strengthen you in your way, and encourage you to hold on?

(3.) *Thirdly*, When you are indisposed for duties, and find your hearts empty and dry, he is ready to fill them, quicken and raise them; so that oftentimes the beginnings and end of your prayers, hearing, or meditations, are as vastly different, as if one man had begun, and another ended the duty. O then, what assistances for a holy life have you! Others indeed are bound to resist temptations, as well as you; but, alas, having no special assistance from the Spirit, what can they do? It may be, they reason with temptation a little while, and in their own strength resolve against it; but how easy a conquest doth Satan make, where no greater opposition is made to him, than this? Others are bound to hear, meditate, and pray as well as you; else the neglect of those duties would not be their sin: But, alas, what pitiful work do they make of it! being left to the hardness and vanity of their own hearts; when you spread your

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ſails, you have a gale, but they lie wind-bound, heart-bound, and can do nothing ſpiritually in a way of duty.

Fourthly, and laſtly, to mention no more, You have a further advantage to this holy life, by all the rods of God, that are at any time upon you. I might ſhew you in many particulars, the advantages this way alſo, but I ſhall only preſent theſe three to your obſervation at this time.

Firſt, By theſe you are clogged, to prevent your ſtraying and wandering. Others may wander even as far as hell, and God will not ſpend a ſanctified rod upon them, to reduce or ſtop them; but ſaith, "Let them alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. But if you wander out of the way of holineſs, he will clog you with one trouble or other, to keep you within bounds, 2 Cor. xii. 7. "Leſt I ſhould be "lifted up, a thorn in the fleſh; a meſſenger of Satan, was "ſent to buffet me." So David, Pſal. cxix. 67. "Before I was "afflicted, I went aſtray; but now I have kept thy word." Afflictions are uſed by God, as thorns by huſband-men, to ſtop the gaps and keep you from breaking out of God's way, Hoſ. ii. 6. "I will hedge up her way with thorns, and build a wall, "that ſhe ſhall not find her paths." A double alluſion; 1. To cattle that are apt to ſtray, *I will hedge up thy way with thorns.* 2. To the ſea, which is apt to overflow the country, *I will build a wall to prevent inundations.* Holy Baſil was a long time ſorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, he often prayed for the removal of it; at laſt, God removed it, but, in the room of it, he was ſorely exerciſed with the motions and temptations of luſt; which, when he perceived, he heartily deſired his head-ach again, to prevent a worſe evil. You little know the ends and uſes of many of your afflictions. Are you exerciſed with bodily weakneſs? it is a mercy you are ſo; and if theſe pains and infirmities were removed, theſe clogs taken off, you may with Baſil, wiſh for them again, to prevent worſe evils. Are you poor? why, with that poverty God hath clogged your pride. Are you reproached? with theſe reproaches God hath clogged your ambition. Corruptions are prevented by your afflictions. And, is not this a marvellous help to holineſs of life?

Secondly, By your afflictions, your corruptions are not only clogged, but purged. By theſe God dries up and conſumes that ſpring of ſin, that defiles your lives, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this "therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is "all the fruit to take away ſin." God orders your wants to kill your wantonneſs; and makes your poverty poiſon to your pride. They are God's phyſic, to purge ill humours out of

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your souls. * "When they fall by the sword, and by famine, "and by captivity, and by spoil, it is to try them, and to purge "them, and to make them white?" They are both purges and lavatories to your souls. Others have the same afflictions that you have, but they do not work on them as on you; they are to you as fire for purging, and water for cleansing; and yet, shall not your lives be clean? It is true, (as one well observes upon that place of Daniel), Christ is the only lavatory, and his blood the only fountain to wash away sin: but, in the virtue and efficacy of that blood, sanctified afflictions are cleansers and purgers too.

A cross without a Christ never made any man better, but, with Christ, saints are much the better for the cross. Hath God been (as it were) so many days and nights a whitening you, and yet is not the hue of your conversation altered? Hath he put you so many times into the furnace, and yet is not your dross separated? The more afflictions you have been under, the more assistance you have had for this life of holiness.

Thirdly, By all your troubles, God hath been weaning you from the world, the lusts, loves, and pleasures of it; and drawing out your souls to a more excellent life and state than this. He makes your sorrows, in this life, give a lustre to the glory of the next. Whoever hath, be sure you shall have no rest here; and all, that you may long more ardently for that to come. He often makes you groan, "being burdened, to be "cloathed with your house from heaven," 1 Cor. v. 4. And yet will you not be weaned from the lusts, customs, and evils of it? O what manner of persons should you be for heavenly and holy conversations? You stand upon the higher ground. You have, as it were, the wind and tide with you. None are assisted for this life as you are. Put all this together, and see what this second argument contributes towards your further conviction, and persuasion to holiness of life. Have you received a supernatural principle, fitting you for, and inclining you to, holy actions, resisting and holding you back from sin? Hath God also set before you such eminent patterns to encourage, and quicken you, in your way? Doth the Spirit himself stand ready, so many ways, to assist and help you in all difficulties, and hath God hedged up the way of sin, with the thorns of affliction, to prevent your wandering, and yet will you turn aside? Will you offer violence to your own principles, and new nature? Refuse to follow such leaders as have beaten the way

* Dan. xi. 33, 34, 35.

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before you? Reſiſt, or neglect the gracious aſſiſtances of the bleſſed Spirit, which he offers you in every need, and venture upon ſin, though God hath hedged up your way with afflictions? O how can you do ſuch great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt ſuch grace as this!

Methinks, I need ſay no more to convince you how much you are concerned to keep the iſſues of life pure, none being ſo much obliged to it, or aſſiſted for it, as you are. But when I remember that Joaſh loſt the compleat victory over the Syrians, becauſe he ſmote not his arrows often enough upon the ground, 2 Kings xiii. 8. I ſhall level one arrow more at this mark: For, indeed, that can never be enough preſſed, which can never be enough practiſed. And therefore,

Conſid. 3. *Thirdly*, It will yet farther appear to be your high concernment, to exalt holineſs in your converſations, becauſe of the manifold and great uſes which God hath to make of the viſible holineſs and purity of your lives, both in this world and that to come. The uſes God puts the converſation-holineſs of his people in this world, are theſe, among others.

Firſt, *To win over ſouls to Chriſt, and bring them in love with religion.* Practical holineſs is a very lovely, attractive, and obliging thing. If the Heathen could call moral virtue *verticordia, turn-heart*, from that obliging and winning power it exerciſes upon the hearts of men: if they could ſay of it, that were it viſible to human eyes, all men would adore it, and fall in love with it; how much rather may we ſay ſo of true holineſs, made viſible in the lives of ſaints! This is the *turn-heart* indeed. It makes the ſouls of men to cling and cleave to the perſons in whom it is; as it is propheſied, Zech. viii. 23. of the Jews, when they ſhall be called (which ſhall be a time of great holineſs) "in that day, ten men out of all languages of the nations "ſhall take hold of the ſkirt of him that is a Jew, ſaying, we "will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." So much of God as appears in men, ſo much drawing excellency there is in them. And this is the apoſtle's argument, 1 John i. 3. "That ye may have fellowſhip with us." Why, what is there in your fellowſhip to invite men to you? "Truly our "fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus." Who can chooſe but covet their company, that keep company every day with God? Great is the efficacy of viſible holineſs to work upon the hearts of men; either as a *concauſe*, working in fellowſhip with the word, or as a ſingle inſtrument, working ſolitarily without the word.

Where God is pleaſed to afford the word unto men, there the

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practical holiness of saints is of singular use, to assist and help it in its operation upon the hearts of men. When the lives of *Christians* sensibly exhibit that to the eyes of *men*, which the gospel doth to their ears; when so we preach, and so ye believe and live; when we draw by our doctrines, and you draw with us by our examples, when we hold forth the word of life doctrinally, and you hold it forth practically; as Phil. ii. 16. Where is the heart that can stand before us? O! when the plain and powerful *gospel* pierces the ears of men, and, at the same time, the visible holiness of professors shines so full in their faces, that they must rather put out their own eyes, or else be forced to acknowledge, that God is in you of a truth; then it will work to purpose upon souls. Then will Christ see of the travail of his soul daily.

Yea, if God deny the word to men, yet this practical holiness I am speaking of, may be to them an ordinance for conversion. This way, souls *may be won to Christ without the word*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. iii. 1. Though pulpits should be silent, and vision fail; yet, if you would this way turn preachers, if your lives may but preach the reality, excellency, and sweetness of Jesus Christ, and his ways; and, if you would this way preach down the love of the world, and let men see what poor vanities these are; and preach up the necessity and beauty of holiness; surely you, even you, might be honoured to bring many souls to Christ, to turn many to righteousness, and cause many to bless God, on your behalf, in the day of visitation. This is the use God hath for the holiness and purity of your lives, and doth not this engage you strongly to it? What, not when it may prove the means of eternal life to others? Surely, if you have any bowels of mercy in you, you cannot hide from others that whereby they may be saved. How can you instead of holding forth the *word of life*, (which is your manifest duty) visibly hold forth the *works of death* before men? Have you been beholding to others, and shall none be beholding to you for help towards heaven? Dare you say, let others shift as well as they can, find the way to heaven by themselves if they can, they shall have no benefit by your light? If you be Christians, you are Christians of a different stamp and spirit from all those we find described in scripture. Should not you rather say as the Lepers did, 2 Kings vii. 6. "Do we well to hold our peace," whilst others are perishing? Shall the *lips of ministers*, and the *lives* of *Christians*, be both silenced together? Shall poor sinners neither hear any thing from us, nor see any thing from you, that may help them to Christ? The Lord have mercy then upon the

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poor world, and pity it, for its case is desperate. O put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy. Destroy not, by the looseness of your conversations, so many souls; for your scandalous miscarriages are like a bag of poison put into the spring, which supplies the whole city with water.

Secondly, *Another use God hath for it, is to recover and salve the credit of religion, which by the apostacies of hypocrites, and scandalous falls of careless Christians, is wounded, and exposed to contempt.* Much reproach by this means is brought upon religion, and how shall that reproach be rolled away, but by your strictness and purity? By this the world must be convinced that all are not so. Though some be a blot to the name of Christ, yet others are his glory. The more others slur and disgrace religion, the more God expects you to honour and adorn it. I remember Chrysostome brings in the persecutors speaking to two renowned martyrs, after this manner, *Nonne videtis alios vestri ordinis hoc feciſſe?* (i. e.) Why are you so nice and scrupulous? See you not that others of your rank and profession have done these things? To which they returned this brave answer, *Nos hac potiſſimum ratione viriliter ſtabimus*, (i. e.) have they done it? For that very reason we will stand it out like men, and will never yield to it. There is an holy *Antiperiſtaſis* in the zeal of a Christian, which makes it, like fire, burn most vehemently in the coldest weather. If men make void God's law, therefore will David love his commandments above gold, Psal. cxix. 127. If there be many Pendletons among professors who will betray Christ and his truth to save their flesh; God will have some Sanders to repair that breach, by their constancy and courage in appearing for them.

Thirdly, God makes use of it for the *encouragement of his ministers, who labour among you.* And indeed it is of no small use to refresh their hearts, and strengthen their hands, in their painful work: "Now we live (saith the apostle) if ye stand fast in "the Lord," 1 Thess. iii. 8. He speaks, as if their very life lay at the mercy of the people, because so much of the joy and comfort of it is wrapt up in their regularity and stedfastness. God knows what an hard providence his poor ministers have, and how many discouragements attend them in their work; hear how * one of them expresses it, "Ministers would not be gray-headed "so soon, nor die so fast, notwithstanding their great labours, if "they were but successful; but this cuts to the heart, and makes "us bleed in secret, that though we do much, yet it comes to "nothing. Our work dies, therefore we die. Not so much

* Lockyer upon the Colossians, p. 528, 529.

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" that we labour, as that we labour in vain: When our mini-
" ſtry petrifies, turns hearts into ſtones, and theſe taken up
" and thrown at us, this kills us; the recoiling of our pains
" kills us. When our peace returns to us, when we ſpend
" our ſtrength to make men more nought than they were;
" this wounds our hearts: Which ſhould be conſidered by ſin-
" ners, to kill one's ſelf, and one's miniſter too, which would
" ſave them; what a bloody condition is this? † Every drop
" that hath fallen from our heart and hand, from our eye-
" lids, and eye-brows, ſhall be all gathered up, and put as mar-
" ginal notes by all our labours, and all put in one volume toge-
" ther, and this volume put in your hands at the great day, and
" opened leaf after leaf, and read diſtinctly and exactly to you."

Chriſtians, you hear our caſe, you ſee our work, now a little to chear our ſpirits in the midſt of our hard and killing labours, God ſends us to you for a little refreſhment, that, by beholding your holy and heavenly converſation, your chearful obedience, and ſweet agreement in the ways of God; we may be comforted over all theſe troubles, 2 Theſ. i. 3, 4. And will you wound and kill our hearts too? O what a cut will this be!

Fourthly, *God hath further uſe for holineſs of your lives; this ſerves to daunt the hearts, and overawe the conſciences of his, and your enemies.* And ſometimes it hath had a ſtrange influence, and effect upon them. There is a great deal of awful Majeſty in holineſs, and when it ſhines upon the conſcience of a wicked man, it makes him ſtoop, and do obeyſance to it. Which turns to a teſtimony for Chriſt and his ways before the world. Thus Herod was over-awed by the ſtrict and holy life of John, he feared him, knowing that he was a juſt and holy man, and obſerved (or preſerved and ſaved) him.

That bloody tyrant was convinced in his conſcience of the worth and excellency of that ſervant of God, and was forced to reverence him for his holineſs. So Darius, Dan. vi. 14, 18, 19, 20. What conflicts had he himſelf about Daniel, whom he had condemned; his conſcience condemned him, for condemning ſo holy, and righteous a perſon. "Then the king went
" to his palace, and paſt the night in faſtings; neither were in-
" ſtruments of muſic brought before him, and his ſleep went
" from him. He goes early in the morning to the den, and cries
" with a lamentable voice, O Daniel, ſervant of the living God."
How much is this for the honour of holineſs, that it conquers the very perſecutors of it; and makes them ſtoop to the meaneſt

† Lockyer, upon the Coloſſians, p. 551.

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ſervant of God! It is ſaid of Henry II. of France, that he was ſo daunted by the heavenly majeſty of a poor taylor that was burnt before him, that he went home ſad, and vowed, that he would never be preſent at the death of ſuch men any more. When Valence the emperor came in perſon to apprehend Baſil, he ſaw ſuch majeſty in his very countenance, that he reeled at the very ſight of him; and had fallen backward to the ground, had not his ſervant ſtept in to ſupport him. O holineſs, holineſs, thou art a conqueror. So much, O Chriſtians, as you ſhew of it in your lives, ſo much you preſerve your intereſt in the conſciences of your enemies: caſt off this, and they deſpiſe you preſently.

Fifthly, and *laſtly*, God will uſe the purity of your converſations, *to judge and convince the world in the great day* ‡. It is true, the world ſhall be judged by the goſpel, but your lives ſhall alſo be produced as a commentary upon it; and God will not only ſhew them by the word how they ought to have lived, but bring forth your lives and ways to ſtop their mouths, by ſhewing how others did live. And this I ſuppoſe is intended in that text, 1 Cor. vi. 2. "The ſaints ſhall judge the world, yea, "we ſhall judge Angels;" that is, our examples are to condemn their lives and practices, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. is ſaid to condemn the world by building the ark, *i. e.* his faith in the threatning, and obedience to the command, condemned their ſupineneſs, infidelity and diſobedience. They ſaw him every day about that work, diligently preparing for a deluge, and yet were not moved with the like fear that he was; this left them inexcuſable: ſo when God ſhall ſay in that day to the careleſs world, did you not ſee the care, and diligence, the holy zeal, watchfulneſs, and ſelf-denial, of my people, who lived among you? How many times have they been watching, and praying, when you have been drinking, or ſleeping! Was it not eaſy to reflect when you ſaw their pains, and diligence; have not I a ſoul to look after as well as they; a heaven to win or loſe, as well as they? O how ſpeechleſs and inexcuſable will this render wicked men, yea, it ſhall not only be uſed to judge them, but *angels* alſo. How many ſhocks of temptations have poor ſaints ſtood; whereas

‡ When therefore the faithful are ſaid to ſit in judgment with Chriſt, it muſt be underſtood, not of any authority and power of judging of themſelves, but, (1.) Of that which is given them in Chriſt their head. (2.) Of their approbation of the ſentence pronounced by Chriſt. *Apoc.* xix. 1. (3.) Of their bearing witneſs by their miniſtry or converſation (againſt the wicked) and the compariſon of their own lives with theirs, by which the juſtice of the Judge ſhall be manifeſt.

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they fell without a tempter? They ſtood not in their integrity, though created in ſuch excellent natures; how much then are you concerned on this very account alſo, to walk exactly! if not inſtead of judging them, you ſhall be condemned with them.

And thus you ſee what uſe your lives and actions ſhall be put to; and are theſe inconſiderable uſes? Is the winning over ſouls to God a ſmall matter? Is the ſalving the honour, and reputation of godlineſs, a ſmall matter? Is the encouraging the hearts, and ſtrengthening the hands of God's poor miniſters, amidſt their ſpending, killing labours, a ſmall matter? Is the awing of the conſciences of your enemies, and judging them in the laſt day, a light thing? Which of theſe can you call ſo?

O then, ſince you are thus *obliged* to holineſs of life, thus ſingularly *aſſiſted* for it; and ſince there are ſuch great dependencies upon it, and uſes for it, both now, and in the world to come; ſee that ye be holy in all manner of converſation. See that, "as ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo ye walk in "him;" always remembring, that, for this very end, Chriſt hath redeemed, or "delivered you out of the hands of your e-"nemies, that you might ſerve him without fear, in righteouſ-"neſs and holineſs all the days of your lives," Luke i. 74, 75. And to how little purpoſe will be all that I have preached, and you have heard, of Chriſt, if it be not converted into practical godlineſs? This is the ſcope and deſign of it all.

And now, Reader, thou art come to the laſt leaf of this treatiſe of Chriſt, it will be but a little while, and thou ſhalt come to the laſt page or day of thy life; and thy laſt moment in that day. Wo, to thee, wo and alas for ever, if an intereſt in this bleſſed Redeemer be then to get. The world affords not a ſadder ſight, than a poor Chriſtleſs ſoul ſhivering upon the brink of eternity. To ſee the poor ſoul that now begins to awake out of its long dream, at its entrance into the world of realities, to ſhrink back into the body, and cry, *O I cannot, I dare not die.* And then the tears run down. Lord, what will become of me? O what ſhall be my eternal lot? This, I ſay, is as ſad a ſight as the world affords. That this may not be thy caſe, reflect upon what thou haſt read in theſe ſermons; judge thyſelf in the light of them. Obey the calls of the Spirit in them. Let not thy ſlight and formal ſpirit, float upon the ſurface of theſe truths, like a feather upon the water; but get them deeply fixed upon thy ſpirit, by the Spirit of the Lord; turning them into life and power upon thee; and ſo animating the whole courſe and tenor of thy converſation by them, that it may proclaim to all that know thee, that thou art one who eſteemeſt all to be but droſs, that thou mayſt win Chriſt.

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THE METHOD OF GRACE IN THE GOSPEL-REDEMPTION.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY,

To the Worſhipful JOHN UPTON, *of* Lupton, *Eſq; and the moſt accompliſhed and virtuous* Lady, *his dear* Conſort, *the* Author *wiſhes Grace, Mercy, and Peace.*

Honoured and worthy Friends,

IT was a comfortable expreſſion, which Ambroſe uſed in his funeral oration, at the death of Theodoſius; * "That though "he were gone, yet he was not wholly gone; for he had left "Honorius, with others of his children, behind him, in whom "Theodoſius ſtill lived." Your renowned and worthy *anceſtors* are gone, yet (bleſſed be God) they are not wholly gone; whilſt the prudence, piety, and publicneſs of their ſpirits, ſtill lives and flouriſhes in you, the top branch of a renowned and religious family. It is a great truth, which Philo Judaeus recommends to the obſervation of all poſterity, "† That it is not a natural "deſcent from the moſt honourable and illuſtrious progenitors, "nor the greateſt affluence of riches and pleaſures that makes a "man either honourable or happy; but the inhabitation of God "in his ſoul, as in his temple, tho' (ſaith he) thoſe that never "taſted religion, nor have ſeen its glory, will not credit this aſ-

* *Theodoſius tantus imperator receſſit a nobis, ſed non totus receſſit; reliquit enim nobis liberos ſuos, in quibus debemus eum agnoſcere.* Ambroſ. in obit. Theod.

† Τας δ' υμνησαι την ευγενειαν ως μεγιστον αγαθον κ) μεγαλων αγαθων αιτιον, κ μαλιστας επαινουντων, ει πρωτον μεν ουσας τας εκ παλαιοπλουτων κ) φαλαινοδοξων ευγενεις., μητε των προγονων αν ων ευχοι γενεσθαι.—Βελτιους γαρ ο Θεος δια ημεροτητα κ) φιλανθρωπιαν κ) παρ ημιν τω ιδρυσασθαι, νεων αξιοπρεπεστερον επι γης εχ ευρε λογισμω κρειττω ο γαρ νους αγαλματοφορια το αγαθον, και απιστουσι τινες των μη γευσαμενων σοφιας η χειλεσιν ακροις. *Philo Judaeus* περι Ευγενειας, a book fit for the hands of all gentlemen, tranſlated by *Laurentius Humphredus* in his excellent tract *de Nobilitate.*

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" ſertion." " The ſoul which is filled with God, (ſaith * Ploti-
" nus) and brings forth the beautiful fruits of righteouſneſs, this
" is the truly noble ſoul :" Our new birth makes us more honourable than our natural birth, let our birthright dignities be what they will. The children of nobles are, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others : *Omnis Sanguis concolor*, all blood is of one colour : it is all tainted in Adam, and mingled together in his poſterity. " There is no king, ſaith † Seneca, which roſe
" not from a ſervant; there is no *ſervant* which roſe not from
" a *king* : theſe things have been blended, and toſſed to and fro
" by a long variety."

But though the privileges of natural birth ſignify nothing as to eternal ſalvation, yet in civil and political reſpects and conſiderations, thoſe that by birth, education, or eſtate, poſſeſs an higher ſtation in the world, differ from the vulgar, as ſtars of greater magnitude and luſtre : their intereſt and influence are great in theſe things, and the welfare of kingdoms ‡ greatly depends upon them.

It is therefore a great deſign of the enemy of mankind, to corrupt perſons of eminent rank and quality both in religion and morality; and by their influence and example, to infect and poiſon the whole body politic; and his ſucceſs herein, deſerves to be greatly lamented and bewailed. Perſons of eminency are more eſpecially ‖ obliged to ſhun baſe and ſordid actions. Hierom profeſſed § he ſaw nothing deſirable in *nobili-*

* Ψυχη πληρωθεισα θεου γεννα το καλλος, γεννα τεν δικαιοσυνην. *Plotinus.*

† *Neminem regem non ex ſervis eſſe oriundum, neminem ſervum non ex regibus : omnia iſta longa varietas miſcuit, et ſurſum deorſum fortuna verſavit.* Sen. Ep. 44.

‡ Who manages the reins of government, who is preſent at, and preſides over, both private and public matters, but perſons of eminent rank and quality? Who moderates in the ſenate, preſides in courts, commands at home and abroad? Chief men and nobles ſurely. Who commands and countermands, acts and overacts, manages and canvaſſes all affairs, who makes laws and reſcinds them, who governs the ſtate in time of peace, and commands the forces in time of war, but great men and nobles? No wonder that the management of public affairs be committed to him, who both by perſonal merit and renown of his anceſtors hath recommended himſelf to the good report and eſteem of mankind. *Laurent. Humphred. on Nobility.*

‖ *In maxima fortuna, minima eſt licentia.* Saluſt.

§ *Nihil aliud video in nobilitate appetendum, niſi quod nobiles quadam*

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ty, except this, that such persons are bound by a certain kind of necessity, not to degenerate from the probity, or stain the glory of their *ancestors*. But alas! how many in our times, have not only exposed Christianity to contempt, but obscured * the glory of their own families, and the kingdom in which they had their birth and breeding; so that if you will take right marks of your way to heaven you will have little direction from those of your own rank, but as † mariners take their direction at sea, by looking up to the heavens, so must you. In this general corruption it is very hard to escape infection; (many as Salvian complained) ‡ are compelled to be *evil*, lest they should be accounted *vile*, and incur the offence of God, to avoid the slights and censures of men. Although there is no more reason why they should be offended at the rational and religious pleasures, you, and other pious gentlemen take in the ways of godliness, than there is, that you should envy the sinful pleasures they take in the ways of wickedness. It was an excellent apology, that Tertullian made for the Christians of his time, against the Gentiles, "Wherein (saith § he) do we offend you, if we believe "there are other pleasures? If we will not partake with you in "your delights, it is only our own injury: we reject your plea-"sures, and you are not delighted with ours."

But by how much the infection spreads and prevails among

quadam necessitate constringuntur, ne ab antiquorum probitate degenerent. Hieron.

* God grant that the end proposed may be obtained, that the ancient and truly venerable nobility may at length return, who by the honour of prudence and knowledge, and lustre of renowned deeds, may obscure the fame of progenitors, and quite remove and wipe off the stain brought on its august name. *Humph. on Nobility.*

† In the same manner, you ought to seek the path of life, that the mariners at sea seek the designed course for their ships, who, if they observe not some luminary in the heavens, steer but an uncertain course, but whosoever is resolved to keep in the right path of life, must not look down to the earth but to heaven; and (to speak more plainly) he ought not to follow men but God; therefore if thou wouldst always keep thine eyes fixed on heaven, and observe the sun whence he ariseth, and take him as thy guide, thy feet of themselves will keep straight in the way. *Lactant. lib.* 1. *c.* 8.

‡ *Mali esse coguntur ne viles habeantur.* Salv. de Gubernat.

§ *Quo vos offendimus si alias præsumimus voluptates? si oblectari nolumus, nostra injuria est: reprobamus quæ placent vobis, nec vos nostra delectant.* Tertul. Apolog. adv. Gent.

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thoſe of your order, by ſo much the more we have reaſon to value you, and all thoſe that remain ſound and untainted, both in religion and morality, as perſons worthy of ſingular reſpect and honour: and bleſſed be God there is yet a number of ſuch left.

Sir, It was a ſpecial happineſs, which Chryſoſtom earneſtly recommended to perſons of quality, that they would ſo order their converſations, that their parents, might rather glory in them, than they in their parents; "Otherwiſe (ſaith * he) it is "better to riſe to honour, from a contemptible parent, than to "be contemptible from an honourable parent;" but bleſſed be God, you and your worthy anceſtors, mutually reflect honour upon each other.

Had God ſuffered you to degenerate, as many do, it would have been but a poor conſolation to have ſaid, My *progenitors* were men of honour, the love and delight of their country. This, as † one excellently expreſſeth it, would be the ſame thing, as if one that is blind himſelf, ſhould boaſt what a ſharp and piercing ſight his father had; or one that is lame himſelf, ſhould glory in thoſe feats of activity his grandfather performed; but God (to whoſe bounty therefore you are doubly obliged) hath made you the inheritor of their virtues, as well as of their lands, and therein fulfilled many thouſand prayers, which have been poured out to God upon your account. But I muſt forbear, leſt I provoke others to envy, and draw upon myſelf the ſuſpicion of flattery. What hath been already ſaid, may ſerve for a ſufficient reaſon of this dedication. I know the ‡ agreeableneſs of ſuch diſcourſes, to the pious diſpoſitions of your ſouls, is of itſelf ſufficient to make it welcome to you. It is a treatiſe of Chriſt, yea, of the method of grace, in the applicati-

* *Melius eſt de contemptibili fieri clarum, quam de claro genere contemptibilem eſſe*, Chryſoſt. in Mat. 4. *Nec fieri poteſt quin hunc comitetur ignobilitas etiamſi vel avis, vel proavis natus ſit vita in culpatis, qui ab eorum ſtudiis alienus eſt, ſeque longiſſime tum dictis, tum factis a nobilitate diſjungit.*

† What profit is the ſharp-ſightedneſs of anceſtors to the offspring, which is deprived of ſight? What help can it give the man that is dumb, for attaining the power of ſpeech, that his parents and grandfathers had the voice of orators? In like manner, juſt parents cannot help their unjuſt children; nor the temperate, thoſe who are luxurious: nor at any rate, can the good communicate goodneſs to the bad. *Philo.* περι Ευγενειας.

‡ When the mind of the hearer is good and gracious, it eaſily aſſents to ſpeeches of truth. *Chryſoſt. Hom.* 26. *in Mat.*

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on of Christ; than which no subject can be more necessary to study, or sweet to experience. * All goodness is attractive, how powerfully attractive then must Jesus Christ be, who is the ocean of all goodness, from whom all streams off goodness are derived, and into whom, they all empty themselves? † If Pindarus could say of the lovely Theoxenus, that whosoever saw that august and comely face of his, and was not surprised with amazement, and inflamed with love, must have an heart of adamant or brass, what then shall we resemble that man's heart unto, that hath no ferverous affections kindled in it by the incomparable beauty of Christ! a beauty, which excels in lustre and brightness, that visible light which so dazzles our eyes ‡, as that light doth darkness itself; as Plato speaks of the divine light Christ is ὑπερβαλλοντως καλος, an inexpressible beauty, and all other beauties are but εικον, και σκια an image, nay, a shadow of his beauty. How was holy Ignatius ravished with desires after Christ, when § he cried out, O how I long to be thrown into the jaws of those lions, which I hear roaring for me! and if they will not dispatch me the sooner, και προσβιασομαι, I will enforce them to it by violence, that I may enjoy the sight of my blessed Jesus. O my heart, (saith ‖ another) how is it thou art not drawn up by the very root, by thy desires after Christ? The necessity, and the trial of our union with, and interest in, this lovely LORD JESUS, is the main subject of this discourse. Without the personal application of Christ by faith, our hopes of heaven are but deluding dreams, Heb. iii. 11. "I sware in my "wrath, ει εισελευσονται, if they shall enter into my rest:" What then? Nay, there is all: but it is a dreadful *Apostopesis* (as one calls it) such a pause, as may justly shake every vein of the unbeliever's heart: *If they shall enter;* as if he had said, If ever they come into my glory, then say, I am no God, for I have sworn the contrary.

* Ουδεν αλλο εστιν ὁ ερωτιν ανθρωποι η τὸ αγαθὸν ανελκει παντα ϗ᾽ αναγκα τους ουκειους ελαμβανειν ως ηλιος. *Plato.*

† Ακτινας προσωπὸ μαρμαρυζουσας δρακεις ος μη πόθω κυμαινεται, ως αδαμαντος.

‡ Το νοητον φως, το αρχετυπον θαυμων τοσουτω τὸ ορατὸ λαμπροτερον τὸ ϗ᾽ αυτοειδες εστιν ωσπερ ηλιος σκιατς. *Plato.*

§ Ο εμος ερως εσταυρωται ϗ᾽ ουκ εστιν εν εμοι το πυρ το φιλυλον, αλλ υδωρ αλλομενον, &c. ωκυμιν των θηριων, ινα τὸ Ιησὸ Χριστὸ επιτυχω. *Ignatii Epist.*

‖ *O cor meum quomodo non te evellis post tantum decorem?* Nieremberg. *Vivere renuo, ut Christo vivam.*

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I will not be tiresome, but conclude all in a few requests to you and to God for you both. That which I request of you is,

(1.) That you will search and try your own hearts by these truths, especially now, when so great trials are like to be made of every man's root and foundation in religion. Account that your first work, which Bellarmine calls "the first error of "Protestants," to make sure your interest in Christ; * every thing is as its foundation is: a true *diamond* will endure the smartest stroke of the hammer, but a false one will fly.

(2.) That you be humble under all that dignity and honour, which God hath put upon you; be ye cloathed with humility. It was the glory of the primitive Christians, that they † did not speak but live great things: humility will be the lustre of your other excellencies: estates and honours are but appendants and fine trappings, which add not any real worth, yet ‡ how are some vain minds puffed up with these things! But ye have not so learned Christ.

(3.) That you steadily persevere in those good ways of God, in which you have walked, and beware of heart, or life apostacy. You expect happiness whilst God is in heaven, and God expects holiness from you whilst you are on earth. It was an excellent truth which Tossanus § recommended to his posterity in his last-will and testament, from his own experience: "I beseech "you (saith he) my dear children and kindred, that you never "be ashamed of the truths of the gospel, either by reasons of "scandals in the church, or persecutions upon it; truth may la-"bour for a time, but cannot be conquered; and I have often "found God to be wonderfully present with them that walk be-"fore him in truth, though for a time they may be opposed "with troubles and calumnies."

* *Primus Hæreticorum error est, posse fideles eam notitiam habere de sua gratia, ut certa fide statuant sibi remissa esse peccata.* Bellarm. de Just. lib. 3. cap. 3.

† *Non elaquimur magna, sed vivimus.* Tertul. Apolog.

‡ They report that Bucephalus without his furniture, would suffer a groom on his back, but when dressed with royal trappings and studded bridles, would suffer none to mount him but the king himself; so it is truly the case with these upstart nobles among us, *&c.*

§ *Obtester etiam vos liberos, et generos carissimos ne illius veritatis evangelicæ unquam vos pudeat: potuit enim vinci veritas: et non semel expertus sum Dominum Deum mirabiliter adesse iis qui coram ipso ambulunt, et in sua vocatione sedulo et integre versantur; licet ad tempus, odiis, aut simultatibus, aut calumniis agitentur.* Melch. Adamus, in vita Tossani.

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(4.) Lastly, That you keep a strict and constant watch over your own hearts, lest they be ensnared by the tempting, charming, and dangerous snares, attending a full and easy condition in the world. There are temptations suited to all conditions. Those that are poor and low in estate and reputation, are tempted to cozen, cheat, lie, and flatter, and all to get up to the mount of riches and honours; but those that were born upon that mount, tho' they be more free from those temptations, yet lie exposed to others no less dangerous, and therefore we find, "Not "many mighty, not many noble are called," 1 Cor. i. 26. Many great and stately ships, which spread much sail, and draw much water, perish in the storms, when small barks creep along the shore under the wind, and get safe into their port. Never aim at an higher station in this world, than that you are in ‖: Some have wished in their dying hour, they had been lower, but no wise man ever wished himself at the top of honour, at the brink of eternity.

I will conclude all with this hearty wish for you that as God hath set you in a capacity of much service for him in your generation, so your hearts may be enlarged for God accordingly; that you may be very instrumental for his glory on earth, and may go safe, but late to heaven. That the blessings of heaven may be multiplied upon you both, and your hopeful springing branches; and that you may live to see your childrens children, and peace upon Israel. In a word, that God will follow these truths in your hands with the blessing of his Spirit; and that the manifold infirmities of him that ministers them, may be no prejudice or bar to their success with you, or any into whose hands they shall come; which is the hearty desire of

Your most faithful Friend,

and Servant in CHRIST,

JOHN FLAVEL.

‖ Hermannus, when dying, bewailed, that he had bestowed more time and pains on his palace than on the temple of God, and encouraged the luxury and wickedness of the court, which he ought to have restrained: Thus, with much grief for sin, his hope of mercy from God greatly wavering, by-standers being filled with great horror, and himself doubtful of his state, his soul entered into eternity. *Hist. Bohem.* lib. 11.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

EVERY creature, by the inſtinct of nature, or by the light of reaſon, ſtrives to avoid danger, and get out of harm's way. The *cattle* in the fields preſaging a ſtorm at hand, fly to the hedges and thickets for ſhelter. The *fowls* of heaven, by the ſame natural inſtinct, perceiving the approach of winter, take their timely flight to a warmer *climate*. This * *naturaliſts* have obſerved of them, and their obſervation is confirmed by ſcripture-teſtimony: of the *cattle* it is ſaid, Job xxxvii. 6, 7, 8. "He ſaith to the ſnow; Be thou on the earth, likewiſe the ſmall "rain, and the great rain of his ſtrength; then the beaſts go "into dens, and remain in their places;" And of the fowls of the air it is ſaid, Jer. viii. 7. "The ſtork in the heavens know-"eth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and "the ſwallow, obſerve the time of their coming."

But man being a prudent and proſpecting creature, hath the advantage of all other cratures in his foreſeeing faculty: "For "God hath taught him more than the beaſts of the earth, and "made him wiſer than the fowls of heaven," Job xxxv. 11. "And a wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both time and judgment," Eccl. viii. 5. For as there are natural ſigns of the change of the weather, Matth. xvi. 3. ſo there are moral ſigns of the changes of time and providences: yet ſuch is the ſupineneſs and inexcuſable regardleſneſs of moſt men, that they will not fear till they feel, nor think any danger very conſiderable, till it become inevitable.

We of this nation have long enjoyed the light of the glorious goſpel among us; it hath ſhone in much clearneſs upon this ſinful iſland, for more than a whole century of happy years: but the longeſt day hath an end, and we have cauſe to fear our bright ſun is going down upon us; for the ſhadows in England are grown greater than the ſubſtance, which is one ſign of approaching night, Jer. vi. 4. "The beaſts of prey creep out of "their dens and coverts," which is another ſign of night at hand, Pſal. civ. 20. "And the workmen come home apace from "their labours, and go to reſt," which is as ſad a ſign as any of the reſt, Job vii. 1, 2. Iſa. lvii. 1, 2. Happy were it, if, in

* Plin. l. 18, c. 35. Virg. Georg. l. 1.

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ſuch a juncture as this, every man would make it his work, and buſineſs to ſecure himſelf in Chriſt from the ſtorm of God's indignation, which is ready to fall upon theſe ſinful nations. It is ſaid of the Egyptians, when the ſtorm of hail was coming upon the land, Exod. ix. 20. "He that feared the word of the Lord "made his ſervants and cattle flee into the houſes." It is but an old ſight to ſee the prudence of an Egyptian, out-vying the wiſdom, and circumſpection of a Chriſtian.

God, who provides natural ſhelter and refuge for all creatures, hath not left his people unprovided with, and deſtitute of defence and ſecurity, in the moſt tempeſtuous times of national judgments. It is ſaid, Mic. v. 5. "This man (meaning the "man Chriſt Jeſus) ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall "come into our land, and when he ſhall tread in our palaces." And Iſa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy "chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thyſelf as it "were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt."

My friends, let me ſpeak as *freely*, as I am ſure I ſpeak, *ſeaſonably*. A ſound of Judgment is in our ears; "the Lord's "voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wiſdom ſhall ſee "thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. All things round about us ſeem to poſture themſelves for trouble and diſtreſs. Where is the man of wiſdom that doth not foreſee a ſhower of wrath and indignation coming? "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. "Aſk ye now, and ſee whether a man doth travail with child? "Wherefore do I ſee every man with his hand on his loins, as "a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleneſs? "Alas, for that day is great, ſo that none is like it; it is even "the day of Jacob's trouble, but he ſhall be delivered out of "it," Jer. xxx. 5, 6, 7.

Many eyes are now opened to ſee the common danger, but ſome foreſaw it long ago; when they ſaw the general decay of *Godlineſs* every where, the *notorious prophanity* and *atheiſm* that overſpread the *nations*; the ſpirit of enmity and bitterneſs againſt the power of *Godlineſs* wherever it appeared: and tho' there ſeemed to be a preſent calm, and general quietneſs; yet thoſe that were wiſe in heart could not but diſcern diſtreſs of nations, with great *perplexity*, in theſe ſeeds of judgment and calamity: But as the *ephah* fills more and more, ſo the determined wrath grows *more* and *more* viſible to every eye: and it is a fond thing to dream of *tranquillity*, in the midſt of ſo much *iniquity*. Indeed, if theſe *nations* were once ſwept with the *beſom* of *reformation*, we might hope God would not ſweep

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them with the *beſom* of *deſtruction*; but what peace can be *expected*, whilſt the higheſt *provocations* are *continued*?

It is therefore the great and preſent concernment of all to provide themſelves of a refuge before the ſtorm overtakes them: for, as Auguſtin well obſerves, *Non facile inveniuntur praeſidia in adverſitate, quae non fuerint in pace quaeſita.* O take up your lodgings in the attributes and promiſes of God before the night overtake you; view them often by faith, and clear up your intereſt in them, that you may be able to go to them in the dark, when the miniſters and ordinances of Chriſt have taken their leave of you, and bid you good night.

Whilſt many are haſting on the wrath of God by *profaneneſs*, and many be ſmiting their fellow-ſervants; and multitudes reſolve, if trouble come, to fiſh in the troubled waters for ſafety and preferment, not doubting (whenſoever the overflowing flood comes) but they ſhall ſtand dry. O that you would be mourning for their ſins, and providing better for your own ſafety.

Reader, it is thy *one thing neceſſary* to get a cleared intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; which being once obtained, thou mayeſt face the ſtorm with boldneſs, and ſay, come troubles and diſtreſſes, loſſes and trials, priſons and death, I am provided for you; do your worſt, you can do me no harm: let the winds roar, the lightnings flaſh, the rains and hail fall never ſo furiouſly, I have a good roof over my head, a comfortable lodging provided for me: "My place of defence is the munition of rocks, where "bread ſhall be given me, and my waters ſhall be ſure," Iſa. xxxiii. 16.

The deſign of the enſuing treatiſe, is to aſſiſt thee in this great work; and though it was promiſed to the world many years paſt, yet providence hath reſerved it for the fitteſt ſeaſon, and brought it to thy hand in a time of need.

It contains the method of grace in the *application of the great redemption to the ſouls of men*, as the former part contains the method of grace in the interpretation thereof by Jeſus Chriſt. The acceptation God hath given the former part, ſignified by the deſires of many, for the publication of this, hath at laſt prevailed with me (notwithſtanding the ſecret conſciouſneſs of my inequality to ſo great an undertaking) to adventure this *ſecond part* alſo, upon the ingenuity and candour of the reader.

And I conſent the more willingly to the publication of this, becauſe the deſign I firſt aimed at, could not be entire and complete without it; but eſpecially, the quality of the ſubject-matter, which (through the bleſſing and concurrence of the ſpirit)

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may be useful both to rouze the drowsy consciences of this sleepy generation, and to assist the upright, in clearing the work of the spirit upon their own souls. These considerations have prevailed with me against all discouragements.

And now, *reader*, it is impossible for me to speak particularly and distinctly to the case of thy soul, which I am ignorant of, except the Lord shall direct my discourse to it in some of the following *suppositions*.

If thou be one that hast sincerely *applied*, and received Jesus Christ by faith, this discourse (through the blessing of the Spirit) may be useful to thee, to clear and confirm thy evidences, to melt thy heart in the sense of thy mercies, and to engage and quicken thee in the way of thy duties. Here thou wilt see what great things the Lord hath done for thy soul, and how these dignities, as thou art his son or daughter, by the double title of *regeneration* and *adoption*, do oblige thee to yield up thyself to God entirely, and to say from thy heart, Lord, whatever I am, I am for thee, whatever I can do, I will do for thee, and whatever I can suffer, I will suffer thee; and all that I am, or, have, all that I can do, or suffer, is nothing to what thou hast done for my soul.

If thou be a stranger to *regeneration* and *faith*; a person that makest a *powerless profession* of Christ; that hast a name to live, but art dead; here it is *possible* thou mayest meet with something that will convince thee how dangerous a thing it is, to be an old creature, in the new creature's dress and habit; and what it is that blinds thy judgment, and is likeliest to prove thy ruin; a seasonable and full conviction whereof, will be the greatest mercy that can befal thee in this world, if thereby at last, God may help thee to put on Christ, as well as the name of Christ.

If thou be in darkness about the state of thy own soul, and willing to have it faithfully and impartially tried by the rule of the word, which will not warp to any man's humour or interest, here thou wilt find some weak assistance offered thee, to clear and disentangle thy doubting thoughts, which (through thy prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ) may lead thee to a comfortable settlement and inward peace.

If thou be a proud, conceited, presumptuous soul, who hast too little knowledge, and too much pride and self-love, to admit any doubts or scruples of thy state towards God, there are many things in this *treatise* proper for thy conviction, and better information; for woe to thee, if thou shouldst not *fear*, till thou

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begin to *feel* thy miſery, if thy troubles do not *come on* till all thy hopes are *gone off*.

I know all theſe things are performed by me with much infirmity; and that the whole management is quite below the dignity of the ſubject. But when I conſider the ſucceſs of ſermons and books in the world, hath but little relation to the elegancy of language, or accuracy of method, and that many may be *uſeful*, who cannot be *excellent*, I am willing in all humility and ſincerity to commit it to be the direction of providence, and the bleſſing of the ſpirit.

One thing I ſhall earneſtly requeſt of all the people of God, into whoſe hands this ſhall fall, that now at laſt they will be perſuaded to end all their unbrotherly quarrels and ſtrifes among themſelves, which have waſted ſo much precious time, and decayed the vital ſpirits of religion; hindred the converſion of multitudes, and increaſed and confirmed the atheiſm of the times, and now at laſt opened a breach, at which the common enemy is ready to enter, and end the quarrel to our coſt. O put on, as the *elect of God*, bowels of mercy, and a ſpirit of charity and forbearance, if not for your own ſakes, yet for the church's ſake: *Si non vis tibi parcere, parce Carthagini.*

I remember it is noted in our Engliſh hiſtory as a very remarkable thing, that when the Severn overflowed part of Somerſetſhire, it was obſerved that *dogs* and *hares*, *cats* and *rats*, to avoid the common deſtruction, would ſwim to the next riſing ground, and abide quietly together in that common danger, without the leaſt diſcovery of their natural antipathy.

The ſtory *applies* itſelf, and O that Chriſtians would every where depoſe their animoſities, that the hearts of the fathers might be turned to the children, and the children to the fathers; leſt God come and ſmite the earth with a curſe.

O that you would dwell more in your cloſets, and be more frequently and fervently upon your knees. O that you would, ſearch your hearts more narrowly, and ſift them more throughly than ever, before the day paſs as the chaff, and the Lord's fierce anger come upon you: look into your Bibles, then into your *hearts*, and then to *heaven*, for a true diſcovery of your conditions; and if this poor mite may contribute any thing to that end, it will be a great reward of the unworthy labours of

Thy ſervant in CHRIST,

JOHN FLAVEL.

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SERMON I.

Opening the general Nature of effectual Application.

1 Cor. i. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

HE that enquires what is the just value and worth of Christ, asks a question which puts all the men on earth, and angels in heaven, to an everlasting non-plus.

The highest attainment of our knowledge, in this life, is to know, that himself, and his love do pass knowledge, Eph. iii. 19.

But how excellent soever, Christ is in himself, what treasures of righteousness soever lie in his blood, and whatever joy, peace, and ravishing comforts, spring up to men out of his *incarnation*, *humiliation*, and *exaltation*, they all give down their distinct benefits and comforts to them, in the way of *effectual application*.

For never was any wound healed by a prepared, but unapplied plaister. Never any body warmed by the most costly garment made, but not put on: Never any heart refreshed and comforted by the richest cordial compounded, but not received: Nor from the beginning of the world was it ever known, that a poor *deceived*, *condemned*, *polluted*, miserable sinner, was actually delivered out of that woful state, until of God, Christ was made unto him, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

For look * as the condemnation of the *first Adam* passeth not to us, except (as by generation) we are his; so grace and remission pass not from the *second Adam* to us, except (as by regeneration) we are his. Adam's sin hurts none but those that are in him: And Christ's blood profits none but those that are in him: How great a weight therefore doth there hang upon the effectual application of Christ to the souls of men! And

* Parisiensis de causis, cur Deus homo, cap. 9. *Quemadmodum non transit Adæ damnatio, nisi per generationem in carnaliter ex eo generatos: sic non transit Christi gratia, et peccatorum remissio, nisi per regenerationem ad spiritualiter per ipsum regeneratos. Sicut delictum Adæ non nocet, nisi suis, in eo quod sui sunt: sic nec gratia Christi prodest, nisi suis, in eo quod sui sunt.*

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what is there in the whole world so awfully solemn, so greatly important, as this is! Such is the strong consolation resulting from it, that the apostle, in this context, offers it to the believing Corinthians, as a superabundant recompense for the despicable meanness, and baseness of their outward condition in this world, of which he had just before spoken in ver. 27, 28. telling them, though the world contemned them as vile, foolish, and weak, yet "of God Christ is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

In which words we have an *enumeration* of the chief privileges of believers, and *an account* of the method whereby they come to be invested with them †.

First, Their privileges are enumerated, namely, *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*, mercies of inestimable value in themselves, and such as respect a fourfold misery lying upon sinful Man, *viz. ignorance*, *guilt*, *pollution*, and the whole train of miserable consequences and effects, let in upon the nature of men, yea, the best and holiest of men, by sin.

Lapsed man is not only deep in misery, but grosly ignorant, both that he is so, and how to recover himself from it: Sin hath left him at once senseless of his state, and at a perfect loss about the true remedy.

To cure this, Christ is made to him *wisdom*, not only by *improvement* of those treasures of wisdom that are in himself, for the benefit of such souls as are united to him, as an head, consulting the good of his own members; but also, by *imparting* his wisdom to them by the Spirit of illumination, whereby they come to discern both their sin and danger; as also the true way of their recovery from both, through the application of Christ to their souls by faith.

But alas! simple illumination doth but increase our burden, and exasperate our misery, as long as sin in the guilt of it is, either imputed to our persons unto condemnation, or reflected by our consciences in a way of accusation.

With design therefore to remedy and heal this sore evil, *Christ* is made of God unto us *righteousness*, complete and perfect righteousness, whereby our obligation to punishment is dissolved, and thereby a solid foundation for a well-settled peace of conscience firmly established.

Yea, but although the removing of guilt from our persons

† He ascribes a fourfold commendation of Christ, which comprehends all his virtue, and all the good we receive from him. *Calvin on the place.*

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and consciences be an inestimable mercy, yet alone it cannot make us completely happy: For though a man should never be damned for sin, yet what is it less than hell upon earth, to be under the dominion and pollution of every base lust? It is misery enough to be daily defiled by sin, though a man should never be damned for it.

To complete therefore the happiness of the redeemed; Christ is not only made of God unto them *wisdom* and *righteousness*, the one curing our ignorance, the other our guilt; but he is made *sanctification* also, to relieve us against the dominion and pollutions of our corruptions: "He comes both by water and "by blood, not by blood only, but by water also," 1 John v. 6. *purging* as well as *pardoning*: How complete and perfect a cure is Christ!

But yet something is required beyond all this to make our happiness perfect and entire, wanting nothing; and that is the removal of those doleful effects and consequences of sin, which (notwithstanding all the forementioned privileges and mercies) still lie upon the souls and bodies of illuminated, justified, and sanctified persons. For even with the best and holiest of men, what swarms of vanity, loads of deadness, and fits of unbelief, do daily appear in, and oppress their souls! to the imbittering of all the comforts of life to them? And how many diseases, deformities, pains, oppress their bodies, which daily moulder away by them, till they fall into the grave by death, even as the bodies of other men do, who never received such privileges from Christ as they do? For if "Christ be in us" (as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 10.) "the body is dead, because of sin:" Sanctification exempts us not from mortality.

But from all these, and whatsoever else, the fruits and consequences of sin, Christ is *redemption* to his people also: This seals up the sum of mercies: This so completes the happiness of the saints, that it leaves nothing to desire.

These four, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, take in all that is necessary or desirable, to make a soul truly and perfectly blessed.

Secondly, We have here the method and way, by which the elect come to be invested with these excellent privileges: the account whereof, the apostle gives us in these words, ["Who "of God is made unto us"] in which expression, four things are remarkable.

First, That Christ and his benefits go inseparably and undividedly together: it is Christ himself is made all this unto us: We can have no saving benefit separate and apart from the per-

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ſon of Chriſt: many would willingly receive his *privileges*, who will not receive his perſon; but it cannot be; if we will have one, we muſt take the other too: Yea, we muſt accept his perſon firſt, and then his benefits: as it is in the marriage covenant, ſo it is here.

Secondly, That Chriſt with his benefits, muſt be perſonally and particularly applied to us, before we can receive any actual, ſaving privilege by him; he muſt be [*made unto us*] *i. e.* particularly applied to us; as a ſum of money becomes, or is made the ranſom and liberty of a captive, when it is not only promiſed, but paid down in his name, and legally applied for that uſe and end. When Chriſt died, the ranſom was prepared, the ſum laid down; but yet the elect continue ſtill in ſin and miſery, notwithſtanding, till by *effectual calling*, it be actually *applied* to their perſons, and then they are made free, Rom. v. 10, 11. reconciled by Chriſt's death, by whom "we have now re-"ceived the atonement."

Thirdly, That this application of Chriſt, is the work of God, and not of man: "Of God he is made unto us:" The ſame hand that prepared it, muſt alſo apply it, or elſe we periſh, notwithſtanding all that the Father hath done in contriving, and appointing, and all that the Son hath done in executing, and accompliſhing the deſign thus far. And this actual application is the work of the Spirit, by a ſingular appropriation.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, This expreſſion imports the ſuitableneſs of Chriſt, to the neceſſities of ſinners; what they want, he is made to them; and indeed, as money anſwers all things, and is convertible into meat, drink, raiment, phyſic, or what elſe our bodily neceſſities do require; ſo Chriſt is virtually, and eminently all that the neceſſities of our ſouls require; bread to the hungry, and cloathing to the naked ſoul. In a word, God prepared, and furniſhed him on purpoſe to anſwer all our wants, which fully ſuits the apoſtle's ſenſe, when he ſaith, "Who of "God is made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification "and redemption." The ſum of all is,

Doct. *That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all his precious benefits, becomes ours, by God's ſpecial and effectual application.*

There is a twofold application of our redemption, one *primary*, the other *ſecondary*: The former is the act of God the *Father*, applying it to Chriſt our ſurety, and virtually to us in him; the latter is the act of the Holy *Spirit*, perſonally and actually applying it to us in the work of converſion: The for-

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mer hath the reſpect and relation of an example, model, or pattern to this, and this is produced and wrought by the virtue of that. What was done upon the perſon of Chriſt, was not only virtually done upon us, conſidered in him as a common public repreſentative perſon, in which ſenſe, we are ſaid to die with him, and live with him, to be crucified with him, and buried with him, but it was alſo intended for a platform, or idea, of what is to be done by the Spirit, actually upon our ſouls and bodies, in our ſingle perſons. As he died for ſin, ſo the Spirit applying his death to us in the work of *mortification*, cauſes us to die to ſin, by the virtue of his death: And as he was quickned by the Spirit, and raiſed unto life, ſo the Spirit applying unto us the life of Chriſt, cauſeth us to live, by ſpiritual *vivification*. Now this perſonal, ſecondary, and *actual application of redemption* to us by the Spirit, in his ſanctifying work, is that which I am engaged here to diſcuſs, and open; which I ſhall do in theſe following propoſitions.

Prop. 1. *The application of Chriſt to us, is not only comprehenſive of our juſtification, but of all thoſe works of the Spirit, which are known to us in ſcripture, by the names of regeneration, vocation, ſanctification, and converſion.*

Though all theſe terms have ſome ſmall reſpective differences among themſelves, yet they are all included in this general, the *applying*, and *putting* on of Chriſt, Rom. xiii. 14. "Put ye "on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

Regeneration expreſſes thoſe ſupernatural, divine, new qualities, infuſed by the Spirit into the ſoul, which are the principles of all holy actions.

Vocation expreſſes the terms from which, and to which, the ſoul moves, when the Spirit works ſavingly upon it, under the goſpel-call.

Sanctification notes an holy dedication of heart and life to God: our becoming the temples of the living God, ſeparate from all prophane ſinful practices, to the Lord's only uſe and ſervice.

Converſion denotes the great change itſelf, which the Spirit cauſeth upon the ſoul, turning it by a ſweet irreſiſtable efficacy from the power of ſin and Satan, to God in Chriſt.

Now all theſe are imported in, and done by the *application of Chriſt to our ſouls*: For when once the efficacy of Chriſt's death, and the virtue of his reſurrection, come to take place upon the heart of any man, he cannot but turn from ſin to God, and become a new creature, living and acting by new principles and rules. So the apoſtle obſerves, 1 Theſ. i. 5, 6. ſpeaking of the

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effect of this work of the Spirit upon that people, "Our Gospel (saith he) came not to you in word only, but in power; "and in the Holy Ghost:" There was the effectual application of Christ to them. "And you became followers of us, and "of the Lord," ver. 6. there was their effectual call. "And "ye turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God," ver. 9. there was their conversion. "So that ye were en- "samples to all that believe," ver. 9. there was their life of sanctification or dedication to God. So that all these are comprehended in effectual application.

Prop. 2. *The application of Christ to the souls of men, is that great project and design of God in this world, for the accomplishment whereof, all the ordinances, and all the officers of the gospel, are appointed and continued in the world.*

This the gospel expressly declared to be its direct end, and the great business of all its officers, Eph. iv. 11, 12. "And he gave "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and "some pastors and teachers; till we all come in the unity of "the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God; to a per- "fect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of "Christ," *i. e.* the great aim and scope of all Christ's ordinances and officers, are to bring men into union with Christ, and so build them up to perfection in him: or to unite them to, and confirm them in, Christ: And when it shall have finished this design, then shall the whole frame of gospel-ordinances be taken down, and all its officers disbanded. "The kingdom" (*i. e.* this present oeconomy, manner, and form of government) "shall be delivered up," 1 Cor. xv. 24. What are ministers, but the bridegroom's friends, ambassadors for God, to beseech men to be reconciled? When therefore all the elect are brought home in a reconciled state to Christ, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, our work and office expire together.

Prop. 3. *Such is the importance and great concernment of the personal application of Christ to us by the Spirit, that whatsoever the Father hath done in the contrivance, or the Son hath done in the accomplishment of our redemption, is all inavailable, and ineffectual, to our salvation, without this.*

It is confessedly true, that God's good pleasure appointing us from eternity to salvation, is, in its kind, a most full and sufficient *impulsive* cause of our salvation, and every way able (for so much as it is concerned) to produce its effect. And Christ's humiliation and sufferings are a most complete, and sufficient *meritorious* cause of our salvation, to which nothing can be added to make it more apt, and able to procure our

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salvation, than it already is: Yet neither the one or the other can actually save any soul, without the *Spirit's application* of Christ to it: for where there are divers *social causes*, or *concauses*, necessary to produce one effect, there the effect cannot be produced, until the last cause hath wrought. Thus it is here, the *Father* hath elected, and the *Son* hath redeemed; but until the *Spirit* (who is the last cause) hath wrought his part also, we cannot be saved. For he comes in the Father's and in the Son's name and authority, to put the last hand to the work of our salvation, by bringing all the fruits of election and redemption home to our souls in this work of effectual vocation. Hence the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 2. noting the order of causes in their operations, for the bringing about of our salvation, thus states it: "Elect, "acording to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through "sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of "the blood of Jesus Christ." Here you find God's election and Christ's blood, the two great causes of salvation, and yet neither of these alone, nor both together can save us; there must be added the sanctification of the Spirit, by which God's decree is executed; and the sprinkling (*i. e.* the personal *application* of Christ's blood) as well as the shedding of it, before we can have the saving benefit of either of the former causes.

Prop. 4. *The applieation of Christ, with his saving benefits, is exactly of the same extent and latitude with the Father's election, and the Son's intention in dying, and cannot possibly be extended to one soul farther.*

"Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," Rom. viii. 30. and Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal "life, believed;" 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved and called "us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but ac-"cording to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in "Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world."

The Father, Son, and Spirit, (betwixt whom was the council of peace) work out their design in a perfect harmony and consent: As there was no jar in their council, so there can be none in the execution of it: those whom the Father, before all time, did chuse; they, and they only, are the persons, whom the Son, when the fulness of time for the execution of that decree was come, died for, John xvii. 6. "I have manifested "thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the "world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and ver. 19. "For their sakes I sanctify myself;" *(i. e.)* consecrate, devote, or set myself apart for a sacrifice for them. And those for

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whom Christ died, are the persons to whom the Spirit effectually applies the benefits and purchases of his blood: He comes in the name of the Father and Son: "But the world cannot re- "ceive him, for it neither sees, nor knows him," John xiv. 17. "They that are not of Christ's sheep, believe not," John x. 26.

Christ hath indeed a fulness of saving power, but the dispensation thereof is limited by the Father's will; therefore he tells us, Mat. xx. 23. "It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to "them for whom it is prepared of my Father:" In which words he no ways denies his authority, to give glory as well as grace; only shews that in the dispensation proper to him, as Mediator, he was limited by his Father's will and counsel.

And thus also are the dispensations of grace by the Spirit, in like manner, limited, both by the counsel and will of the Father and Son. For as he proceeds from them, so he acts in the administration proper to him, by commission from both. John xiv. 26. "The holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name;" and as he comes forth into the world by this joint commission, so his dispensations are limited in his commission; for it is said, John xvi. 13. "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he "shall hear, that shall he speak;" *(i. e.)* He shall in all things act according to his commission, which the Father and I have given him.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, John v. 19. And the Spirit can do nothing of himself, but what he hears from the Father and Son: And it is impossible it should be otherwise, considering not only the unity of their nature, but also of their will and design. So that you see the applications of Christ, and benefits by the Spirit, are commensurable with the Father's secret counsel, and the Son's design in dying, which are the rule, model, and pattern of the Spirit's working.

Prop. 5. *The application of Christ to souls, by the regenerating work of the Spirit, is that which makes the first internal difference, and distinction among men.*

It is very true, that in respect of God's fore-knowledge and purpose, there was a distinction betwixt one man and another, before any man had a being, one was taken, another left: And with respect to the death of Christ, there is a great difference betwixt one and another: He laid down his life for the sheep, he prayed for them, and not for the world; but all this while, as to any *relative change* of state, or *real change* of temper, they are upon a level with the rest of the miserable world. The elect them-

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ſelves are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 3. And to the ſame purpoſe the apoſtle tells the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. (when he had given in that black bill, deſcribing the moſt lewd, profligate, abominable wretches in the world, men whoſe practices did ſtink in the very noſtrils of nature, and were able to make the more ſober Heathens bluſh; after this he tells the Corinthians) "And ſuch were ſome of you, "but ye are waſhed," *&c. q. d.* look, theſe were your companions once: as they are, you lately were.

The work of the Spirit doth not only evidence, and manifeſt that difference which God's election hath made between men and man, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Theſſ. i. 4, 5. But it alſo makes a twofold difference itſelf, namely in *ſtate* and *temper*; whereby they viſibly differ, not only from other men, but alſo from themſelves: after this work, though a man be the *who*, yet not the *what* he was. This work of the Spirit, makes us new creatures, namely, for quality and temper, 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be "in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away, be- "hold, all things are become new."

Propoſ. 6. *The application of Chriſt, by the work of regeneration, is that which yields unto men all the ſenſible ſweetneſs, and refreſhing comforts, that they have in Chriſt, and in all that he hath done, ſuffered, or purchaſed for ſinners.*

An unſanctified perſon may reliſh the natural ſweetneſs of the creature, as well as he that is ſanctified; he may alſo ſeem to reliſh and taſte ſome ſweetneſs in the delicious promiſes and diſcoveries of the goſpel, by a *miſapplication* of them to himſelf. But this is like the joy of a beggar, dreaming he is a king; but he awakes and finds himſelf a beggar ſtill: but for the rational, ſolid, and genuine delights, and comforts of religion, no man taſtes them, till this work of the Spirit hath firſt paſſed upon his ſoul: it is an encloſed pleaſure, a ſtranger intermeddles not with it. "The white ſtone, and the new name," (denoting the pleaſant reſults and fruits of juſtification and adoption) "no "man knows but he that receives it," Rev. ii. 7. There are all thoſe things wanting in the unſanctified (though elect) ſouls, that ſhould capacitate and enable it to reliſh the ſweetneſs of Chriſt and religion, namely, *propriety*, *evidence*, and ſuitableneſs of ſpirit.

Propriety is the ſweeteſt part of any excellency; therefore Luther was wont to ſay, that the ſweetneſs of the goſpel lay moſtly in *pronouns*, as *me*, *my*, *thy*, &c. who loved [me] and gave himſelf for me, Gal. ii. 20. Chriſt Jeſus [my] Lord, Phil.

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iii. 18. So Mat. ix. 2. "Son, be of good cheer. [thy] sins are "forgiven." Take away propriety, and you deflower the very gospel, of its beauty and deliciousness: and as propriety, so

Evidence is requisite to joy and comfort; yea, so necessary, that even interest and propriety afford no sensible sweetness without it. For as to comfort, it is all one not to appear, and not to be. If I am registred in the book of life, and know it not, what comfort can my name there afford me? Besides, to capacitate a soul for the sweetness and comfort of Christ there is also *an agreeable temper* of spirit required; for how can Christ be sweet to that man's soul, whose thoughts reluctate, decline, or nauseate so holy and pure an object? Now, all these requisites being the proper effects and fruits of the Spirit's sanctifying operations upon us, it is beyond controversy, that the consolations of Christ cannot be tasted, until the application of Christ be first made.

Propos. 7. *The application of Christ to the soul effectually, though it be so far wrought in the first saving work of the Spirit, as truly to entitle the soul to Christ, and save it from the danger of perishing; yet it is a work gradually advancing in the believer's soul, whilst it abides on this side heaven and glory.*

It is true, indeed, that Christ is perfectly and completely applied to the soul in the first act, for righteousness, "Justifica-"tion being a relative change *, properly admits no degrees, "but is perfected together, and at once, in one only act; tho' "as to its manifestation, and sense, it hath various degrees:" But the *application* of Christ to us, for wisdom, and sanctification, is not perfected in one single act, but rises by many, and slow degrees to its just perfection.

And though we are truly said to be come to Christ when we first believe, John vi. 35. yet the soul after that is still coming to him by farther acts of faith, 1 Pet. ii. 4. "To whom [coming] "as unto a living stone:" the *particle* notes a continued motion, by which the soul gains ground, and still gets nearer and nearer to Christ; growing still more inwardly acquainted with him. The knowledge of Christ grows upon the soul as the morning-light, from its first spring, to the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. every grace of the Spirit grows, if not sensibly, yet really; for it is in discerning the growth of sanctification, as it is in discerning the

* *Nullos proprie dictos gradus admittit, sed unico actu simul ac semel existit perfecta, quamvis quoad manifestationem, sensum, et effecta; varios habet gradus.* Amef.

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growth of plants, which we perceive rather *creviſſe, quam creſcere*; to have grown, than to grow. And as it thrives in the ſoul, by deeper radications of the habits, and more promptitude and ſpirituality in the actings; ſo Chriſt, and the ſoul, proportionably, cloſe more and more inwardly, and efficaciouſly, till at laſt it is wholly ſwallowed up in Chriſt's full and perfect enjoyment.

Propoſ. 8. *Laſtly, Although the ſeveral privileges and benefits forementioned are all truly and really beſtowed with Chriſt upon believers, yet they are not communicated to them in one and the ſame way and manner; but differently, and diverſly, as their reſpective natures do require.*

Theſe four illuſtrious benefits are conveyed from Chriſt to us in three different ways and methods: his righteouſneſs is made ours by *imputation*: his wiſdom and ſanctification by *renovation*: his redemption by our *glorification*.

I know the communication of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us by imputation, is not only denied, but † ſcoffed at by Papiſts; who own no righteouſneſs, but what is (at leaſt) confounded with that which is inherent in us; and for *imputative* (blaſphemouſly ſtiled by them *putative*) righteouſneſs; they flatly deny it, and look upon it as a moſt abſurd doctrine, every where endeavouring to load it with theſe and ſuch like abſurdities. That if God imputes Chriſt's righteouſneſs to the believer, and accepts what Chriſt hath performed for him, as if he had performed it himſelf; then we may be accounted as righteous as Chriſt. Then we may be the redeemers of the world. Falſe and groundleſs conſequences; as if a man ſhould ſay, my debt is paid by by ſurety, therefore I am as rich as he. "When we ſay the "righteouſneſs of Chriſt is made ours by *imputation* ‡, we think "not it is made ours according to its univerſal value, but accord- "ing to our particular neceſſity: not to make others righteous "but to make us ſo: not that we have formal intrinſical righ- "teouſneſs of Chriſt in us, as it is in him, but a relative righte- "ouſneſs, which makes us righteous, even as he is righteous, "not as to the quantity, but as to the truth of it: nor is it im- "puted to us, as though Chriſt deſigned to make us the *cauſes*

† A phantom ſprung of Luther's brain. *Stapleton.*

‡ *Non formali intrinſeca juſtitia, ſed relativa: non quoad quantitatem ſed veritatem; ſit enim finita applicatio infinitae juſtitiae; ſi aliter, aeque juſti eſſemus ut Chriſtus, at non: juſtitia Chriſti ſit noſtra, non quoad univerſalem valorem, ſed particularem neceſſitatem; et imputatur nobis, non ut cauſis ſalvationis, ſed ut ſubjectis ſalvandis.* Bradſh. de Juſtificat.

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" of salvation to others, but the *subjects* of salvation ourselves;" it is *inhesively* in him, *communicatively* it becomes ours; by imputation, the sin of the first Adam becomes ours, and the same way the righteousness of the second Adam becomes ours, Rom. v. 17. This way the Redeemer became sin for us, and this way we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. This way Abraham the Father of believers was justified, therefore this way all believers, the children of Abraham, must be justified also, Rom. iv. 22, 23. And thus is Christ's righteousness made ours.

But in conveying and communicating his *wisdom*, and *sanctification*, he takes another method, for this is not *imputed*, but really *imparted*, to us, by the illuminating and regenerating work of the Spirit: these are graces really inherent in us: our righteousness comes from Christ, as a *surety*, but our holiness comes from him, as a quickening *head*, sending vital influences into all his members.

Now these gracious habits being subjected and seated in the souls of poor imperfect creatures, whose corruptions abide and work in the very same faculties where grace hath its residence, it cannot be, that our sanctification should be so perfect and complete, as our justification is, which inheres only in Christ. See Gal. v. 17. Thus are righteousness, and sanctification, communicated and made ours: but then,

For *redemption*, that is to say, absolute and plenary deliverance from all the sad remains, effects, and consequents of sin, both upon soul and body; this is made ours, (or, to keep to the terms) *Christ is made redemption to us by glorification*; then, and not before, are these miserable effects removed; we put off these together with the body. So that look, as *justification* cures the *guilt* of sin, and *sanctification* the *dominion* and power of sin, so *glorification* removes, together with its *existence* and being, all those *miseries* which it let in (as at a flood-gate) upon our whole man, Eph. v. 26, 27.

And thus of God, Christ is made unto us ‖ wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; namely, by imputation, regeneration, and glorification.

I shall next improve the point in some useful inferences.

Inference 1. *Learn from hence what a naked, destitute, and*

‖ But it is said he is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, therefore any worth or merit in us excluded. Whence it likewise follows, that we were foolish, unrighteous, unholy, and slaves of the Devil.

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empty thing, a poor ſinner is, in his natural and unregenerate ſtate.

He is one that naturally, and inherently, hath neither wiſdom, nor righteouſneſs, ſanctification, nor redemption; all theſe muſt come from without himſelf, even from Chriſt; who is made all this to a ſinner, or elſe he muſt eternally periſh.

As no creature (in reſpect of external abilities) comes under more natural weakneſs into the world than man, naked, and empty, and more ſhiftleſs and helpleſs than any other creature: ſo it is with his ſoul, yea, much more than ſo: all our excellencies are borrowed excellencies, no reaſon therefore to be proud of any of them; 1 Cor. iv. 7. "What haſt thou that thou haſt not "received? Now, if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glo-"ry, as if thou hadſt not received it?" *q. d.* What intolerable inſolence, and vanity, would it be for a man that wears the rich and coſtly robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, in which there is not one thread of his own ſpinning; but all made by *free-grace*, and not by *free-will*; to jet proudly up and down the world in it, as if himſelf had made it; and he were beholden to none for it? O man! thine excellencies, whatever they are, are borrowed from Chriſt, they oblige thee to him, but he can be no more obliged to thee, who weareſt them, than the ſun is obliged to him that borrows its light, or the fountain to him that draws its water for his uſe and benefit.

And it hath ever been the care of holy men, when they have viewed their own gracious *principles*, or beſt *performances*, ſtill to diſclaim themſelves, and own free-grace, as the ſole author of all. Thus holy Paul viewing the principles of divine life in himſelf, (the richeſt gift beſtowed upon man in this world by Jeſus Chriſt) how doth he renounce himſelf, and deny the leaſt part of the praiſe and glory as belonging to him, Gal. ii. 20. "Now "I live, yet not I; but Chriſt liveth in me:" and ſo for the beſt duties that ever he performed for God; (and what mere man ever did more for God?) Yet when, in a juſt and neceſſary defence, he was conſtrained to mention them, 1 Cor. xv. 10. how carefully is the like [*Yet not I*] preſently added? "I la-"boured more abundantly than they all, yet not I; but the "grace of God which was with me."

Well then, let the ſenſe of your own emptineſs by nature, humble, and oblige you the more to Chriſt, from whom you receive all you have.

Infer. 2. *Hence we are informed, that none can claim benefit by imputed righteouſneſs, but thoſe only that live in the power of*

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inherent holineſs: to whomſoever Chriſt is made righteouſneſs, to him he alſo is made ſanctification.

The goſpel hath not the leaſt favour for licentiouſneſs. It is every way as careful to preſs men to their duties as to inſtruct them in their privileges, Tit. iii. 8. "This is a faithful ſaying; "and theſe things I will that you affirm conſtantly; that they "which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain "good works." It is a looſe principle, divulged by *libertines*, to the reproach of Chriſt, and his goſpel, that ſanctification is not the evidence of our juſtification. And Chriſt is as much wronged by them who ſeparate holineſs from righteouſneſs (as if a ſenſual vile life were conſiſtent with a juſtified ſtate) as he is in the contrary extreme, by thoſe who confound Chriſt's righteouſneſs with man's holineſs, in the point of juſtification; or that own no other righteouſneſs, but what is inherent in themſelves. The former opinion makes him a *cloak* for ſin, the latter a *needleſs ſacrifice* for ſin.

It is true, our ſanctification cannot juſtify us before God; but what then, cannot it evidence our juſtification before men? Is there no neceſſity, or uſe for holineſs, becauſe it hath no hand in our juſtification? Is the preparation of the ſoul for heaven, by altering its frame and temper, nothing? Is the glorifying of our Redeemer, by the exerciſes of grace in the world, nothing? Doth the work of Chriſt render the work of the Spirit needleſs? God forbid: "He came not by blood only, but by water alſo," 1 John v. 6. And when the apoſtle ſaith, in Rom. iv. 5. "But "unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſti- "fieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs:" the ſcope of it is neither to characterize and deſcribe the juſtified perſon, as one that is lazy, and ſlothful, and hath no mind to work, or rebellious and refractory, refuſing obedience to the commands of God; but to repreſent him as an humbled ſinner, who is convinced of his inability to work out his own righteouſneſs by the law, and ſees all his endeavours to obey the law fall ſhort of righteouſneſs, and therefore is ſaid, in a law-ſenſe, *not to work*, becauſe he doth not work ſo as to anſwer the purpoſe and end of the law, which accepts of nothing beneath perfect obedience.

And when (in the ſame text) the ungodly are ſaid to be juſtified, that character deſcribes not the temper and frame of their hearts and lives, after their juſtificaton, but what it was before, not as it leaves, but as it found them *.

* God juſtifies the ungodly antecedently not conſequently. *Par.*

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Infer. 3. *How unreasonable, and worse than brutish, is the sin of infidelity; by which the sinner rejects Christ, and with him all those mercies, and benefits, which alone can relieve and cure his misery!*

He is by nature blind and ignorant, and yet refuses Christ, who comes to him with heavenly light and wisdom: he is condemned by the terrible sentence of the law to eternal wrath, and yet rejects Christ, who renders to him complete and perfect righteousness: he is wholly polluted and plunged into original and actual pollutions of nature and practice, yet will have none of Christ, who would become sanctification to him. He is oppressed in soul and body, with the deplorable effects and miseries sin hath brought upon him, and yet is so in love with his bondage, that he will neither accept Christ, nor the redemption he brings with him to sinners.

O! what monsters, what beasts, hath sin turned its subjects into! "You will not come to me, that ye may have life," John v. 40. Sin hath stabbed the sinner to the heart, the wounds are all mortal, eternal death is in his face; Christ hath prepared the only plaister that can cure his wounds, but he will not suffer him to apply it †. He acts like one in love with death, and that judges it sweet to perish. So Christ tells us, Prov. viii. 36. "All they that hate me, love death:" not in itself, but in its causes; with which it is inseparably connected. They are loth to burn, yet willing to sin; though sin kindle those everlasting flames. So that in two things the unbeliever shews himself worse than brutish, he cannot think of damnation, the effect of sin, without horror; and cannot yet think of sin, the cause of damnation, without pleasure; he is loth to perish to all eternity without remedy, and yet refuses and declines Christ as if he were an enemy, who only can and would deliver him from that eternal perdition.

How do men act therefore, as if they were in love with their own ruin! Many poor wretches now in the way to hell, what an hard shift do they make to cast themselves away! Christ meets them many times in the ordinances, where they studiously shun him: many times checks them in their way by convictions, which they make an hard shift to overcome and conquer.

† Not that any one is so mad, as willingly and knowingly to love death, which we all naturally abhor; but because that is the fruit of despising the wisdom of God, which at length brings death on us. *Lavat. on the place.*

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Oh how willing are they to accept a cure, a benefit, a remedy, for any thing but their ſouls! You ſee then that ſinners cannot, (ſhould they ſtudy all their days to do themſelves a miſchief), take a readier courſe to undo themſelves, than by rejecting Chriſt in his gracious offers.

Surely the ſin of Sodom and Gomorrah is leſs than this ſin. Mercy itſelf is exaſperated by it, and the damnation of ſuch as reject Chriſt, (ſo prepared for them, with whatever they need, and ſo ſeriouſly and frequently offered to them upon the knee of goſpel entreaty), is juſt, inevitable, and will be more intolerable than any in the world beſide them. It is juſt, for the ſinner hath but his own option, or choice: he is but come to the end which he was often told his way would bring him to. It is inevitable, for there is no other way to ſalvation, but that which is rejected. And it will be more intolerable than the damnation of others, becauſe, neither Heathens nor devils, ever aggravated their ſins by ſuch an horrid circumſtance, as the wilful refuſing of ſuch an apt, offered, and only remedy.

Infer. 4. *What a tremendous ſymptom of wrath, and ſad character of death, appears upon that man's ſoul, to which no effectual application of Chriſt can be made by the goſpel.*

Chriſt, with his benefits, is frequently tendered to them in the goſpel; they have been beſeeched once and again, upon the knee of importunity, to accept him, thoſe entreaties and perſuaſions have been urged by the greateſt arguments, the command of God, the love of Chriſt, the inconceivable happineſs or miſery which unavoidably follow the accepting or rejecting of thoſe offers, and yet nothing will affect them: all their pleas for infidelity have been over and over confuted, their reaſons and conſciences have ſtood convinced; they have been ſpeechleſs, as well as Chriſtleſs: not one ſound argument is found with them to defend their infidelity: they confeſs in general, that ſuch courſes, as theirs are, lead to deſtruction. They will yield them to be happy ſouls that are in Chriſt; and yet, when it comes to the point, their own cloſing with him, nothing will do; all arguments, all entreaties, return to us without ſucceſs.

Lord! what is the reaſon of this unaccountable obſtinacy? In other things it is not ſo: if they be ſick, they are ſo far from rejecting a phyſician that offers himſelf, that they will ſend, and pray, and pay him too. If they be arreſted for debt, and any one will be a ſurety, and pay their debts for them, words can hardly expreſs the ſenſe they have of ſuch a kindneſs: but though Chriſt would be both a phyſician and ſurety, and what-

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ever elſe their needs require, they will rather periſh to eternity, than accept him. What may we fear to be the reaſon of this, but becauſe they are not of Chriſt's ſheep, John x. 26. The Lord open the eyes of poor ſinners, to apprehend not only how great a ſin, but how dreadful a ſign, this is.

Infer. 5. *If Chriſt, with all his benefits, be made ours, by God's ſpecial application, what a day of mercies then is the day of converſion! what multitudes of choice bleſſings viſit the converted ſoul in that day!*

"This day, (ſaith Chriſt to Zaccheus, Luke xix. 9.), is ſal-
"vation come to this houſe. In this day, Chriſt cometh into the ſoul, and he comes not empty, but brings with him all his treaſures of wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption. Troops of mercies yea, of the beſt of mercies, come with him. It is a day of ſingular gladneſs and joy to the heart of Chriſt, when he is eſpouſed to, and received by the believing ſoul; it is a coronation-day to a king. So you read, Cant. iii. 11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solo-
"mon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in
"the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his
"heart."

Where, under the type of Solomon in his greateſt magnificence and glory, when the royal diadem was ſet upon his head, and the people ſhouted for joy, ſo that the earth did ring again, is ſhadowed out the joy of Chriſt's heart, when poor ſouls, by their high eſtimation of him, and conſent to his government, do, as it were, crown him with glory and honour, and make his heart glad.

Now, if the day of our eſpouſals to Chriſt, be the day of the gladneſs of his heart, and he reckons himſelf thus honoured and glorified by us, what a day of joy and gladneſs ſhould it be to our hearts, and how ſhould we be tranſported with joy, to ſee a King from heaven, with all his treaſures of grace and glory, beſtowing himſelf freely, and everlaſtingly upon us, as our portion! No wonder Zaccheus came down joyfully, Luke xix. 6.; that the eunuch went home rejoicing, Acts viii. 39.; that the jaylor rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſhold, Acts xvi. 34.; that they that were converted, did eat their meat with gladneſs, praiſing God, Acts ii. 41, 46.; that there was great joy among them of Samaria, when Chriſt came among them in the preaching of the goſpel, Acts viii. 5, 8. I ſay, it is no wonder we read of ſuch joy accompanying Chriſt into the ſoul, when we conſider, that, in one day, ſo many bleſſings meet to-

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gether in it, the leaſt of which is not to be exchanged for all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. Eternity itſelf will but ſuffice to bleſs God for the mercies of this one day.

Infer. 6. *If Chriſt be made all this to every ſoul, unto whom he is effectually applied, what cauſe then have thoſe ſouls, that are under the preparatory work of the Spirit, and are come nigh to Chriſt, and all his benefits, to ſtretch out their hands. with vehement deſire, to Chriſt, and give him the moſt importunate invitation into their ſouls!*

The whole world is diſtinguiſhable into three claſſes, or ſorts of perſons: ſuch as are *far from Chriſt;* ſuch as are *not far from Chriſt;* and ſuch as are *in Chriſt.* They that are in Chriſt, have heartily received him. Such as are far from Chriſt; will not open to him; their hearts are faſt barred by ignorance, prejudice, and unbelief againſt him: But thoſe that are come under the preparatory workings of the Spirit, nigh to Chriſt, who ſee their own indiſpenſible neceſſity of him, and his ſuitableneſs to their neceſſities, in whom alſo encouraging hopes begin to dawn, and their ſouls are waiting at the foot of God for power to receive him, for an heart to cloſe ſincerely and univerſally with him; Oh what vehement deſires! what ſtrong pleas! what moving arguments ſhould ſuch perſons urge, and plead to win Chriſt, and get poſſeſſion of him! they are in ſight of their only remedy; Chriſt and ſalvation are come to their very doors: there wants but a few things to make them bleſſed for ever. This is the day in which their ſouls are exerciſed between hopes and fears: Now they are much alone, and deep in thoughtfulneſs, they weep and make ſupplication for a heart to believe, and that againſt the great diſcouragements with which they encounter.

Reader, if this be the caſe of thy ſoul, it will not be the leaſt piece of ſervice I can do for thee, to ſuggeſt ſuch pleas as in this caſe are proper to be urged for the attainment of thy deſires, and the cloſing of the match between Chriſt and thee.

Firſt, Plead the abſolute neceſſity which now drives thee to Chriſt: Tell him thy hope is utterly periſhed in all other refuges. Thou art come like a ſtarving beggar to the laſt door of hope. Tell him thou now beginneſt to ſee the abſolute neceſſity of Chriſt. Thy body hath not ſo much need of bread, water, or air, as thy ſoul hath of Chriſt; and that wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption, that are in him.

Secondly, Plead the Father's gracious deſign in furniſhing and ſending him into the world, and his own deſign in accepting the Father's call. Lord Jeſus, waſt thou not "anointed to preach

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" good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, and " to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison " to them that are bound?" Isa. lxi. 1, 3. Behold an object suitable to thine office: whilst I was ignorant of my condition, I had a proud rebellious heart, but conviction and self-acquaintance have now melted it: my heart was harder than the nether mill-stone, and it was as easy to dissolve the obdure rocks, as to thaw and melt my heart for sin; but now God hath made my heart soft, I sensibly feel the misery of my condition. I once thought myself at perfect liberty, but now I see what I conceited to be perfect liberty, is perfect bondage; and never did a poor prisoner sigh for deliverance more than I. Since then thou hast given me a soul thus qualified, though still unworthy, for the exercise of thine office, and execution of thy commission; Lord Jesus, be, according to thy name, a Jesus unto me.

Thirdly, Plead the unlimited and general invitation made to such souls as you are, to come to Christ freely. Lord, thou hast made open proclamation; " Ho, every one that thirsteth, " come ye to the waters." Isa. lv. 1.; and Rev. xxii. 17. " Him " that is a-thirst come." In obedience to thy call, lo, I come; had I not been invited, my coming to thee, dear Lord Jesus, had been an act of presumption, but this makes it an act of duty and obedience.

Fourthly, Plead the unprofitableness of thy blood to God, Lord, there is no profit in my blood, it will turn to no more advantage to thee to destroy, than it will to save me; if thou send me to hell, (as the merit of my sin calls upon thy justice to do), I shall be there dishonouring thee to all eternity, and the debt I owe thee never paid. But, if thou apply thy Christ to me for righteousness, satisfaction for all that I have done, will be laid down in one full, complete sum; indeed, if the honour of thy justice lay as a bar to my pardon, it would stop my mouth; but when thy justice, as well as thy mercy, shall both rejoice together, and be glorified and pleased in the same act, what hinders but that Christ be applied to my soul, since, in so doing, God can be no loser by it?

Fifthly, and Lastly, Plead thy compliance with the terms of the gospel: tell him, Lord, my will complies fully and heartily to all thy gracious terms. I can now subscribe a blank: let God offer his Christ on what terms he will, my heart is ready to comply; I have no exception against any article of the gospel. And now, Lord, I wholly refer myself to thy pleasure; do with me what seemeth good in thine eyes, only give me an interest in Jesus Christ; as to all other concerns I lie at thy feet, in full re-

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ſignation of all to thy pleaſure. Never yet did any periſh in that poſture and frame; and I hope I ſhall not be made the firſt inſtance and example.

Infer. 7. Laſtly, *If Chriſt, with all his benefits, be made ours, by a ſpecial application; how contented, thankful, comfortable, and hopeful, ſhould believers be, in every condition which God caſts them into in this world!*

After ſuch a mercy as this, let them never open their mouths any more to repine and grudge at the outward inconveniencies of their condition in this world. What are the things you want, compared with the things you enjoy? What is a little money, health, or liberty, to wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption? All the crowns and ſceptres in the world, ſold to their full value, are no price for the leaſt of theſe mercies. But I will not inſiſt here, your duty lies much higher than contentment.

Be thankful, as well as content, in every ſtate. "Bleſſed be "God, (ſaith the apoſtle) the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "who hath bleſſed us with all [ſpiritual bleſſings] in heavenly "places in Chriſt:" O think what are men to angels, that Chriſt ſhould paſs by them to become a Saviour to men! And what art thou among men, that thou ſhouldſt be taken, and others left! And among all the mercies of God, what mercies are comparable to theſe conferred upon thee? O bleſs God in the loweſt ebb of outward comforts, for ſuch privileges as theſe.

And yet you will not come up to your duty in all this, except you be joyful in the Lord, and rejoice evermore, after the receipt of ſuch mercies as theſe, Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the "Lord ye righteous, and again I ſay rejoice." For hath not the poor captive reaſon to rejoice, when he hath recovered his liberty? The debtor to rejoice when all ſcores are cleared, and he owes nothing? The weary traveller to rejoice, though he be not owner of a ſhilling, when he is come almoſt home, where all his wants ſhall be ſupplied? Why this is our caſe, when Chriſt once becomes yours: you are the Lord's freemen, your debts to juſtice are all ſatisfied by Chriſt; and you are within a little of compleat redemption, from all the troubles and inconveniences of your preſent ſtate.

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

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SERMON II.

Wherein the Believer's union with CHRIST is ſtated and opened, as a principle Part of Goſpel-Application.

JOHN. xvii. 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*

THE deſign and end of the application of Chriſt to ſinners is the communication of his benefits to them; but ſeeing all communications of benefits neceſſarily imply communion, and all communion as neceſſarily preſuppoſes union with his perſon; I ſhall therefore, in this place, and from this ſcripture, treat of the myſtical union betwixt Chriſt and believers; this union, being the principle act, wherein the Spirit's application of Chriſt conſiſts, of which I ſpake (as to its general nature) in the former ſermon.

In this verſe (omitting the context) we find a threefold union, one betwixt the Father and Chriſt, a ſecond betwixt Chriſt and believers, a third betwixt believers themſelves.

Firſt, *Thou in me:* This is a glorious ineffable union, and is fundamental to the other two. The Father is not only in Chriſt, in reſpect of dear affections, as one dear friend is in another, who is as his own ſoul; nor only eſſentially, in reſpect of the identity and ſameneſs of nature and attributes, in which reſpect, Chriſt is the expreſs image of his perſon, Heb. i. 3. But he is in Chriſt alſo as Mediator, by communicating the fulneſs of the Godhead, which dwells in him as God-man, in a tranſcendent and ſingular manner, ſo as it never dwelt, nor can dwell in any other, Col. ii. 9.

Secondly, *I in them*: Here is the myſtical union betwixt Chriſt and the ſaints, *q. d.* thou and I are one eſſentially, they and I are one myſtically: and thou and I are one by communication of the Godhead, and ſingular fulneſs of the Spirit to me as Mediator; and they and I are one, by my communication of the Spirit to them in meaſure.

Thirdly, From hence reſults a third union betwixt believers themſelves; *that they may be made perfect in one:* the ſame Spirit dwelling in them all, and equally uniting them all to me, as living members to their Head of influence, there muſt needs be a

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dear and intimate union betwixt themſelves, as fellow-members of the ſame body.

Now my buſineſs, at this time, lying in the ſecond branch, namely, the union betwixt Chriſt and believers, I ſhall gather up the ſubſtance of it into this doctrinal propoſition, to which I ſhall apply this diſcourſe.

Doct. *That there is a ſtrict and dear union betwixt Chriſt and all true believers.*

The ſcriptures have borrowed from the book of nature, four elegant and lively metaphors, to help the nature of this myſtical union with Chriſt into our underſtandings; namely, that of pieces of timber united by glue; that of a graff taking hold of its ſtock, and making one tree; that of the huſband and wife, by the marriage-covenant, becoming one fleſh; and that of the members and head animated by one ſoul, and ſo becoming one natural body. Every one of theſe is more lively and full than the other, and what is defective in one, is ſupplied in the other: but yet, neither any of theſe ſingly, or all of them jointly, can give us a full, and complete account of this myſtery.

Not that of two pieces united by glue, 1 Cor. v. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," κολλωμενος, glewed to the Lord. For though this cementeth, and ſtrongly joins them in one, yet this is but a faint and imperfect ſhadow of our union with Chriſt; for though this union, by glue, be intimate, yet not vital, but ſo is that of the ſoul with Chriſt.

Not that of the graff and ſtock, mentioned Rom. vi. 5. for though it be there ſaid, that believers are συμφυτοι, implanted, or ingraffed by way of inciſion, and this union betwixt it and the ſtock be vital, for it partakes of the vital ſap and juice of it; yet here alſo is a remarkable defect, for the graff is of a more excellent kind and nature than the ſtock, and, upon that account, the tree receives its denomination from it, as from the more noble and excellent part; but Chriſt into whom believers are ingraffed, is infinitely more excellent than they, and they are denominated from him.

Nor yet that conjugal union, by marriage-covenant, betwixt a man and his wife; for though this be exceeding dear and intimate, ſo that a man leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife, and they two become one fleſh; yet this union is not indiſſolvable, but may and muſt be broken by death; and then the relict lives alone without any communion with, or relation

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to, the person that was once so dear; but this betwixt Christ and the soul can never be dissolved by death, it abides to eternity.

Nor, lastly, that of the head and members united by one vital spirit, and so making one physical body, mentioned Eph. iv. 15, 16. for though one soul actuates every member, yet it doth not knit every member alike near to the head, but some are nearer, and others removed farther from it; but here every member is alike nearly united with Christ the Head, the weak are as near to him as the strong.

Two things are necessary to be opened in the doctrinal part of this point. 1. The reality. 2. The quality of this union.

First, For the reality of it, I shall make it appear, that there is such a union betwixt Christ and belivers; it is no *Ens rationis*, empty notion, or cunningly devised fable, but a most certain demonstrable truth, which appears,

First, From the communion which is betwixt Christ and believers; in this the apostle is express, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" κοινωνια. It signifies such fellowship or copartnership, as persons have by a joint interest in one and the same enjoyment, which is in common betwixt them. So Heb. iii. 14. we are μετοχοι, *partakers of Christ*. And Psal. xlv. 7. חֲבֵרֶיךָ here the saints are called the companions, consorts or fellows of Christ; "and that "not only in respect of his * assumption of our mortality, and "investing us with his immortality, but it hath a special refe-"rence and respect to the unction of the Holy Ghost, or graces "of the Spirit, of which believers are partakers with him and "through him." Now this communion of the saints with Christ, is entirely and necessarily dependent upon their union with him, even as much as the branch's participation of the sap and juice, depends upon its union and coalition with the stock; take away union, and there can be no communion, or communications, which is clear from 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All is yours, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Where you see how all our participation of Christ's benefits is built upon our union with Christ's person.

Secondly, The reality of the believers union with Christ, is e-

* *Ipse venit in sortem nostræ mortalitatis, ut in sortem nos adduceret suæ immortalitatis: clarum autem est, hic agi de consortibus unctionis: quales sunt omnes fideles qui unctionis participes fiunt.* Rivet.

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vident from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to him for his justification. That a believer is justified before God by a righteousness without himself, is undeniable from Rom. iii. 24. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption "that is in Christ Jesus." And that Christ's righteousness becomes ours by imputation, is as clear from Rom. iv. 23, 24. but it can never be imputed to us, except we be united to him, and become one with him: which is also plainly asserted in 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye (in Christ Jesus) who of God is made "unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." He communicates his merits unto none but those that are in him. Hence all those vain cavils of the Papist's, disputing against our justification by the righteousness of Christ; and asserting it to be by inherent righteousness, are solidly answered.

When they demand, How can we be justified by the righteousness of another? Can I be rich with another man's money, or preferred by another's honours? Our answer is, Yes, if that other be my surety or husband. Indeed Peter cannot be justified by the righteousness of Paul; but both may be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; they being members, jointly knit to one common Head. Principal and surety are one in obligation and construction of law. Head and members are one body, branch and stock are one tree; and it is no strange thing, to see a graff live by the sap of another stock, when once it is engraffed into it.

Thirdly, The sympathy that is betwixt Christ and believers, proves a union betwixt them; Christ and the saints smile and sigh together. St. Paul in Col. i. 24. tells us, that he did "fill "up that which is behind," τα υστερηματα,——the remainders of the "sufferings of Christ in his flesh:" not as if Christ's sufferings were imperfect, ("for by one offering he hath per-"fected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14.) but in these two scriptures, Christ is considered in a twofold capacity; he suffered once in *corpore proprio*, in his own person, as Mediator; these sufferings are complete and full, and in that sense he suffers no more; he suffers also in *corpore mystico*, in his church and members; thus he still suffers in the sufferings of every saint for his sake; and though these sufferings in his mystical body are not equal to the other, either *pondere et mensura*, in their weight and value, nor yet designed *ex officio*, for the same use and purpose, to satisfy by their proper merit, offended justice; nevertheless they are truly reckoned the sufferings of Christ, because the head suffers when the members do; and without this supposition, that place, Acts ix. 5. is never to be understood, when

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Christ, the Head in heaven, cries out, "Saul, Saul, why perse-"cutest thou me?" when the foot was trod upon on earth: How doth Christ sensibly feel our sufferings, or we his, if there be not a mystical union betwixt him and us?

Fourthly, and lastly, The way and manner in which the saints shall be raised at the last day, proves this mystical union betwixt Christ and them; for they are not to be raised as others, by the naked power of God without them, but by the virtue of Christ's resurrection as their Head, sending forth vital quickening influences into their dead bodies, which are united to him as well as their souls. For so we find it, Rom. viii. 11. "But if the "Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in "you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quick-"en your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;" even as it is in our awaking out of natural sleep, first the animal-spirits in the head begin to rouze and play there, and then the senses and members are loosed throughout the whole body.

Now it is impossible the saints should be raised in the last resurrection, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, if that Spirit did not knit and unite them to him, as members to their head. So then by all this, it is proved, that there is a real union of the saints with Christ.

Next, I shall endeavour to open the quality and nature of this union, and shew you what it is, according to the weak apprehensions we have of so sublime a mystery; and this I shall do in a general and particular account of it.

First, More generally, it is an intimate conjunction of believers to Christ, by the imparting of his Spirit to them, whereby they are enabled to believe and live in him.

All divine spiritual life is originally in the Father, and cometh not to us, but by, and through the Son, John v. 26. to him hath the Father given to have an ζωοποιησιν,——a quickening, enlivening power in himself; but the Son communicates this life which is in him to none, but by, and through the Spirit, Rom. viii. 2. "The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made "me free from the law of sin and death."

The Spirit must therefore first take hold of us, before we can live in Christ, and when he doth so, then we are enabled to exert that vital act of faith, whereby we receive Christ; all this lies plain in that one Scripture, John vi. 57. "As the living Fa-"ther hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eat-"eth me (that is, by faith applies me) even he shall live by me." So that these two, namely, the Spirit, on Christ's part, and faith,

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his work on our part, are the two ligaments by which we are knit to Christ.

So that the Spirit's work in uniting or engraffing a soul into Christ, is like the cutting off the graff from its native stock (which he doth by his illuminations and convictions) and closing it with the living, when it is thus prepared, and so enabling it (by the infusion of faith) to suck and draw the vital sap, and thus it becomes one with him. Or as the many members in the natural body, being all quickened and animated by the same vital spirit, become one body with the head, which is the principal member, Eph. iv. 4. "There is one body, and one spirit."

More particularly, we shall consider the properties of this union, that so we may the better understand the nature of it. And here I shall open the nature of it both negatively and affirmatively.

First, Negatively, by removing all false notions and misapprehensions of it. And we say,

First, The saints union with Christ, is not a mere mental union, only in conceit and notion, but really exists *extrà mentem*, whether we conceit it or not. I know the atheistical world censures all these things as fancies and idle imaginations, but believers know the reality of them; John xiv. 20. "At that day "you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and "I in you." This doctrine is not fantastical, but scientifical.

Secondly, The saints union with Christ is not a physical union, such as is betwixt the members of a natural body and the head; our nature indeed is assumed into union with the person of Christ, but it is the singular honour of that blessed and holy flesh of Christ, to be so united as to make one person with him; that union is hypostatical, this only mystical.

Thirdly, Nor is it an essential union, or union with the divine nature, so as our beings are thereby swallowed up and lost in the Divine Being.

Some there be indeed that talk at that wild rate, of being godded into God, and christed into Christ; and those unwary expressions of Greg. Naz. Θεοποιῶν, and Χριστοποιῶν, do but too much countenance those daring spirits; but oh, there is an infinite distance betwixt us and Christ, in respect of nature and excellency, notwithstanding this union.

Fourthly, The union I here speak of, is not a foederal union, or an union by covenant only; such an union indeed, there is betwixt Christ and believers, but that is consequential to, and wholly dependent upon, this.

Fifthly, and lastly, It is not a mere moral union by love and

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affection; thus we say, one soul is in two bodies, a friend is another self; the lover is in the person beloved; such an union of hearts and affections there is also betwixt Christ and the saints, but this is of another nature; that we call a moral, this a mystical union; that only knits our affections, but this our persons, to Christ.

Secondly, Positively. And first, Though this union neither makes us one person or essence with Christ, yet it knits our persons most intimately and nearly to the person of Christ. The church is Christ's body, Coloss. i. 24. not his natural, but his mystical body; that is to say, his body is a mystery, because it is to him as his natural body. The saints stand to Christ in the same relation that the natural members of the body stand to the head, and he stands in the same relation to them, that the head stands in to the natural members; and consequently they stand related to one another, as the members of a natural body, do to each other.

Christ and the saints are not one, as the oak, and the ivy that claspsit are one, but as the graff and stock are one; it is not an union by adhesion, but incorporation. Husband and wife are not so near, soul and body are not so near, as Christ and the believing soul are near to each other.

Secondly, The mystical union is wholly supernatural, wrought by the alone power of God. So it is said, 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of "him are ye in Christ Jesus." We can no more unite ourselves to Christ, than a branch can incorporate itself into another stock; it is of him, *i. e.* of God, his proper and alone work.

There are only two ligaments, or bands of union betwixt Christ and the soul, *viz.* the Spirit on his part, and faith on ours. But when we say faith is the band of union on our part, the meaning is not, that it is so our own act, as that it springs naturally from us, or is educed from the power of our own wills; no, for the apostle expressly contradicts it, Eph. ii. 8. "It is not "of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But we are the subjects of it, and though the act on that account be ours, yet the power enabling us to believe is God's, Eph. i. 19, 20.

Thirdly, The mystical union is an immediate union; immediate I say, not as excluding means and instruments, for several means and many instruments, are employed for the effecting of it; but immediate, as excluding degrees of nearness among the members of Christ's mystical body.

Every member in the natural body stands not as near to the head as another, but so do all the mystical members of Christ's body to him: every member, the smallest as well as the greatest,

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hath an immediate coalition with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 2. "To the "church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanc- "tified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every "place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs "and ours."

Among the factions, in this church at Corinth, those that said, *I am of Christ*, as arrogating Christ to themselves, were as much a faction, as those that said, *I am of Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 30. To cure this he tells them, he is *both theirs and ours*. Such inclosers are against law.

Fourthly, The saints mystical union with Christ is a fundamental union; it is fundamental by way of sustentation; all our fruits of obedience depend upon it, John xv. 4. "As the "branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more "can ye, except ye abide in me." It is fundamental to all our privileges and comfortable claims, 1 Cor. iii. 23. "All is yours, "for ye are Christ's." And it is a fundamental to all our hopes and expectations of glory; for it is "Christ in you the hope of "glory," Col. i. 27. So then destroy this union, and with it you destroy all our fruits, privileges, and eternal hopes, at one stroke.

Fifthly, The mystical union is a most efficacious union, for through this union the divine power flows into our souls, both to quicken us with the life of Christ, and to conserve and secure that life in us, after it is so infused.

Without the union of the soul to Christ, which is to be conceived efficiently as the Spirit's act, there can be no union formally considered; and, without these, no communications of life from Christ to us, Eph. iv. 16. And as there is that ἐνέργεια, or effectual working of the spirit of life in every part, which he there speaks of, (as though you should say, the first appearances of a new life, a spiritual vitality diffused through the soul, which ere while was dead in sin) yet still this union with Christ is as necessary to the maintaining, as before it was to the producing of it.

For why is it that this life is not again extinguished, and wholly suffocated in us, by so many deadly wounds as are given it by temptations and corruptions? Surely no reason can be assigned more satisfying than that, which Christ himself gives us, in John xiv. 19. "Because I live, ye shall live also:" *q. d.* whilst there is vital sap in me the root, you that are branches in me cannot wither and die.

Sixthly, The mystical union is an indissoluble union; there is an everlasting tye betwixt Christ and the believer; and here-

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in alſo it is beyond all other unions in the world; death diſſolves the dear union betwixt the huſband and wife, friend and friend, yea, betwixt ſoul and body, but not betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul, the bands of this union rot not in the grave. "What "ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?" ſaith the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. He bids defiance to all his enemies, and triumphs in the firmneſs of this union over all hazards that ſeem to threaten it. It is with Chriſt and us, in reſpect of the *myſtical union*, as it was with Chriſt himſelf, in reſpect of the *hypoſtatical union:* That was not diſſolved by his death, when the *natural union* betwixt his ſoul and body was, nor can this myſtical union of our ſouls and bodies with Chriſt be diſſolved, when the union betwixt us and our deareſt relations, yea, betwixt the ſoul and body, are diſſolved by death. God calls himſelf the God of Abraham, long after his body was turned into duſt.

Seventhly, It is an *honourable union* *, yea, the higheſt honour that can be done unto men: The greateſt honour that was ever done to our common nature, was by its aſſumption into union with the ſecond perſon *hypoſtatically*, and the higheſt honour that was ever done to our ſingle perſons, was their union with Chriſt *myſtically*. To be a ſervant of Chriſt, is a dignity tranſcendent to the higheſt advancement among men; but to be a member of Chriſt, how matchleſs and ſingular is the glory thereof! And yet ſuch honour have all the ſaints, Eph. v. 30. "We are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his "bones."

Eightly, It is a moſt *comfortable union:* Yea, the ground of all ſolid comfort, both in life and death: Whatever troubles, wants, or diſtreſſes, befal ſuch, in this is abundant relief and ſupport. Chriſt is mine, and I am his; what may not a good ſoul make out of that! If I am Chriſt's, then let him take care for me, and, indeed, in ſo doing, he doth but care for his own: He is my head, and to him it belongs to conſult the ſafety and welfare of his own members, Eph. i. 22, 23. He is not only an head to his own, by way of *influence*, but to all things elſe, by way of *dominion*, for their good. How comfortably may we

* Chriſt is the head, ſummit, and crown of all dignity, without whom there is nothing (truly) noble in all this ſublunary world, who has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footſtool. The earth, I ſay, with all the perſons of high rank and ſtation in it are put under his feet. *Laur. Humphred. on Nobility.*

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repose ourselves, under that cheering consideration, upon him at all times, and in all difficult cases!

Ninthly, It is a *fruitful union:* The immediate end of it is fruit, Rom. vii. 4. "We are married to Christ, that we should "bring forth fruit to God:" All the fruit we bear before our ingrafture into Christ, is worse than none: Till the person be in Christ, the work cannot be evangelically good and acceptable to God: "We are made accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. Christ is a fruitful root, and makes all the branches, that live in him, so too, John xv. 8.

Tenthly, and *Lastly*, It is an *enriching union:* For, by our union with his person, we are immediately interested in all his riches, 1 Cor. i. 30. How rich and great a person do the little arms of faith clasp and embrace! "All is yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. All that Christ hath becomes ours, either by communication to us, or improvement for us: His father, John xx. 17. His promises, 2 Cor. i. 20. His providences, Rom. viii. 28. His glory, John xvii. 24. It is all ours by virtue of our union with him.

Thus you see, briefly, what the mystical union is. Next we shall improve it.

Infer. 1. *If there be such an union betwixt Christ and believers, Oh then what transcendent dignity hath God put upon believers!*

Well might Constantine prefer the honour of being a member of the church, before that of being head of the empire †; for it is not only above all earthly dignities and honours, but, in some respect, above that honour which God hath put upon the angels of glory.

Great is the dignity of the angelical nature: The angels are the highest and most honourable species of creatures: They also have the honour continually to behold the face of God in heaven, and yet, in this one respect, the saints are preferred to them, they have a mystical union with Christ, as their head of influence, by whom they are quickned with spiritual life, which the angels have not.

It is true, there is an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις, or gathering together of all in heaven and earth under Christ as a common head, Eph. i. 10. He is the Head of *angels*, as well as saints, but in different

† If thou would'st be called a man of power, put on Christ who is the power and wisdom of God, and in all things join thyself to the Lord, that thou mayest be one spirit with him, and then thou shalt become a man of power. *Orig. Hom. in Num.* xxxi.

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reſpects. To angels he is an head of *dominion* and government, but to ſaints he is both an head of dominion, and vital *influence* too: They are his chief and moſt honourable ſubjects, but not his myſtical members: They are as the Barons and Nobles in his kingdom, but the ſaints as the dear ſpouſe and wife of his boſom. This dignifies the believer above the greateſt angel. And as the nobles of the kingdom think it a preferment and honour to ſerve the queen, ſo the glorious angels think it no degradation or diſhonour to them to ſerve the ſaints; for to this honourable office they are appointed, Heb. i. 14. to be miniſtring, or ſerviceable ſpirits, for the good of them that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation. The chiefeſt ſervant diſdains not to honour and ſerve the heir.

Some imperious grandees would frown, ſhould ſome of theſe perſons but preſume to approach their preſence; but God ſets them before his face with delight, and angels delight to ſerve them.

Infer. 2. *If there be ſuch a ſtrict and inſeparable union betwixt Chriſt and believers, then the graces of believers can never totally fail: Immortality is the privilege of grace, becauſe ſanctified perſons are inſeparably united to Chriſt the fountain of life:* "Your life is hid with Chriſt in God," Col. iii. 3. Whilſt the ſap of life is in the root, the branches live by it. Thus it is betwixt Chriſt and believers, John xiv. 19. "Becauſe I live, "ye ſhall live alſo." See how Chriſt binds up their life in one bundle with his own, plainly intimating, it is as impoſſible for them to die, as it is for himſelf, he cannot live without them.

True it is, the ſpiritual life of believers is encountred by many ſtrong and fierce oppoſitions: It is alſo brought to a low ebb in ſome, but we are always to remember, there are ſome things which pertain to the eſſence of that life, in which the very being of it lies, and ſome things that pertain only to its well-being. All thoſe things which belong to the well-being of the new creature, as manifeſtations, joys, ſpiritual comforts, *&c.* may, for a time, fail, yea, and grace itſelf may ſuffer great loſſes and remiſſions in its degrees, notwithſtanding our union with Chriſt; but ſtill the eſſence of it is immortal, which is no ſmall relief to gracious ſouls: When the means of grace fail, as it is threatned, Amos viii. 11. When temporary, formal profeſſors drop away from Chriſt like withered leaves from the trees in a windy day, 2 Tim. ii. 18. And when the natural union of their ſouls and bodies is ſuffering a diſſolution from each other by death, when

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that *silver cord* is loosed, this *golden chain* holds firm, 1 Cor. iii. 23.

Infer. 3. *Is the union so intimate betwixt Christ and believers? How great and powerful a motive then is this, to make us open-handed and liberal in relieving the necessities and wants of every gracious person! For in relieving them we relieve Christ himself.*

Christ *personal* is not the object of our pity and charity, he is at the fountain-head of all the riches in glory, Eph. iv. 10. but Christ *mystical* is exposed to necessities, and wants, he feels hunger and thirst, cold and pains, in his body the church *; and he is refreshed, relieved, and comforted, in their refreshments and comforts. Christ the Lord of heaven and earth, in this consideration, is sometimes in need of a penny; he tells us his wants and poverty, and how he is relieved, Mat. xxv. 35, 40. A text believed and understood by very few. "I was an "hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me "drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Then shall the "righteous answer, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, &c. "And the King shall answer, and say unto them, verily I say "unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least "of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

It was the saying of a great divine, that he thought scarce any man on earth did fully understand, and believe this truth, and he conceives so much hinted in the very text, where the righteous themselves reply, "Lord, when saw we thee sick," &c. intimating in the question, that they did not thoroughly understand the nearness, yea, *oneness* of those persons with Christ, for whom they did these things. And, indeed, it is incredible, that a Christian can be hard-hearted, and close-handed, to that necessitous Christian, in refreshing and relieving of whom, he verily believes, that he ministers refreshment to Christ himself.

O think again and again, upon this scripture, consider what forcible and mighty arguments are here laid together, to engage relief to the wants of Christians.

Here you see their near relation to Christ; they are mystically one person; what you did to them, you did to me. Here you see also how kindly Christ takes it at our hands: acknow-

* He who is not moved with the condition of a brother in the church, let him be moved with the contemplation of Christ: and he who does not regard his fellow servant in straits and want, let him regard the Lord, dwelling in that man whom he despises. *Cyprian on Works and Charity.*

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ledging all those kindnesses that were bestowed upon him, even to a bit of bread: He is, you see, content to take it as a courtesy, who might demand it by authority, and bereave you of all immediately upon refusal.

Yea, here you see one single branch or act of obedience, (our charity to the saints) is singled out from among all the duties of obedience, and made the test and evidence of our sincerity in that great day, and men blessed or cursed according to the love they have manifested this way to the saints.

O then, henceforth, let none that understand the relation the saints have to Christ, as the members to the head, or the relation they have to each other thereby, as fellow-members of the same body, from henceforth suffer Christ to hunger, if they have bread to relieve him, or Christ to be thirsty, if they have wherewith to refresh him: this union betwixt Christ and the saints, affords an argument beyond all other arguments in the world to prevail with us. Methinks, a little *rhetoric* might persuade a Christian to part with any thing he hath for Christ who parted with the glory of heaven, yea, and his own blood for his sake.

Infer. 4. *Do Christ and believers make but one mystical person? How unnatural and absurd then are all those acts of unkindness, whereby believers wound and grieve Jesus Christ! This is as if the hand should wound his own head, from which it receives life, sense, motion, and strength.*

When satan smites Christ by a wicked man, he then wounds him with the hand of an enemy; but when his temptations prevail upon the saints to sin, he wounds him, as it were with his own hand: As the *eagle* and *tree* in the *fable* complained, the one that he was wounded by an arrow winged with his own feathers; the other, that it was cleaved asunder by a wedge hewn out of its own limbs.

Now the evil and disingenuity of such sins, are to be measured, not only by the near relation Christ sustains to believers as their Head; but more particularly, from the several benefits they receive from him as such; for in wounding Christ by their sins,

First, They wound their *head of influence*, through whom they live, and without whom they had still remained in the state of sin and death, Eph. iv. 16. Shall Christ send life to us, and we return that which is death to him! O how absurd, how disingenuous is this;

Secondly, They wound their *head of government*. Christ is a

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guiding, as well as a *quickening* head, Col. i. 18. He is your wisdom, he guides you by his counsels to glory: but must he be thus requited for all his faithful conduct! What do you, when you sin, but rebel against his government, refusing to follow his counsels, and obeying, in the mean time, a deceiver, rather than him.

Thirdly, They wound their *consulting head*, who cares, provides, and projects, for the welfare and safety of the body. Christians, you know your affairs below have not been steered and managed by your own wisdom, but that orders have been given from heaven for your security and supply from day to day. "I "know, O Lord, (saith the prophet) that the way of man is not "in himself, neither is it in him that walks to direct his own "steps," Jer. x. 23.

It is true, Christ is out of your sight, and you see him not: but he sees you, and orders every thing that concerns you. And is this a due requital of all that care he hath taken for you? Do you thus requite the Lord for all his benefits? What, recompense evil for good! O let shame cover you.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, They wound *their head of honour*. Christ your Head, is the fountain of honour to you: This is your glory that you relate to him as your head: You are, on this account, (as before was noted) exalted above angels.

Now then consider, how vile a thing it is to reflect the least dishonour upon him, from whom you derive all your glory. O consider and bewail it.

Infer. 5. *Is there so strict and intimate a relation and union betwixt Christ and the saints? Then surely they can never want what is good for their souls or bodies.*

Every one naturally cares and provides for his own, especially for his own body; yet we can more easily violate the law of nature, and be cruel to our own flesh, than Christ can be so to his mystical body *. I know it is hard to rest upon, and rejoice in a promise, when necessities pinch, and we see not from whence relief should arise; but O! what sweet satisfaction and comfort, might a necessitous believer find in these considerations, would he but keep them upon his heart in such a day of strait.

First, Whatever my distresses are for quality, number, or degree, they are all known even to the least circumstance, by Christ my Head: He looks down from heaven upon all my af-

* *Qui misit filium, immisit spiritum, promisit vultum, quid tandem denegabit?* i. e. He who hath sent his Son, put the Spirit within us, and promised his countenance, What will he deny us?

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flictions, and understands them more fully than I that feel them, Psal. xxxviii 9. "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my "groaning is not hid from thee."

Secondly, He not only knows them, but feels them, as well as knows them; "We have not an High-priest that cannot be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," Heb. iv. 15. In all your afflictions he is afflicted; tender sympathy cannot but flow from such intimate union; therefore, in Matth. xxv. 35. he saith, I was an hungred, and I was a-thirst, and I was naked. For indeed his sympathy, and tender compassion, gave him as quick a resentment, and as tender a sense of their wants, as if they had been his own. Yea,

Thirdly, He not only knows and feels my wants, but hath enough in his hand, and much more than enough to supply them all; for all things are delivered to him by the Father, Luke x. 22. All the storehouses in heaven and earth are his, Phil. iv. 19.

Fourthly, He bestows all earthly good things, even to superfluity and redundance, upon his very enemies, "They have "more than heart can wish," Psal. lxxiii. 7. He is bountiful to strangers; he loads very enemies with these things, and can it be supposed he will in the mean while starve his own, and neglect those whom he loves as his own flesh? It cannot be. Moreover,

Fifthly, Hitherto he hath not suffered me to perish in any former straits; when, and where was it, that he forsook me? This is not the first plunge of trouble I have been in; have I not found him a God at hand! How oft have I seen him in the mount of difficulties!

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, I have his promise and engagement that he will never leave me nor forsake me, Heb. xiii. 5. and John xiv. 18. a promise which hath never failed, since the hour it was first made. If then the Lord Jesus knows and feels all my wants, hath enough, and more than enough to supply them, if he gives even to redundance unto his enemies, hath not hitherto forsaken me, and hath promised he never will? Why then is my soul thus disquieted in me! Surely there is no cause it should be so.

Infer. 6. *If the saints are so nearly united to Christ, as the members to the head: O then how great a sin, and full of danger is it for any to wrong and persecute the saints! For in so doing, they must needs persecute Christ himself.*

"Saul, Saul, (saith Christ) why persecutest thou me?" Acts

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ix. 4. † The righteous God holds himself obliged to vindicate oppressed innocency, though it be in the persons of wicked men, how much more when it is in a member of Christ? "He that "toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8. And is it to be imagined, that Christ will sit still, and suffer his enemies to hurt or injure the very apples of his eyes: No, no, "He hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors," Psalm vii. 13.

O it were better thine hand should wither, and thine arm fall from thy shoulder, than ever it should be lifted up against Christ, in the poorest of his members. Believe it, sirs, not only your violent actions, but your hard speeches, are all set down upon your doom's-day book; and you shall be brought to an account for them in the great day, Jude 15. Beware what arrows you shoot, and be sure of your mark before you shoot them.

Infer. 7. *If there be such a union betwixt Christ and the saints, as hath been described, upon what comfortable terms then, may believers part with their bodies at death?*

Christ your head is risen, therefore you cannot be lost: nay, he is not only risen from the dead himself, but is also "become "the first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20. Believers are his members, his fulness, he cannot therefore be complete without you: a part of Christ cannot perish in the grave ‡, much less burn in hell. Remember, when you feel the natural union dissolving, that this mystical union can never be dissolved: the pangs of death cannot break this tie. And as there is a peculiar excellency in the believer's life, so there is a singular support, and peculiar comfort in his death; "To me to live is "Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21.

Infer. 8. If there be such a union betwixt Christ and believers, *How doth it concern every man to try and examine his estate, whether he is really united with Christ or not, by the natural and proper effects, which always flow from this union?* As,

† Agesilaus was wont to say, That he very much wondered, that those were not reckoned upin the number of sacrilegious persons, who injured those who made supplication to God, or worshipped him: By which he signified, that not only those should be reckoned injurious, who robbed the Gods themselves, or their temples, but even these chiefly who affronted their servants or heralds. *Æmyl. Prob.*

‡ To say that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, shall not partake of salvation, but be brought into perdition, what is it but the greatest blasphemy? *Iren. lib.* 5.

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First, The real communication of Christ's holiness to the soul. We cannot be united with this root, and not partake of the vital sap of sanctification from him; all that are planted into him, are planted into the likeness of his death, and of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5, 6. *viz.* by mortification and vivification.

Secondly, They that are so nearly united to him, as members to the head, cannot but love him and value him, above their own lives; as we see in nature, the hand and arm will interpose to save the head. The nearer the union, the stronger always is the affection.

Thirdly, The members are subject to the head. Dominion in the head must needs infer subjection in the members, Eph. v. 24. In vain do we claim union with Christ as our head, whilst we are governed by our own wills, and our lusts give us law.

Fourthly, All that are united to Christ, do bear fruit to God, Rom. vii. 4. Fruitfulness is the next end of our union: there are no barren branches growing upon this fruitful root.

Infer. 9. *Lastly, How much are believers engaged to walk as the members of Christ, in the visible exercises of all those graces and duties, which the consideration of their near relation to him exacts from them.* As,

First, How contented and well pleased should we be with our outward lot, however providence hath cast it for us in this world. O do not repine, God hath dealt bountifully with you; upon others he hath bestowed the good things of this world; upon you, himself in Christ.

Secondly, How humble and lowly in spirit should you be under your great advancement! It is true, God hath magnified you greatly by this union, but yet do not swell, "You bear not "the root, but the root you," Rom. xi. 18. You shine, but it is as the stars, with a borrowed light.

Thirdly, How zealous should you be to honour Christ, who hath put so much honour upon you! Be willing to give glory to Christ, though his glory should rise out of your shame. Never reckon that glory that goes to Christ, to be lost to you: when you lie at his feet, in the most particular heart-breaking confessions of sin, yet let this please you, that therein you have given him glory.

Fourthly, How exact and circumspect should you be in all your ways, remembring whose you are, and whom you represent! Shall it be said, that a member of Christ was convicted of unrighteousness and unholy actions! God forbid. "If we say,

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" we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie," 1 John i. 6. " And he that ſaith he abideth in him, ought al-" ſo himſelf to walk even as he alſo walked," 1 John ii. 6.

Fifthly, How ſtudious ſhould you be of peace, among yourſelves, who are all ſo nearly united to ſuch a Head, and thereby are made fellow-members of the ſame body! The Heathen world was never acquainted with ſuch an argument as the apoſtle urges for unity, in Eph. iv. 3, 4.

Sixthly, and laſtly, How joyful and comfortable ſhould you be, to whom Chriſt, with all his treaſures and benefits, is effectually applied in this bleſſed union of your ſouls with him! This brings him into your poſſeſſion: O how great! how glorious a perſon do theſe little, weak arms of your faith embrace!

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON III.

Opening the Nature and Uſe of the Goſpel-miniſtry, as an external Means of applying CHRIST.

2 COR. v. 20. *Now then, we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

THE effectual application of Chriſt, principally conſiſts in our union with him, but, ordinarily, there can be no union without a goſpel-tender, and overture of him to our ſouls; for, " How ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have " not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher? " and how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent?" Rom. x. 14.

If God be upon a deſign of eſpouſing poor ſinners to his Son, there muſt be a treaty in order to it; that treaty requires interlocution betwixt both the parties concerned in it; but ſuch is our frailty, that, ſhould God ſpeak immediately to us himſelf, it would confound and overwhelm us: God therefore graciouſly condeſcends, and accomodates himſelf to our infirmity, in treating with us in order to our union with Chriſt, by his *ambaſſadors*, and theſe not *angels*, whoſe converſes we cannot bear, but *men* like ourſelves, who are commiſſionated for the effecting of this great buſineſs betwixt Chriſt and us. " Now then, we are am-" baſſadors for God," &c. In which words you have,

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First, Christ's ambassadors commissionated.

Secondly, Their commission opened.

First, Christ's ambassadors commissionated. "Now then, we "are ambassadors for Christ." The Lord Jesus thought it not sufficient to print the law of grace, and blessed terms of our union with him in the scriptures, where men may read his willingness to receive them, and see the just and gracious terms and conditions upon which he offers to become theirs; but hath also so set up and established a standing office in the church, to expound that law, inculcate the precepts, and urge the promises thereof; to woo and espouse souls to Christ, "I have espoused "you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin "to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 20.; and this not simply from their own affections and compassions to miserable sinners, but also by virtue of their office and commission, whereby they are authorized and appointed to that work. "We then are ambassadors for "Christ."

Secondly, Their commission opened: Wherein we find,

1. Their work appointed.

2. Their capacity described.

3. And the manner of their acting in that capacity prescribed.

First, The work whereunto the ministers of the gospel are appointed, is to *reconcile the world to God*; to work these sinful, vain, rebellious hearts, which have a strong aversation from God naturally in them; to close with him according to the articles of peace contained in the gospel, that thereby they may be capable to receive the mercies and benefits purchased by the death of Christ, which they cannot receive in the state of enmity and alienation.

Secondly, Their capacity described: They act *in Christ's stead*, as his *vicegerents*. He is no more in this world to treat personally with sinners, as once he did in the days of his flesh; but yet he still continues the treaty with this lower world, by his officers, requiring men to look upon them, and obey them as they would himself, if he were corporally present, Luke x. 16. "He "that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, de-"spiseth me."

Thirdly, The manner of their acting in that capacity prescribed; and that is, by humble, sweet, and condescending entreaties and beseechings. This best suits the meek and lamb-like Saviour whom they represent: thus he dealt with poor sinners himself, when he conversed among them; he "would not

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" break a bruiſed reed, *nor* quench the ſmoaking flax," Iſa. xlii. 3. This is the way to allure and win the ſouls of ſinners to Chriſt.

From hence the note is,

Doct. *That the preaching of the goſpel by Chriſt's ambaſſadors, is the means appointed for the reconciling and bringing home of ſinners to Chriſt.*

This is clear from Rom. x. 14., 1 Cor. i. 21. and many other ſcriptures.

Here we ſhall take into conſideration theſe three things.

Firſt, What is implied in Chriſt's treating with ſinners by his ambaſſadors or miniſters.

Secondly, What is the great concernment they are to treat with ſinners about.

Thirdly, What, and when is the efficacy of preaching, to bring ſinners to Chriſt.

Firſt, We will open what is implied and imported in Chriſt's treaty with ſinners, by his ambaſſadors or miniſters.

And here we find theſe ſix things implied.

1. It neceſſarily implies the defection and fall of man, from his eſtate of favour and friendſhip with God: If no war with heaven, what need of ambaſſadors of peace? The very office of the miniſtry, is an argument of the fall. Goſpel-ordinances, and officers came in upon the fall, and expire with the Mediator's diſpenſatory-kingdom, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. " Then ſhall he " deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father:" Thenceforth no more ordinances, no more miniſters; What uſe can there be of them, when the treaty is ended? They have done and accompliſhed all they were ever intended and deſigned for, when they ſhall have reconciled to God all the number of his elect, that diſperſed among the loſt and miſerable poſterity of Adam, and have brought them home to Chriſt in a perfect ſtate, Eph. iv. 12, *&c.*

2. It implies the ſingular grace and admirable condeſcenſion of God to ſinful man. That God will admit any treaty with him at all, is wonderful mercy, it is more than he would do for the angels that fell, Jude 6. " *They are* reſerved in everlaſting " chains, under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day." Chriſt took not on him their nature, but ſuffered myriads of them to periſh, and fills up their vacant places in glory, with a number of ſinful men and women, to whom the law awarded the ſame puniſhment.

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But that God will not only treat, but entreat and beſeech ſinful men to be reconciled, is yet more wonderful. Barely to propound the terms of peace, had been an aſtoniſhing mercy; but to woo and beſeech ſtubborn enemies to be at peace, and accept their pardon, oh, how unparralleled was this condeſcenſion!

3. It implies the great dignity and honour of the goſpel-miniſtry. *We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt* *. Ambaſſadors repreſent and perſonate the prince that ſends them; and the honours or contempts done to them, reflect upon, and are reckoned to the perſon of their maſter, Luke x. 16. "He that heareth you, "heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me."

Neither their perſons, nor parts, are the proper ground and reaſon of our reſpects to them; but their office and commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt.

We are fallen into the dregs of time, wherein a vile contempt is poured, not only upon the perſons, but the very office of the miniſtry; and I could heartily wiſh that ſcripture, Mal. ii. 7, 8, 9., were thoroughly conſidered by us, poſſibly it might inform us of the true cauſe and reaſon of this ſore judgment; but ſurely Chriſt's faithful miniſters deſerve a better entertainment than they ordinarily find in the world; and if we did but ſeriouſly bethink ourſelves, in whoſe name they come, and in whoſe ſtead they ſtand, we ſhould receive them as the Galatians did Paul, Gal. iv. 14., as angels of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.

4. Chriſt's treating with ſinners by his miniſters, who are his ambaſſadors, implies the ſtrict obligation they are under, to be faithful in their miniſterial employment. Chriſt counts upon their faithfulneſs, whom he puts into the miniſtry, 1 Tim. i. 12. They are accountable to him for all acts of their office, Heb. xiii. 17. If they be ſilent, they cannot be innocent: "Neceſſity is laid upon them, and woe to them, if they preach "not the goſpel," 1 Cor. ix. 16.

Yea, neceſſity is not only laid upon them to preach, but to keep cloſe to their commiſſion in preaching the goſpel, 1 Theſ. ii. 3, 4, 5. "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile, but as we were allowed of God to be put

* We are ambaſſadors among thoſe who ſerve the King of kings; we repreſent the perſon of God and Chriſt: never any yet deſpiſed us with impunity, nay, without being injurious to God and Chriſt. *Bowles, Præfat. ad Paſt. Evan.*

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" in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing " men, but God who trieth our hearts:" the word is not to be corrupted to pleaſe men, 2 Cor. ii. 17. their buſineſs is not to make them their diſciples, but Chriſt's; not to ſeek theirs, but them, 2 Cor. xii. 14. to keep cloſe to their inſtructions, both in the matter, manner, and end of their miniſtry. So did Chriſt himſelf, the treaſure of wiſdom and knowledge, yet being ſent by God, he ſaith, John vii. 16. " My doctrine is not " mine, but his that ſent me." And ſo he expects and requires that his ambaſſadors keep cloſe to the commiſſion he hath given them, and be (according to their meaſure) faithful to their truſt, as he was to his. Paul is to deliver to the people, that which he alſo received from the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. And Timothy muſt keep that which was committed to him, 2 Tim. i. 14.

5. It implies the removal of the goſpel-miniſtry to be a very great judgment to the people. The remanding of ambaſſadors, preſages an enſuing war. If the reconciling of ſouls to God be the greateſt work, then the removal of the means and inſtruments thereof, muſt be the ſoreſt judgment. Some account " the falling of the ſalt upon the table" ominous, but ſurely the falling of them, whom Chriſt calls *the ſalt of the earth*, is ſo indeed.

What now are thoſe, once famous and renowned places, from whence Chriſt, (as he threatned), hath removed the candleſtick, but *magna latrocinia*, dens of robbers, and mountains of prey!

6. And laſtly, It implies both the wiſdom and condeſcenſion of God to ſinful men, in carrying on a treaty of peace with them by ſuch ambaſſadors, negociating betwixt him and them: Without a treaty, there would be no reconciliation; and no method to carry on ſuch a treaty like this: for had the Lord treated with ſinners perſonally, and immediately, they had been overwhelmed with his awful majeſty. The appearances of God confound the creature, " Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my " God, (ſaith Iſrael) neither let me ſee this great fire any more, " that I die not: Yea, ſo terrible was that ſight, that Moſes " ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake," Deut. xviii. 16. Heb. xii. 21.

Or had he commiſſionated *angels* for this employment, though they ſtand not at ſuch an infinite diſtance from us as God doth, yet ſuch is the excellence of their glory (being the higheſt *ſpecies* and order of creatures) that their appearances would be more apt to aſtoniſh than perſuade us: beſides, they being creatures of another rank and kind, and not partaking with us, ei-

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ther in the misery of the fall, or benefit of the recovery by Christ; it is not to be supposed, they should speak to us so feelingly and experimentally, as these his ministers do; they can open to you the mysteries of sin, feeling the workings thereof daily in their own hearts; they can discover to you the conflicts of the flesh and Spirit, as being daily exercised in that warfare; and then being men of the same mould and temper, they can say to you as Elihu did to Job, Chap. xxxiii. 6, 7. "Behold, I am "according to thy wish, in God's stead, I also am formed out "of the clay; behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, "neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee."

So that in this appointment, much of the divine wisdom and condescension to sinners is manifested: "We have this treasure "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of "God, and not of us," 2 Cor. iv. 7. God's glory and man's advantage are both promoted by this dispensation.

Secondly, Next we are to consider that great concernment, about which these *ambassadors* of Christ are to treat with sinners; and that (as the text informs us) is their reconciliation to God.

Now reconciliation with God, is the restoring of men to that former friendship they had with God, which was broken by the fall *, and is still continued by our enmity and aversation whilst we continue in our natural and unregenerate estate. Now this is the greatest and most blessed design that ever God had in the world; an astonishing and invaluable mercy to men, as will clearly appear, by considering these particulars following.

First, That God should be reconciled after such a dreadful breach as the fall of man made, is wonderful; no sin, all things considered, was ever like to this sin: other sins, like a single bullet, kill particular persons, but this, like a chain-shot, cuts off multitudes as the sand upon the sea-shore, which no man can number.

If all the posterity of Adam in their several generations, should do nothing else but bewail and lament this sin of his, whilst this world continues, yet would it not be enough lamented; for a man so newly created out of nothing, and admitted the first moment into the highest order, crowned a king over the works of God's hands, Psal. viii. 5. a man perfect and upright, without the least inordinate motion, or sinful inclination: a man whose mind was most clear, bright, and apprehensive of

* To reconcile is nothing else, than to make up that friendship, which was broke by some grievous offence, and thus to bring enemies back into their former state of concord. *Dav. on Col.* i. 20.

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the will of God, whose will was free, and able to have easily put by the strongest temptation: a man in a paradise of delights, where nothing was left to desire for the advancing happiness of soul or body: a man understanding himself to be a public, complexive person, carrying not only his own, but the happiness of the whole world in his hand: so soon, upon so slight a temptation, to violate the law of his God, and involve himself and all his posterity with him, in such a gulph of guilt and misery; all which he might so easily have prevented! O wonderful amazing mercy, that ever God should think of being reconciled, or have any purposes of peace towards so vile an apostate creature as man.

Secondly, That God should be reconciled to *men*, and not to *angels*, a more high and excellent order of creatures, is yet more astonishing: when the angels fell they were lost irrecoverably; no hand of mercy was stretched out to save one of those *myriads* of excellent beings, but chains of darkness were immediately clapped on them, to reserve them to the judgment of the great day, Jude 6.

That the milder attribute should be exercised to the inferior, and the severer attribute to the more excellent creature, is just matter for eternal admiration. Who would cast away vessels of gold, and save earthen potsherds! Some indeed undertake to shew us the reasons, why the wisdom of God made no provision for the recovery of *angels* by a *Mediator* of reconciliation; partly from the high degree of the malignity of their sin, who sinned in the light of heaven, partly because it was decent, that the first breach of the divine law should be punished, to secure obedience for the future. And besides, the angelical nature was not entirely lost, *myriads* of *angels* still continuing in their innocency and glory; when as all mankind was lost in Adam.

But we must remember still the law made no distinction, but awarded the same punishment, and therefore it was mercy alone that made the difference, and mercy for ever to be admired by men; how astonishing is the grace of God, that moves in a way of reconciliation to us, out of design to fill up the vacant places in heaven, from which angels fell, with such poor worms as we are! Angels excluded, and men received. O stupendous mercy!

Thirdly, That God should be *wholly* and *thoroughly* reconciled to man, so that no fury remains in him against us; according to that scripture, Isa. xxvii. 4. is still matter of farther wonder.

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The design he sends his *ambassador* to you about, is not the allaying and mitigating of his wrath, (which yet would be matter of great joy to the damned) but thoroughly to quench all his wrath, so that no degree thereof shall ever be felt by you. O blessed embassy! "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of "them that bring such tidings." God offers you a full reconciliation, a plenary remission.

Fourthly, That God should be *freely* reconciled to sinners, and discharge them without any the least satisfaction to his justice from them, is, and for ever will be, marvellous in their eyes.

Oh what mercy would the damned account it, if after a thousand years torments in hell, God would at last be reconciled to them, and put an end to their misery! But believers are discharged without bearing any part of the curse, not one farthing of that debt is levied upon them.

Object. If you say, how can this be, when God stands upon full satisfaction to his justice before any soul be discharged and restored to favour? freely reconciled, and yet fully satisfied, how can this be?

Solut. Very well, for this mercy comes freely to your hands, how costly soever it proved to Christ; and that free remission, and full satisfaction, are not contradictory and inconsistent things, is plain enough from that scripture, Rom. iii. 24. "Being "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is "in Christ Jesus:" freely, and yet in the way of redemption.

For though Christ, your surety, hath made satisfaction in your name and stead, yet it was his life, his blood, and not yours, that went for it, and this surety was of God's own appointment, and providing, without your thoughts or contrivance. O blessed reconciliation, happy is the people that hear the joyful sound of it.

Fifthly and lastly, That God should be finally reconciled to sinners, so that never any new breach shall happen betwixt him and them any more, so as to dissolve the league of friendship, is a most ravishing and transporting message.

Two things give confirmation and full security to reconciled ones, *viz.* the terms of the covenant, and the intercession of the Mediator.

The covenant of grace gives great security to believers, against new breaches betwixt God and them. It is said, Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, "that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I "will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart

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"from me." The fear of the Lord, is a choice preservative against second revolts, and therefore taken into the covenant. It is no *hindrance*, but a special *guard* to assurance.

There is no doubt of God's faithfulness: that part of the promise is easily believed, that he will not turn away from us to do us good: all the doubt is of the inconstancy of our hearts with God, and against that danger, this promise makes provision.

Moreover the *intercession* of Christ in heaven secures the saints in their reconciled state, 1 John ii. 1, 2. "If any man sin, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righ-"teous, and he is the propitiation." He continually appears in heaven before the Father, "as a lamb that had been slain," Rev. v. 6. And as the *bow* in the clouds, Rev. iv. 3. So that as long as Christ thus appears in the presence of God for us, it is not possible our state of justification, and reconciliation can be again dissolved.

And this is that blessed *embassy* gospel-ministers are employed about; he hath committed to them the word of this reconciliation.

In the last place, we are to enquire what, and whence, is this efficacy of preaching, to reconcile and bring home sinners to Christ.

That its efficacy is great in convincing, humbling, and changing the hearts of men, is past all debate and question. "The "weapons of our warfare (saith the apostle) are not carnal, but "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalt-"eth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into "captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. No heart so hard, no conscience so stupid, but this sword can pierce and wound; in an instant, it can cast down all those vain reasonings and fond imaginations, which the carnal heart hath been building all its life long, and open a fair passage for convictions of sin, and the fears and terrors of wrath to come into that heart that never was afraid of these things before. So Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the "heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?"

What shall we do? is the doleful cry of men at their wits end; the voice of one in deepest distress: and such outcries have been no rarities under the preaching of the word; its power hath been felt by persons of all orders and conditions; the great and honourable of the earth, as well as the poor and de-

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ſpicable. The learned and the ignorant, the civil and profane, the young and the old, all have felt the heart-piercing efficacy of the goſpel.

If you aſk, whence hath the word, preached, this mighty power? The anſwer muſt be, neither from itſelf, nor him that preaches it, but from the Spirit of God, whoſe inſtrument it is, by whoſe bleſſing and concurrence with it, it produceth its bleſſed effects upon the hearts of men.

Firſt, This efficacy, and wonderful power, is not from the word itſelf; take it in an abſtract notion, ſeparated from the ſpirit, it can do nothing: it is called "the fooliſhneſs of preach-"ing," 1 Cor. i. 21. Fooliſhneſs, not only becauſe the world ſo accounts it, but becauſe in itſelf it is a weak and unſuitable, and therefore a very improbable way to reconcile the world to God; that the ſtony heart of one man ſhould be broken by the words of another man; that one poor ſinful creature ſhould be uſed to breathe ſpiritual life into another; this could never be, if this ſword were not managed by an omnipotent hand.

And beſides, we know what works naturally, works neceſſarily; if this efficacy were inherent in the word, ſo that we ſhould ſuppoſe it to work as other natural agents do, then it muſt needs convert all to whom it is at any time preached, except its effect were miraculouſly hindered, as the fire when it could not burn the three children; but alas, thouſands hear it, that never feel the ſaving power of it, Iſa. liii. i. and 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Secondly, It derives not this efficacy from the *inſtrument* by which it is miniſtred; let their gifts and abilities be what they will, it is impoſſible that ever ſuch effects ſhould be produced from the ſtrength of their natural or gracious abilities, 2 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treaſure (ſaith the apoſtle) in earthen veſ-"ſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and "not of us."

The treaſure of the goſpel-light is carried ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, *in earthen veſſels*, as Gideon and his men had their lamps in earthen pitchers, or in *oyſter-ſhells*, for ſo the word alſo ſignifies; the *oyſter-ſhell* is a baſe and worthleſs thing in itſelf; however, there lies the rich and precious pearl of ſo great value. And why is this precious treaſure lodged in ſuch weak, worthleſs veſſels? Surely, it is upon no other deſign, but to convince us of the truth I am here to prove, that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us; as it follows in the next words. To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the ſame apoſtle, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "So then, neither is he that

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" planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that " giveth the increaſe."

Not any thing! What can be more diminutively ſpoken of the goſpel-preachers? But we muſt not underſtand theſe words in a ſimple and *abſolute*, but in a *comparative* and relative ſenſe; not as if they were not neceſſary and uſeful in their place, but that how neceſſary ſoever they be, and what excellent gifts ſoever God hath furniſhed them with; yet it is neither in their power nor choice, to make the word they preach effectual to men: if it were, then the damnation of all that hear us muſt needs lie at our door: then alſo, many thouſands would have been reconciled to God, which are yet in the ſtate of enmity, but the effect of the goſpel is not in our power.

Thirdly, But whatever efficacy it hath to reconcile men to God, it derives from the Spirit of God, whoſe co-operation and bleſſing (which is arbitrarily diſpenſed) gives it all the fruit it hath.

Miniſters, ſaith one *, are like trumpets which make no ſound, if breath be not breathed into them. Or like Ezekiel's wheels, which move not unleſs the Spirit move them; or Eliſha's ſervant, whoſe preſence doth no good except Eliſha's ſpirit be there alſo. For want of the Spirit of God, how many thouſands of ſouls do find the miniſtry to be nothing to them? If it be ſomething to the purpoſe to any ſoul, it is the Lord that makes it ſo. This Spirit is not limited by mens gifts or parts; he concurs not only with their labours who have excellent gifts, but oftentimes bleſſes mean, deſpicable gifts: with far greater ſucceſs.

Suppoſe ſaith † Auſtin, there be two conduits in a town, one very plain and homely, the other built of poliſhed marble, and adorned with excellent images, as eagles, lions, angels; the water refreſhes as it is water, and not as it comes from ſuch or ſuch a conduit. It is the Spirit that gives the word all that virtue it hath: he is the Lord of all ſaving influences: he hath dominion over the *word*, over our *ſouls*, over the *times* and *ſeaſons* of converſion; and if any poor creature attends the miniſtry without benefit, if he go away as he came, without fruit, ſurely we may

* Mr. Anthony Burgeſs.

† What is the reaſon why of two adult ungodly perſons, the one is ſo called as to follow him who calls, the other not? Do not thou judge, if thou wouldſt not err: the judgments of God are unſearchable, and he hath mercy on whom he will. *Aug. de bono perſev. cap.* 8.

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ſay in this caſe, as Martha ſaid to Chriſt, in reference to her brother Lazarus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died; ſo, Lord, if thou hadſt been in this prayer, in this ſermon, this poor ſoul had not gone dead and carnal from under it. And now what remains, but that we apply this truth in thoſe uſes that it gives us.

Firſt uſe of information.

Is the preaching of the goſpel by Chriſt's *ambaſſadors*, the way which God takes to reconcile ſinners to himſelf? *Then how inexcuſable are all thoſe that continue in their ſtate of enmity, though the ambaſſadors of peace have been with them all their lives long, wooing and beſeeching them to be reconciled to God?*

O invincible, obſtinate, incurable diſeaſe, which is aggravated by the only proper remedy! Hath God been wooing and beſeeching you by his ambaſſadors ſo many years to be reconciled to him, and will you not yield to any intreaties? Muſt he be made to ſpeak in vain, to charm the deaf adder? Well, when the milder attribute hath done with you, the ſeverer attribute will take you in hand.

The Lord hath kept an account of every year and day of his patience towards you, Luke xiii. 7. "Theſe three years I came "ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none;" and Jer. xxv. 3. "Theſe three and twenty years have I ſpoken unto you, riſing "early and ſpeaking, but you have not hearkened."

Well be you aſſured, that God hath both the glaſs of your time, and the vials of his wrath, by him; and ſo much of his abuſed patience as runs out of one, ſo much of his incenſed wrath runs into the other. There is a time when this treaty of peace will end, when the Maſter of the houſe will riſe up, and the doors be ſhut, Luke xiii. 25. Then will you be left without hope, and without apology.

We read, indeed, of ſome poor and ineffectual pleas that will be made by ſome at the laſt day; ſo Mat. vii. 22. "We have "propheſied in thy name," *&c.* Theſe pleas will not avail; but as for you, what will you plead? Poſſibly many thouſand *ideots*, or poor weak-headed perſons, may periſh; many young ones that had little or no time in the world to acquaint themſelves with matters of religion, or underſtand the way of ſalvation. Many millions of Heathens that never heard the name of Chriſt, nor came within the ſound of ſalvation, who will yet periſh, and that juſtly.

Now whatſoever apologies any of theſe will make for themſelves in the laſt day, to beſure you can make none. God hath

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given you a capacity, and competent underſtanding; many of you are wiſe and ſubtle in all your other concernments, and only ſhew your folly in the great concernments of your ſalvation. You cannot plead want of time, ſome of you are grown gray-headed under the goſpel; you cannot plead want of means and opportunities, the ordinances and miniſters of Chriſt have been with you all your life long to this day; ſure, if you be Chriſtleſs now, you muſt alſo be ſpeechleſs then.

Infer. 2. Hence it alſo follows, *That the world owes better entertainment, than it gives, to the miniſters of Chriſt: Chriſt's ambaſſadors deſerve a better welcome than they find among men.*

Your reſpects to them is founded upon their office and employment for you, Heb. xiii. 17. and 1 Theſſ. v. 12. They watch for your ſouls, dare any of you watch for their ruin? They bring glad tidings, ſhall they return with ſad tidings to him that ſent them? They publiſh peace, ſhall they be rewarded with trouble? O ungrateful world! We read in Eph. vi. 20. of an *ambaſſador in bonds*, and he no ordinary one neither. We read alſo a ſtrange challenge, made by another at his own death, Acts vii. 52. "Which of all the prophets have not your fathers "perſecuted? And they have ſlain them which ſhewed before "the coming of the juſt One." Some that brake the bread of life to you, might want bread to eat, for any regard you have to them. The office of the miniſtry ſpeaks the abundant love of God to you; your contempt and abuſe of it, ſpeaks the abundant ſtupidity or malignity of your hearts towards God. What a ſad proteſtation doth Jeremy make againſt his ungrateful people, Jer. xviii. 20. "Shall evil (ſaith he) be recompenſed for "good? for they have digged a pit for my ſoul; remember "that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn "away thy wrath from them."

God's *mercy* is eminently diſcovered in the *inſtitution* of, and Satan's *malice* is eminently diſcovered in the *oppoſition* to, the miniſterial office. Satan is a great and jealous prince, and it is no wonder he ſhould raiſe all the forces he can to oppoſe the *ambaſſadors* of Chriſt; when, ſaith * one, the goſpel comes into his dominions, it doth, as it were, by ſound of trumpet, and beat of drum, proclaim liberty to all his ſlaves and vaſſals, if they will quit that tyrant that hath ſo long held their ſouls in bondage, and come under the ſweet and eaſy government of Chriſt. And can the devil endure this, think you? If Chriſt ſends forth *ambaſſadors*, no wonder if Satan ſends forth *oppoſers*; he certain-

* Mr. Gurnal's Chriſtian Armour.

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ly owes them a ſpite, that undermine his government in the world.

Infer. 3. Hence it follows, *That it nearly concerns all Chriſt's ambaſſadors, to ſee that they be in a ſtate of reconciliation with God themſelves.*

Shall we ſtand in Chriſt's ſtead by *office*, and yet not be in Chriſt by union? Shall we entreat men to be reconciled to God, and yet be at enmity with him ourſelves? O let us take heed, "Leſt after we have preached to others, we ourſelves ſhould be "caſt-a-ways," 1 Cor. ix. 27. Of all men living we are the moſt miſerable, if we be Chriſtleſs and graceleſs: our conſciences will make more terrible applications of our doctrine to us in hell, than ever we made to the vileſt of ſinners on earth. O it is far eaſier to ſtudy and preſs a thouſand truths upon others, than to feel the power of one truth upon our own hearts; to teach others *facienda quam faciendo:* duties to be done, than duties by doing them.

They are ſad *dilemma's* with which a learned † writer poſes ſuch graceleſs miniſters; If ſin be evil, why do ye live in it? If it be not, why do you diſſuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? If it be not, why do you tell men ſo? If God's threatnings be true why do you not fear them? If they be falſe, why do you trouble men needleſsly with them, and put them into ſuch frights without a cauſe?

Take heed to yourſelves, leſt you ſhould cry down ſin, and not overcome it; leſt while you ſeek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its ſlaves yourſelves: it is eaſier to chide at ſin than to overcome it. That is a ſmart queſtion Rom. ii. 21. "Thou that teacheth another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf?" A profane miniſter was converted by reading that text once, but how many have read it as well he, who never trembled at the conſideration of it as he did!

2. *Uſe for Conviction.*

Is this the method God uſes to reconcile men to himſelf? O then examine yourſelves, whether yet the preaching of the goſpel hath reconciled you to God. It is too manifeſt that many among us are in the ſtate of enmity unto this day. We may ſay with the prophet, Iſa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our re-"port? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We offer you peace upon goſpel-terms and articles, but our peace returns to us again; enemies you were to God, and enemies you ſtill continue. The evidence is undeniable; for,

† Gildas Salv. p. 15, 16.

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1. *Evidence.* Many of you were never convinced, to this day, of your ſtate of enmity againſt God; and without conviction of this, reconciliation is impoſſible; without repentance, there can be no reconciliation, and without conviction, there can be no repentance. When we repent, we lay down our weapons, Iſa. xxvii. 4, 5. But how few have been brought to this? Alas! if a few poor, cold, heartleſs, ineffectual confeſſions of ſin, may paſs for a due conviction, and ſerious repentance, then have we been convinced, then have we repented; but you will find, if ever the Lord intend to reconcile you to himſelf, your convictions and humiliations for ſin, will be other manner of things; and will coſt you more than a few cheap words againſt ſin, 2 Cor. vii. 11. "In that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what "careſulneſs it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of your-"ſelves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what ve-"hement deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge?"

2. *Evidence.* Many of us never treated ſeriouſly with the Lord about peace, and how then are we reconciled to him? What, a peace without a treaty? Reconciliation without any conſideration about it? It can never be. When was the time, and where was the place, that you were found in ſecret upon your knees, mourning over the ſin of your nature, and the evils of your ways? Certainly you muſt be brought to this; you muſt, with a broken heart, bewail your ſin and miſery.

Friend, That ſtony heart of thine muſt feel remorſe and anguiſh for ſin, it will coſt thee ſome ſad days, and ſorrowful nights, or ever thou canſt have peace with God: it will coſt thee many a groan, many a tear, many a hearty cry to heaven: If ever peace be made betwixt God and thee, thou muſt "take "with thee words, and turn to the Lord, ſaying, Take away all "iniquity, and receive me graciouſly." O for one ſmile, one token of love, one hint of favour! The child of peace is not born without pangs, and agonies of ſoul.

3. *Evidence.* Many of us are not reconciled to the duties of religion, and ways of holineſs, and how then is it poſſible we ſhould be reconciled to God? What, reconciled to God, and unreconciled to the ways of God? By reconciliation we are *made nigh:* in duties of communion we *draw nigh*, and can we be made nigh to God, and have no heart to draw nigh to God? it can never be.

Examine your hearts, and ſay, Is not the way of ſtrictneſs a bondage to you? Had you not rather be at liberty to fulfil the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind? Could you not wiſh that the ſcriptures had not made ſome things elſe your ſins, and

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other things your duties: do you delight in the law of God after the inner man, and *esteem his judgments, concerning all things to be right?* Do you love secret prayer, and delight in duties of communion with God; or rather, are they not an ungrateful burden, and irksom imposition? Give conscience leave to speak plain.

4. *Evidence.* Many of us are not enemies to sin, and how then are we reconciled to God? What, friends with God, and our lusts too? It cannot be. Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the "Lord hate evil:" The same hour our reconciliation is made with God, there is an everlasting breach made with sin: this is one of the articles or conditions of our peace with God, Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will "have mercy on him; and to our God, and he will abundantly "pardon."

But it is manifest in many of us, that we are no enemies to sin, we secretly indulge it, what bad names soever we call it: We will commit ten sins to cover one: we cannot endure the most serious, faithful, seasonable, private, tender, and necessary reproofs for sin, but our hearts swell and rise at it; sure we are not reconciled to God, whilst we embrace his enemy in our bosoms.

5. *Evidence.* We *love not the children of God,* nor are reconciled to them that bear his image, and how then can we be reconciled to God? 1 John v. 1. "He that loveth him that "begat, loveth them also that are begotten: What, at peace with the Father, and at war with the children: it cannot be: Do not some that hope they have made their peace with God, hate, revile, and persecute the children of God? Surely, in that day we are reconciled to the Lord, we are reconciled to all his people: we shall then love a Christian, as a Christian, and by this we know that we are passed from death to life.

6. *Evidence.* Lastly, How can any man think himself to be reconciled to God, who *never closed heartily with Jesus Christ* by faith, who is the only days-man, and peace-maker: the alone Mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and man.

This is a sure truth, that all whom God accepts into favour, are "made accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6. If any man will make peace with God, he must take hold of his strength, accept and close with Christ, who is the power of God, or he can never make peace, Isa. xxvii. He must be made "nigh by "the blood of Christ," Eph. ii. 13. But alas, both Christ

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and faith are ſtrangers to many ſouls, who yet perſuade themſelves they are at peace with God: O fatal miſtake!

3. *Uſe of Exhortation.*

Laſtly, This point deſerves a cloſe, vigorous application in a threefold exhortation.

Firſt, To Chriſt's ambaſſadors, who treat with ſouls in order to their reconciliation with God.

Secondly, To thoſe that are yet in their enmity, and unreconciled ſtate.

Thirdly, To thoſe that have embraced the terms of peace, and ſubmitted to the goſpel-overtures.

Firſt, *To the ambaſſadors of reconciliation.* God hath put a great deal of honour upon you in this high and noble employment: great is the dignity of your office, to ſome you are "the "favour of death unto death, and to others a ſavour of life un- "to life; and who is ſufficient for theſe things?" 2 Cor. ii. 16. But yet the duty is no leſs than the dignity. O what manner of men ſhould we be for judgment, ſerioufneſs, affections, patience, and exemplary holineſs, to whom the management of ſo great a concern betwixt God and man is committed!

Firſt, For judgment and prudence, how neceſſary are theſe in ſo weighty and difficult a buſineſs as this! He had need be a man of wiſdom, that is to inform the ignorant of the nature and neceſſity of this great work, and win over their hearts to conſent to the articles of peace propounded in the goſpel; that hath ſo many ſubtle temptations to anſwer, and ſo many intricate caſes of conſcience to reſolve: there are many ſtrong holds of Satan to be battered, and many ſtout and obſtinate reſiſtances made by the hearts of ſinners, which muſt be overcome; and he had need be no novice in religion, to whom ſo difficult a province is committed.

Secondly, Let us be ſerious in our work as well as judicious. Remember, O ye ambaſſadors of Chriſt, you bring a meſſage from the God of heaven, of everlaſting conſequence to the ſouls of men. The eternal decrees are executed upon them in your miniſtry: to ſome you are "the ſavour of life unto life, and to "ſome the ſavour of death unto death," 2 Cor. ii. 16. Heaven and hell are matters of moſt awful and ſolemn conſideration. O what an account have we alſo ſhortly to give unto him that ſent us!

Theſe are matters of ſuch deep concernment, as ſhould ſwallow up our very ſpirits; the leaſt they can do, is to compoſe our hearts unto ſerioufneſs in the management of them.

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Thirdly, Be filled with tender affections toward the souls of men, with whom you treat for reconciliation: you had need be men of bowels, as well as men of brains *: you see a multitude of poor souls upon the brink of eternal misery, and they know it not, but promise themselves peace, and fill themselves with vain hopes of heaven: and is there a more moving, melting spectacle in the world, than this! O think with what bowels of commiseration Moses and Paul were filled, when the one desired rather to be blotted out of God's book, and the other to be accursed from Christ, than that Israel should not be saved, Exod. xxxii. 33. and Rom. ix. 3. Think how the bowels of Christ yearned over Jerusalem, Mat. xxiii. 37. And over the multitude, Mat. ix. 36. "Let the same mind be in you, which "also was in Christ Jesus."

Fourthly, Be patient and long-suffering toward sinners: such is the value of one soul, that it is worth waiting all our days to save it at last: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but "be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness "instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure "will give them repentance," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. The Lord waits with patience upon sinners, and well may you. Consider yourselves, how long was God treating with you, ere you were won to him? Be not discouraged, if your success presently answer not your expectation.

Fifthly, and lastly, Be sure to back your exhortations with drawing examples; else you may preach out your last breath before you gain one soul to God. The devil, and the carnal hearts of your hearers, will put hinderances enough in the way of your labours; do not you put the greatest of all yourselves. O study not only to preach exactly, but to live exactly; let the misplacing of one action in your lives, trouble you more than the misplacing of words in your discourses: this is the way to succeed in your embassy, and give up your account with joy.

Secondly, The exhortation speaks to all those that are yet in a state of enmity, and unreconciled to God unto this day. O that my words might prevail, and that you would now be entreated to be reconciled to God! The *ambassadors* of peace are yet with you, the *treaty* is not yet ended, the Master of the house is not yet risen up, nor the door of mercy and hope finally shut: hitherto God hath waited to be gracious; O that the long-suffering of God might be your salvation: a day is hasting when

* See Bowle's Pastor. Evang. p. 136.

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God will treat with you no more, when a *gulph shall be fixed* betwixt him and you for ever, Luke xvi. 26. O what will you do when the season of mercy, and all hopes of mercy, shall end together! When God shall become inaccessible, inexorable, and unreconcilable to you for evermore.

O what wilt thou do, when thou shalt find thyself shut up under eternal wrath! when thou shalt feel that misery thou art warned of! Is this the place where I must be! Are these the torments I must endure! What, for ever! yea, for ever: Will not God be satisfied with the sufferings of a thousand years? no, nor millions of years! Ah sinners, did you but clearly see the present and future misery of unreconciled ones, and what that wrath of the great and terrible God is, which is coming as fast as the wings of time can bring it upon you, it would certainly drive you to Christ, or drive you out of your wits. O it is a dreadful thing to have God for your eternal enemy: to have the great and terrible God causing his infinite power to avenge the abuse of his grace and mercy.

Believe it, friends, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men: an eternal weight hangs upon an inch of time. O that you did but know the time of your visitation! That you would not dare to adventure, and run the hazard of one day more in an unreconciled state.

Thirdly, and lastly, This point speaks to those who have believed our report, who have taken hold of God's strength, and made peace with him: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy: who once were afar off, but now are made nigh by the blood of Christ: with you I would leave a few words of exhortation, and I have done.

First, *Admire and stand amazed at this mercy.* "I will "praise thee, O Lord, (saith the church, Isa. xii. 1.) Though "thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and "thou comfortest me." O how overwhelming a mercy is here before you! God is at peace, at peace with you that were "enemies in your minds by wicked works," Col. i. 21. At peace with you, and at enmity with millions as good by nature as you: at peace with you that sought it not: at peace for ever; no dissolving this friendship for evermore. O let this consideration melt your hearts before the Lord, and make you cry, What am I, Lord, that mercy should take in me, and shut out fallen angels, and millions of men and women as capable of mercy as myself! O the riches! O the depths of the mercy and goodness of God!

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Secondly, *Beware of new breaches with God:* God will ſpeak "peace to his people, and to his ſaints: but let them not turn "again to folly," Pſal. lxxxv. 8. What tho' this ſtate of friendſhip can never be diſſolved, yet it is a dreadful thing to have it clouded: you may loſe the ſenſe of peace, and with it all the joy of your hearts, and comforts of your lives, in this world.

Thirdly, *Labour to reconcile others to God:* eſpecially thoſe that are endeared to you by the bonds of natural relation: When Paul was reconciled to God himſelf, his heart was full of heavineſs for others that were not reconciled; for his "bre-"thren and kinſmen according to the fleſh," Rom. ix. 2, 3. When Abraham was become God's friend himſelf, then, "O "that Iſhmael might live before thee!" Gen. xvii. 18.

Fourthly and laſtly, "Let your reconciliation with God re-"lieve you under all burdens of affliction you ſhall meet with "in your way to heaven:" Let them that are at enmity with God droop under croſſes and afflictions; but do not you do ſo. *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia,* Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. Let the peace of God keep your hearts and minds. As nothing can comfort a man that muſt go to hell at laſt, ſo nothing ſhould deject a man that ſhall, through many troubles, at laſt, reach heaven.

SERMON IV.

Explaining the Work of the Spirit, as the internal, and moſt effectual Means of the Application of CHRIST.

JOHN vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.*

OUR laſt diſcourſe informed you of the uſefulneſs and influence of the preaching of the goſpel, in order to the *application* of Chriſt to the ſouls of men. There muſt be (in God's ordinary way) the external miniſterial offer of Chriſt, before men can have union with him.

But yet, all the preaching in the world can never effect this union with Chriſt in itſelf, and in its own virtue, except a ſupernatural, and mighty power, go forth with it, for that end and purpoſe. Let Boanerges and Barnabas try their ſtrength, let

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the *angels* of heaven be the preachers; till God draw, the soul cannot come to Christ.

No saving benefit is to be had by Christ, without union with his person, no union with his person without faith, no faith, ordinarily wrought, without the preaching of the gospel by Christ's *ambassadors*, their preaching hath no saving efficacy, without God's drawings, as will evidently appear, by considering these words, and the occasion of them.

The occasion of these words is found (as learned * Cameron well observes) in the 42d verse. "And they said, is not this Jesus "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Christ had been pressing upon them in his ministry, the great and necessary duty of faith; but notwithstanding the *authority* of the preacher; the *holiness* of his life; the miracles by which he confirmed his *doctrine*; they still objected against him, "is not this "the carpenter's Son?" From whence Christ takes occasion for these words; "No man can come unto me, except my Father "which hath sent me, draw him," *q. d.* In vain is the authority of my person urged; in vain are all the miracles wrought in your sight, to confirm the doctrine preached to you; till that secret, almighty power of the Spirit be put forth upon your hearts, you will not, you cannot, come unto me.

The words are a negative proposition.

In which the author, and powerful manner of divine operation in working faith, are contained: there must be drawing before believing, and that drawing must be the drawing of God: every word hath its weight: we will consider them in the order they lie in the text.

Οὐδεὶς——*No Man*] not one, let his natural qualifications be what they will, let his external advantages, in respect of means and helps, be never so great: it is not in the power of any man: all persons, in all ages, need the same power of God, one as well as another; every man is alike dead, impotent, and averse to faith in his natural capacity. No man, or—not one, among all the sons of men.

Δύναται,——*Can*] or is able: he speaks of impotency to special and saving actions, such as believing in Christ is: no act that is saving, can be done without the concurrence of special grace. Other acts that have a remote tendency to it, are performed by a more general concourse and common assistance; so men may come to the word, and attend to what is spoken, remember, and consider what the word tells them; but as to believing or com-

* *Cameronis Myrothec. p.* 139.

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ing to Christ, that no man can do of himself, or by a general and common assistance. No man can.

Ελθειν προς με,——*Come unto me*] *(i. e.)* believe in me unto salvation. Coming to Christ, and believing in him, are terms *aequipollent*, and are indifferently used to express the nature of saving faith, as is plain ver. 35. "He that cometh to me, shall "never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst:" it notes the terms from which, and to which the soul moves, and the voluntariness of the motion, notwithstanding that divine power, by which the will is drawn to Christ.

Εαν μη ο Πατηρ,——*Except my Father*] not excluding the other two persons; for every work of God relating to the creatures, is common to all the three persons: nor only to note that the Father is the first in order of working: but the reason is hinted in the next words.

Ο πεμψας με,——*who hath sent me,*] God hath entered into covenant with the Son, and sent him, stands obliged thereby, to bring the promised seed to him, and that he doth by drawing them to Christ by faith: so the next words tells us the Father doth.

Ελκυση αυτον.——*Draw him.*] That is powerfully and effectually incline his will to come to Christ: "† Not by a violent "coaction, but by a benevolent bending of the will which was "averse;" and as it is not in the way of force and compulsion, so neither is it by a simple *moral suasion*, by the bare proposal of an object to the will, and so leaving the sinner to his own election; but it is such a persuasion, as hath a mighty overcoming efficacy accompanying it: of which more anon.

The words thus opened, the observation will be this:

Doct. *That it is utterly impossible for any man to come to Jesus Christ, unless he be drawn unto him by the special and mighty power of God.*

No man is compelled to come to Christ against his will, he that cometh, comes willingly, but even that will, and desire to come, is the effect of grace, Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that work-"eth in you, both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure."

"If we desire the help and assistance of grace, (saith ‡ Ful-

† *Non violenta coactio immediata, sed voluntatis a Deo aversæ benevola flectio.* Glas. Rhet. Sacra p. 236.

‡ *Ut ergo desideremus adjutorium, hoc quoque est gratiæ; ipsa namque incipit effundi, ut incipiat posci.* Fulgen. Epist. 6. ad Theod.

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" gentius) even the desire is of grace; grace must first be shed " forth upon us, before we can begin to desire it:" " By grace " are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is " the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. suppose the utmost degree of natural ability; let a man be as much disposed and prepared, as nature can dispose or prepare him, and to all this, add the proposal of the greatest arguments, and motives, to induce him to come; let all these have the advantage of the fittest season to work upon his heart; yet no man can come till God draw him: we move as we are moved; as Christ's coming to us, so our coming to him are the pure effects of grace.

Three things require explication in this point before us.

First, *What the drawing of the Father imports.*

Secondly, *In what manner he draws men to Christ.*

Thirdly, *How it appears that none can come till they be so drawn.*

First, What the drawing of the Father imports.

To open this, let it be considered, that drawing is usually distinguished into *physical* and *moral*. The former is, either by co-action, force, and compulsion: or, by a sweet, congruous efficacy upon the will. As to violence and compulsion, it is none of God's way and method, it being both against the nature of the will of man, which cannot be forced, and against the will of Jesus Christ, who loves to reign over a free and willing people, Psal. cx. 5. " Thy people shall be willing in " the day of thy power." Or, as that word may be rendered, they shall be *voluntarinesses*, as willing as willingness itself. It is not then by a forcible *co-action*, but in a *moral* way of persuasion, that God the Father draws men to Jesus Christ: He draws *with the bands of a man*, as they are called, Hos. xi. 14. *(i. e.)* in a way of rational conviction of the mind and conscience, and effectual persuasion of the will.

But yet by *moral persuasion*, we must not understand a simple and bare proposal, or tender of Christ and grace, leaving it still at the sinner's choice, whether he will comply with it or no. ‖ For though God does not force the will contrary to its nature, yet there is a real internal efficacy implied in this *draw-*

‖ We do not see God preaching, writing, and teaching, yet we believe as if we saw thus; for all truth hath a power of inclining the mind to assent; the greater truth, the greater power, and the greatest truth, the greatest power of all; But why then do not all believe the gospel? I answer, because all are are not drawn by God, *Baptist Mantuanus de patientia, lib. 3. cap. 2.*

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ing, or an immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart and will, which, in a way congruous and suitable to its nature, takes away the rebellion and reluctance of it, and of unwilling, makes it willing to come to Christ. And, in this respect, we own a *physical*, as well as *moral* influence of the Spirit in this work; and so the scripture expresses it, Eph. i. 19, 20. "That "we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to-"ward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty "power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from "the dead." Here is much more than a naked proposal made to the will; there is a *power* as well as a *tender*; greatness of power; and yet more, the exceeding greatness of his power; and this power hath an actual efficacy ascribed to it, he works upon our hearts and wills, *according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.* Thus he fulfils in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power, 2 Thess. i. 11.

And this is that which the schools call *gratia efficax*, effectual grace; and others *victrix delectatio*, an overcoming, conquering delight †: Thus the work is carried on with a most efficacious sweetness. So that the liberty of the will is not infringed, whilst the obstinacy of the will is effectually subdued and overruled. For want of this, there are so many *almost Christians* in the world; hence are all those vanishing and imperfect works which come to nothing, called in scripture, a *morning cloud, an early dew.* Had this mighty power gone forth with the word, they had never vanished or perished like *embryo*'s as they do. So then, God draws not only in a *moral* way, by proposing a suitable object to the will, but also in a *physical* way, or by immediate powerful influence upon the will; not infringing the liberty of it, but yet infallibly and effectually persuading it to come to Christ.

Secondly, Next let us consider the marvellous way and manner, in which the Lord draws the souls of poor sinners to Jesus Christ, and you will find he doth it,

1. Gradually,	4. Effectually,
2. Congruously,	and
3. Powerfully,	5. Finally.

First, This blessed work is carried on by the Spirit gradually; bringing the soul step by step, in the due method and order of the gospel to Christ; illumination, conviction, compunction, prepare the way to Christ; and then faith unites the soul to him:

† A certain heavenly sweetness. *Jansenius Aug. lib. cap.*

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Without humiliation, there can be no faith, Matth. xxi. 32. "Ye repented not, that ye might believe." It is the burdensome sense of sin, that brings the soul to Christ for rest, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." But without conviction there can be no compunction; no humiliation; he that is not convinced of his sin and misery, never bewails it, nor mourns for it: Never was there one tear of true repentance seen to drop from the eye of an unconvinced sinner.

And without illumination, there can be no conviction; for what is conviction, but the application of the light which is in the understanding, or mind of a man, to his heart and conscience? Acts. ii. 37. In this order therefore, the Spirit (ordinarily) draws souls to Christ, he shines into their minds by illumination; applies that light to their consciences by effectual conviction; breaks and wounds their hearts for sin in compunction; and then moves the will to embrace and close with Christ, in the way of faith, for life and salvation.

These several steps are more distinctly discerned in some Christians than in others; they are more clearly to be seen in the *adult convert*, than in those that were drawn to Christ in their youth; in such as were drawn to him out of a state of prophaneness, than in those that had the advantage of a pious education; but in this order, the work is carried on, ordinarily, in all; however it differ in point of clearness in the one, and in the other.

Secondly, He draws sinners to Christ congruously, and very agreeably to the nature and way of man, so he speaks, Hos. xi. 4. "I drew them with the * cords of a man, with bands of "love:" Not as beasts are drawn; but as men are inclined, and wrought to compliance, by rational conviction of their judgments, and powerful persuasion of their wills; the minds of sinners are naturally blinded by ignorance, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And their affections bewitched to their lusts, Gal. iii. 4. and whilst it is thus, no arguments or entreaties can possibly prevail, to bring them off from the ways of sin to Christ.

The way therefore which the Lord takes to win and draw them to Christ, is by rectifying their false apprehensions, and shewing them infinitely more good in Christ, than in the creature, and in their lusts; yea, by satisfying their understandings, that there is goodness enough in Jesus Christ, to whom he is drawing them.

* *Funibus hominum* (i. e.) *humanis: non quibus trahi ac deduci solent boves.*

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First, Enough to out-bid all temporal-good, which is to be denied for his ſake.

Secondly, Enough to preponderate all temporal-evils, which are to be ſuffered for his ſake.

First, That there is more good in Chriſt than in all temporal good things, which we are to deny, or forſake, upon his account. This being once clearly, and convincingly diſcovered to the underſtanding, the will is, thereby, prepared to quit all that which entangles, and with-holds it from coming to Chriſt: there is no man that loves money ſo much, but he will willingly part with it, for that which is more worth to him, than the ſum he parts with to purchaſe it: Matth. xiii. 45, 46. "The kingdom "of heaven is like to a merchant-man, ſeeking goodly pearls, "who when he hath found one pearl of great price, goeth and "ſelleth all that he hath and buyeth it."

Such an invaluable *pearl* is Jeſus Chriſt; infinitely more worth than all that a poor ſinner hath to part with for him; and is a more real good than the creature. Theſe are but vain ſhadows; Prov. xxiii. 5. Chriſt is a ſolid, ſubſtantial good: yea, he is, and by conviction appears to be a more ſuitable good than the creature: The world cannot juſtify, and ſave, but Chriſt can. Chriſt is a more neceſſary good than the creature, which is only for our temporal conveniency, but he is of eternal neceſſity. He is a more durable good than any creature-comfort is, or can be: "The faſhion of this world paſſeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 13. But durable riches and righteouſneſs are in him, Prov. viii. 17. Thus Chriſt appears in the day of conviction, infinitely more excellent than the world; he out-bids all the offers that the world can make; and this greatly forwards the work of drawing a ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, And (then to remove every thing out of the way to Chriſt) God diſcovers to the ſoul enough in him to preponderate, and much more than will recompenſe all the evils and ſufferings it can endure for his ſake.

It is true, they that cloſe with Chrſt, cloſe with his croſs alſo: they muſt expect to ſave no more but their ſouls by him. He tells us what we muſt truſt to, Luke xiv. 26, 27. "If any "man come to me, and hate not his Father and mother, and "wife and children, and brethren and ſiſters; yea, and his "own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple: And whoſoever "doth not bear his croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſ-"ciple."

To read ſuch a text as this, with ſuch a comment upon it, as

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ſatan and our fleſh can make; is enough to fright a Man from Chriſt for ever: Nor is it poſſible, by all the arguments in the world, to draw any ſoul to Chriſt upon ſuch terms as theſe, till the Lord convince it, that there is enough, and much more than enough in Jeſus Chriſt to recompenſe all theſe ſufferings, and loſſes, we endure for him.

But when the ſoul is ſatisfied, that theſe ſufferings are but *external*, upon the vile *body*, but that the benefit which comes by Chriſt is *internal*, in a man's own *ſoul*; theſe afflictions are but *temporal*, Rom. viii. 18. But Chriſt and his benefits are *eternal*: This muſt needs prevail with the will to come over to Chriſt; notwithſtanding all the evils of ſuffering that accompany him, when the reality of all this is diſcovered by the Lord, and the power of God goes along with theſe diſcoveries. Thus the Lord draws us in our own way, by rational convictions of the underſtanding, and allurements of the will.

And it is poſſible this may be the reaſon why ſome poor ſouls miſ-judge the workings of the Spirit of God upon themſelves, thinking they never had that wonderful and mighty power of God in converſion, acting upon their hearts, becauſe they find all that is done upon their hearts that way, is done in the ordinary courſe and method of nature: They conſider, compare, are convinced, and then reſolve to chooſe Chriſt and his ways; whereas they expect to feel ſome ſtrange operations, that ſhall have the viſible characters of the immediate power of God upon them, and ſuch a power they might diſcern, if they would conſider it as working in this way and method: But they cannot diſtinguiſh God's acts from their own, and that puzzles them.

Thirdly, The drawings of the Father are very *powerful*. "The arm of the Lord is revealed in this work," Iſa. liii. 1. It was a powerful word indeed, that made the light at firſt ſhine out of darkneſs, and no leſs power is required to make it ſhine into our hearts, 2 Cor. v. 14. That day in which the ſoul is made willing to come to Chriſt, is called "the day of "his power," Pſal. cx. 3. The ſcripture expreſſeth the work of converſion, by a threefold *metaphor*, viz.

That of a *reſurrection* from the dead, Rom. vi. 4.

That of *creation*, Eph. ii. 10. And

That of *victory* or *conqueſt*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. All theſe ſet forth the infinite power of God in this work; for no leſs than almighty Power is required to each of them; and if you ſtrictly examine the diſtinct notions, you ſhall find the power of God more and more illuſtriouſly diſplayed in each of them.

To raiſe the dead, is the effect of almighty Power; but then

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the resurrection supposeth pre-existent matter. In the work of *creation*, there is no pre-existent matter; but then there is no opposition: That which is not, rebels not against the power which gives it being. But *victory* and *conquest* supposes *opposition*, all the power of corrupt nature arming itself, and fighting against God; but yet not able to frustrate his design.

Let the soul whom the Father draws, struggle, and reluctate as much as it can, it shall come, yea, and come willingly too, when the drawing power of God is upon it †. O the self-conflicts, the contrary resolves, with which the soul finds itself distracted, and rent asunder! The hopes, and fears; the encouragements, and discouragements; they will, and they will not: but victorious grace conquers all opposition at last. We find an excellent example of this in blessed ‡ Augustin, who speaks of this very work, the drawing of his soul to Christ, and how he felt in that day two wills in himself, "one old, the other "new; one carnal, the other spiritual; and how in these their "contrary motions, and conflicts, he was torn asunder in his "own thoughts and resolutions, suffering that unwillingly, "which he did willingly." And certainly, if we consider how deep the soul is rooted, by natural inclination, and long continued custom, in sin, how extremely averse it is to the ways of strict godliness, and mortification; how Satan, that invidious enemy, that strong man armed, fortifies the soul to defend his possession, against Christ, and intrenches himself in the understanding, will, and affections, by deep-rooted prejudices against Christ and holiness, it is a wonder of wonders, to see a soul quitting all its beloved lusts, and fleshly interests and endearments, and coming willingly under Christ's yoke.

Fourthly, The drawings of God are very effectual: There is indeed a common and *ineffectual* work upon hypocrites, and apostates, called in scripture a "morning cloud, an early dew," Hos. vi. 4. These may believe for a time, and fall away at last, Luke viii. 13. Their wills may be half won, they may

† A sweet moving from the word, and a powerful drawing on God's part. For there is a certain kind of voluntary necessity. *Moulin Amut. Armin.*

‡ *Ita duae voluntates meae, una vetus, alia vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis illa spiritualis confligebant inter se, atque discordando dissipabant animam meam---ibi enim magis jam non ego, quia, ex magna parte id patiebar invitus, quod faciebam volens.* Aug. confes. lib. 8. cap. 5.

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be drawn half way to Christ, and return again. So it was with Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 28. ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις, within a very little, thou persuadest me to be a Christian: But in God's elected ones, it is effectual: * Their wills are not only *almost*, but *altogether* persuaded to embrace Christ, and quit the ways of sin, how pleasant, gainful, and dear soever they have been to them. The Lord not only draws, but draws home those souls to Christ, John vi. 37. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come "to me."

It is confessed, that in drawing home of the very elect to Christ, there may be, and frequently are, many pauses, stands, and demurs; they have convictions, affections, and resolutions stirring in them, which, like early blossoms, seem to be nipt and die away again. There is frequently, (in young ones especially), an hopeful appearance of grace; they make conscience of avoiding sins, and performing duties: they have sometimes great awakenings under the word, they are observed to retire for meditation and prayer; and delight to be in the company of Christians: and after all this, youthful lusts and vanities are found to stifle and choak these hopeful beginnings, and the work seems to stand, (it may be some years), at a pause; however, at last, the Lord makes it victorious over all opposition, and sets it home with power upon their hearts.

Fifthly, To conclude, those whom the Father draws to Christ, he draws them finally and for ever. "The gifts and "calling of God are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29.: they are so, as to God the giver; he never repents that he hath called his people into the fellowship of his Son Christ Jesus: and they are so on the believer's part; he is never sorry, whatever he afterwards meets with, that he is come to Christ.

There is a time when Christians are drawn to Christ, but there shall never be a time in which they shall be drawn away from Christ, John x. 29. There is no plucking them out of the Father's hand. It was common to a proverb, in the primitive times, when they would express an impossibility, to say, "You may as soon draw a Christian from Christ, as do it." When Christ asked that question of the disciples, "Will ye "also go away? Lord, (said Peter, in the name of them all), "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,"

* Suasion is the act of one using endeavours; persuasion the act of an efficient cause. He uses suasion, who gives advice; persuasion is the deed of him who determines a man to what he pleases. *Erasmus.*

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John vi. 68. They are thus drawn, do with full purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord. And thus of the manner and quality of effectual drawing.

Thirdly, In the last place, I am to evince the impossibility of coming to Christ without the Father's drawings: and this will evidently appear upon the consideration of these two particulars.

First, The difficulty of this work is above all the power of nature to overcome.

Secondly, That little power and ability that nature hath, it will never employ to such a purpose as this; till the drawing power of God be upon the will of a sinner.

First, If all the power of nature were employed in this design, yet such are the difficulties of this work, that it surmounts all the abilities of nature. This the scripture very plainly affirms, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and "that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." To think of Christ is easy, but to come to Christ, is, to nature, impossible: To send forth cold and ineffectual wishes to Christ we may, but to bring Christ and the soul together, requires the almighty power of God, Eph. i. 19. The grace of faith by which we come to Christ, is as much the free gift of God, as Christ himself, who is the object of faith, Phil. i. 29. "To you it is free-"ly given to believe." And this will easily appear to your understandings, if you do but consider

The { Subject / Act, *and* / Enemies } of this work of faith, or coming to Christ,

First, Consider the subject of faith in which it is wrought; or what it is that is drawn to Christ: It is the heart of a sinner which is naturally as indisposed for this work, as the wood which Elijah laid in order upon the altar, was to catch fire, when he had poured so much water upon it, as did not only wet the wood, but also filled up the trench round about it, 1 Kings xviii. 33. For it is naturally a dark, blind, and ignorant, heart, Job. xi. 12. And such an heart can never believe, till he that commanded the light to shine out of darkness do shine into it, 2 Cor. v. 14.

Nor will it avail any thing to say, though man be born in darkness and ignorance, yet afterwards he may acquire knowledge in the use of means, as we see many natural men do to a very high degree: For this is not that light that brings the soul to Christ, yea, this natural, unsanctified light blinds the soul, and

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prejudices it more againſt Chriſt than ever it was before, 1 Cor. i. 21, 26.

As it is a blind ignorant heart, ſo it is a ſelfiſh heart by nature: All its deſigns and aims terminate in ſelf: this is the center and weight of the ſoul; no righteouſneſs but its own is ſought after, that, or none, Rom. x. 3. Now, for a ſoul to renounce and deny ſelf, in all its forms, modes, and intereſts, as every one doth that cometh to Chriſt; to diſclaim and deny natural, moral, and religious ſelf, and come to Chriſt, as a poor, miſerable, wretched, empty creature; to live upon his righteouſneſs for ever, is as ſupernatural and wonderful, as to ſee the hills and mountains ſtart from their baſes and centres, and fly like wandering atoms in the air.

Nay, this heart which is to come to Chriſt, is not only dark and ſelfiſh, but full of pride. O it is a deſperate proud heart by nature, it cannot ſubmit to come to Chriſt, as Benhadad's ſervants came to the king of Iſrael, with ſackcloth on their loins, and ropes upon their heads. To take guilt, ſhame, and confuſion of face to ourſelves, and acknowledge the righteouſneſs of God in our eternal damnation; to come to Chriſt naked, and empty, as one that juſtifies the ungodly: I ſay, nature left to itſelf, would as ſoon be damned as do this: the proud heart can never come to this, till the Lord have humbled and broken it by his power.

Secondly, Let us take the act of faith into conſideration alſo, as it is here deſcribed by the ſoul's coming to Jeſus Chriſt; and you will find a neceſſity of the Father's drawings; for this evidently implies, that which is againſt the ſtream and current of corrupt nature, and that which is above the ſphere and capacity of the moſt refined and accompliſhed nature.

Firſt, It is againſt the ſtream and current of our corrupt nature to come to Chriſt. For let us but conſider the term from which the ſoul departs, when it comes to Chriſt. In that day it leaves all its luſts, and ways of ſin, how pleaſant, ſweet, and profitable ſoever they have been unto it, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the "wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, "and let him return unto the Lord:" Way and thoughts, *i. e.* both the practice of and delight he had in ſin, muſt be forſaken, and the outward and inward man muſt be cleanſed from it. Now there are in the boſoms of unregenerate men ſuch darling luſts, that have given them ſo much practical and ſpeculative pleaſure, which have brought ſo much profit to them; which have been born and bred up with them; and which, upon all theſe accounts, are endeared to their ſouls to that degree, that

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it is easier for them to die, than to forsake them: yea, nothing is more common among such men, than to venture eternal damnation, rather than suffer a separation from their sins.

And which is yet more difficult in coming to Christ, the soul forsakes not only its sinful self, but its righteous self: *i. e.* not only its worst sins, but its best performances, accomplishments, and excellencies. Now this is one of the greatest straits that nature can be put to: Righteousness, by works, was the first liquor that ever was put into the vessel, and it still retains the tang and savour of it, and will to the end of the world, Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going "about to establish their own righteousness, have not submit-"ted themselves unto the righteousness of God." τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ, they have not submitted: To come naked and empty to Christ, and receive all from him as a free-gift, is, to proud corrupt nature, the greatest abasement and submission in the world.

Let the gospel furnish its table with the richest and costliest dainties that ever the blood of Christ purchased, such is the pride of nature, that it disdains to taste them, except it may also pay for the same. If the old hive be removed from the place where it was wont to stand, the bees will come home to the old place, yea, and many of them you shall find will die there, rather than go to the hive, though it stand in a far better place than it did before. Just so stands the case with men. The *hive* is removed, *i. e.* we are no more to expect righteousness as Adam did, by obeying and working, but by believing and coming to Christ; but nature had as lieve be damned as do this: It still goes about to establish its own rigteousness.

Virtues, duties, and moral excellencies, these are the ornaments of nature; here is nature set off in its sumptuous attire, and rich embellishments, and now to renounce it, disclaim and contemn it, as dross and dung, in comparison of Christ, as believers do, Phil. iii. 8. This, I say, is against the grain of nature. We reckon it the strange effect of self-denial in Mahomet the Great *, who being so enamoured with his beautiful Irene, would be persuaded, upon reasons of state, with his own hand to strike off her head; and that, even when she appeared in all her rich ornaments before him, rather like such a goddess, as the poets in their extasies use to feign, than a mortal creature. And yet certainly this is nothing to that self-denial which is exercised in our coming to Christ.

Secondly, And if we look to the other term to which the soul

* Knolles History of the Turks.

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moves, we shall find it acting as much above the sphere and ability of improved nature, as here it acts and moves against the stream and current of corrupted nature: for how wonderful and supernatural an adventure is that, which the soul makes in the day that it comes to Jesus Christ.

Surely, for any poor soul to venture itself for ever upon Jesus Christ, whom it never saw, nay, upon Christ, whose very existence, its own unbelief calls in question whether he be or no: and that when it is even weighed down to the dust, with the burdensome sense of its own vileness and total unworthiness, feeling nothing in itself but sin and misery, the workings of death and fears of wrath: to go to Christ, of whose pardoning grace and mercy it never had any the least experience, nor can find any ground of hope in itself that it shall be accepted; this is as much above the power of nature, as it is for a stone to rise from the earth, and fix itself among the stars. Well might the apostle ascribe it to that almighty Power which raised up Christ from the dead, Eph. i. 19, 20. If the Lord draw not the soul, and that omnipotently, it can never come from itself to Christ. And yet farther,

Thirdly, The natural impossibility of coming to Christ, will more clearly appear, if we consider the enemies to faith; or what blocks are rolled by Satan and his instruments, into the way to Christ: to mention, in this place, no more but our own carnal reason, as it is armed and managed by the subtilty of Satan, what a wonder is it that any soul should come to Christ?

These are the strong holds, (mentioned 2 Cor. x. 4) out of which those objections, fears, and discouragements sally, by which the soul is fiercely assaulted in the way to Christ.

Wilt thou forsake all thy pleasures, merry company, and sensible comforts, to live a sad, retired, pensive life? Wilt thou beggar and undo thyself, let go all thy comforts in hand, for an hope of that which thine eyes never saw, nor hast thou any certainty that it is any more than a fancy? Wilt thou that hast lived in reputation and credit all thy life, now become the scorn and contempt of the world? Thinkest thou thyself able to live such a strict, severe, mortified, and self-denying a life, as the word of God requires? And what if persecution should arise, (as thou mayest expect it will), canst thou forsake father and mother, wife and children, yea, and give up thine own life too, to a cruel and bloody death! be advised better, before thou resolve in so important a matter. What thinkest thou of thy forefathers, that lived and died in that way thou art now living? Art thou wiser than they? Do not the generality of men walk in the same

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paths thou haſt hitherto walked in? If this way lead to hell, as thou feareſt it may, think then how many millions of men muſt periſh as well as thyſelf; and is ſuch a ſuppoſition conſiſtent with the gracious and merciful nature of God? Beſides, think what ſort of people thoſe are, unto whom thou art about to join thyſelf in this new way? Are there not to be found among them many things to diſcourage thee, and cool thy zeal? They are generally of the lower and baſer ſort of men, poor and deſpicable: Seeſt thou not, though their profeſſion be holy, how earthly, carnal, proud, factious, and hypocritical, many of them are found to be! And doubtleſs, the reſt are like them, though their hypocriſy be not yet diſcovered.

O what ſtands and demurs? what heſitations and doubts, is the ſoul clogged with in its way to Chriſt! But yet none of theſe can withhold and detain the ſoul, when the Father draws; Greater, then, is he that is in us, than he that is in the world. And thus you ſee the nature, manner, and efficacy of divine drawings, and how impoſſible it is for any ſoul to come to Chriſt without them.

The inferences and improvements of the point follow.

Infer. 1. *How deeply and thoroughly is the nature of man corrupted, and what an enemy is every man to his own happineſs, that he muſt be drawn to it?* John v. 40. "You will not come "unto me, that ye might have life."

Life is deſireable in every man's eyes, and eternal is the moſt excellent life; yet, in this, the world is rather agreed to die and periſh for ever, than come to Chriſt for life. Had Chriſt told us of fields and vineyards, ſheep and oxen, gold and ſilver, honours and ſenſual pleaſures, who would not have come to him for theſe? But to tell of mortification, ſelf-denial, ſtrictneſs of life, and ſufferings for his ſake, and all this for an happineſs to be enjoyed in the world to come, nature will never like ſuch a propoſition as this.

You ſee where it ſticks, not in a ſimple inability to believe, but in an inability complicated with enmity; they neither can come, nor will come to Chriſt: It is true, all that do come to Chriſt, come willingly; but thanks be to the grace of God, that hath freed and perſuaded the will, elſe they had never been willing to come: Who ever found his own heart firſt ſtir and move towards Chriſt? How long may we wait and expect, before we ſhall feel our hearts naturally burn with deſires after, and love to Jeſus Chriſt?

This averſion of the will and affections from God, is one of

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the main roots of original sin. No argument can prevail to bring the soul to Christ, till this be mastered and overpowered by the Father's drawing. In our motions to sin, we need restraining, but in all our motions to Christ, we as much need drawing. He that comes to heaven may say, Lord, if I had had my own way and will, I had never come here; if thou hadst not drawn me, I should never have come to thee. O the riches of the grace of God! Oh unparalleled mercy and goodness! not only to prepare such a glory as this for an unworthy soul, but to put forth the exceeding greatness of thy power, afterwards to draw an unwilling soul to the enjoyment of it.

Infer. 2. *What enemies are they to God, and the souls of men, that do all they can to discourage and hinder the conversion of men to Christ? God draws forward, and these do all that in them lies to draw backward,* (i. e.) *to prejudice and discourage them from coming to Jesus Christ in the way of faith: this is a direct opposition to God, and a plain confederacy with the devil.*

O, how many have been thus discouraged in their way to Christ, by their carnal relations, I cannot say friends! Their greatest enemies have been the men of their own house. These have pleaded (as if the devil had hired and fee'd them) against the everlasting welfare of their own flesh. O cruel parents, brethren, and sisters, that jeer, frown, and threaten, where they should encourage, assist, and rejoice! Such parents are the devil's children. Satan chuses such instruments as you are, above all others, for this work: he knows what influence and authority you have upon them, and over them; and what fear, love, and dependance, they have for you, and upon you; so that none in all the world are like to manage the design of their damnation so effectually, as you are like to do.

Will you neither come to Christ yourselves, nor suffer your dear relations that would? Had you rather find them in the alehouse, than in the closet? Did you instrumentally give them their being, and will you be the instruments of ruining for ever those beings they had from you? Did you so earnestly desire children, so tenderly nurse and provide for them; take such delight in them; and, after all this, do what in you lies to damn and destroy them; If these lines shall fall into any such hands, O that God would set home the conviction, and sense of this horrid evil upon their hearts.

And no less guilty of this sin are scandalous and loose professors, who serve to furnish the devil with the greatest arguments he hath to dissuade men from coming to Christ: it is your looseness, and hypocrisy, by which he hopes to scare others

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from Christ. It is said, Cant. ii. 7. " I charge you by the roes " and hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my be- " loved till he please."

Roes and hinds, like young converts and comers towards Christ, are shy and timerous creatures, that start at the least sound, or yelp of a dog, and fly away. Take heed what you do in this case, lest you go down to hell under the guilt of damning more souls than your own.

Infer. 3. *Learn hence, the true ground and reason of those strange, amazing, and supernatural effects, that you behold, and so admire in the world, as often as you see sinners forsaking their pleasant, profitable corruptions, and companions, and embracing the ways of Christ, godliness, and mortification.*

It is said, 1 Pet. iv. 4. " They think it strange, that you " run not with them into the same excess of riot;" The word is, ᾧ ξενίζονται, they stand at a gaze, as the hen that hath hatch-partridge eggs doth, when she sees them take the wing and fly away from her.

Beloved, it is the world's wonder to see their companions in sin forsake them; those that were once as prophane, and vain as themselves, it may be more, to forsake their society, retire into their closets, mourn for sin, spend their time in meditation and prayer, embrace the severest duties, and content to run the greatest hazard in the world for Christ; but they see not that almighty power that draws them, which is too strong for all the sinful ties and engagements in the world to withhold and detain them.

A man would have wondered to see Elisha leave the oxen, and run after Elijah, saying, " Let me go, I pray thee, and kiss " my father and mother, and then I will follow thee;" when Elijah had said nothing to persuade him to follow him, only, as he passed by him, he cast his mantle on him, 1 Kings x. 19, 20. Surely that soul whom God draws, must needs leave all and follow Christ, for the power of God resteth on it. All carnal ties and engagements to sin, break and give way, when the Father draws the soul to Christ in the day of his power.

Infer. 4. *Is this the first spring of spiritual motion after Christ? Learn then from hence, how it comes to pass that so many excellent sermons, and powerful persuasions are ineffectual, and cannot draw and win one soul to Christ. Surely it is because ministers draw alone; and the special saving power of God goes not forth, at all times alike, with their endeavours.*

Paul was a chosen vessel, filled with a greater measure of gifts

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and graces by the Spirit, than any that went before him, or followed after him; and, as his talents, so his diligence in improving them, was beyond any recorded example we read of amongst men; "He rather flew like a seraphim, than travelled "upon his master's errand about the world*." Apollos was an eloquent preacher, and mighty in the scriptures, yet Paul is "nothing, and Apollos nothing; but God that gives the in-"crease," 1 Cor. iii. 7. We are too apt to admire men, yea, and the best are but too apt to go forth in the strength of their own parts and preparations; but God secures his own glory, and magnifies his own power, frequently, in giving success to weaker endeavours, and men of lower abilities, when he withholds it from men of more raised, refined, and excellent gifts and abilities.

It is our great honour, who are the ministers of the gospel, that we are συνεργοι, *workers together with God*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. in his strength we can prevail; "the weapons of our warfare are "mighty through God," 2 Cor. x. 4. But if his presence, blessing, and assistance, be not with us, we are nothing, we can do nothing.

If we prepare diligently, pray heartily, preach zealously, and our hearers go as they came, without any spiritual effects and fruits of our labours, what shall we say, but as Martha said to Christ, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not "died:" Had the Spirit of God gone forth with his especial efficacy and blessing, with this prayer, or that sermon, these souls had not departed dead, and senseless from under it.

Infer. 5. *Doth all success and efficacy depend upon the Father's drawings? Let none then despair of their unregenerate, and carnal relations, over whose obstinacy they do, and have cause to mourn.*

What, if they have been as many years under the preaching of the gospel, as the poor man lay at the pool of Bethesda, and hitherto to no purpose? A time may come at last, (as it did for him) when the Spirit of God may move upon the waters; I mean put a quickening and converting power into the means, and then the desire of your souls for them shall be fulfilled.

It may be, you have poured out many prayers, and tears to the Lord for them; you have cried for them as Abraham for his son, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" O that this poor husband, wife, child, brother, or sister, might live in thy sight; and still you see them continue carnal, dead, and sense-

* Ως πατηρ την οικειαν, και ως σωματος διεθαμβε. Chrysost.

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leſs: Well, but yet give not up your hopes, nor ceaſe your pious endeavours, the time may come when the Father may draw as well as you, and then you ſhall ſee them quit all, and come to Chriſt; and nothing ſhall hinder them. They are now drawn away of their own luſts; they are eaſily drawn away by their ſinful companions; but when God draws, none of theſe ſhall withdraw them from the Lord Jeſus. What is their ignorance, obſtinacy, and hardneſs of heart, before that mighty power that ſubdues all things to itſelf? Go therefore to the Lord, by prayer, for them, and ſay, Lord, I have laboured for my poor relations in vain, I have ſpent my exhortations to little purpoſe; the work is too difficult for me, can I carry it no farther, but thou canſt: O let thy power go forth; they ſhall be willing day of thy power.

Infer 6. *If none can come to Chriſt, except the Father draw them, then ſurely none can be drawn from Chriſt except the Father leave them: That power which at firſt drew them to Chriſt, can ſecure and eſtabliſh them in Chriſt to the end,* John x. 29. "My Father which gave them me is greater than "all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's "hand."

When the power of God at firſt draws us out of our natural ſtate to Chriſt, it finds us not only *impotent*, but *obſtinate*, not only unable, but unwilling to come; and yet this power of God prevails againſt all oppoſition: How much more is it able to preſerve and ſecure us, when his fear is put into our inward parts, ſo that we dare not depart, we have no will to depart from him? Well then, if the world ſay, I will enſnare thee; if the devil ſay, I will deſtroy thee; if the fleſh ſay I will betray thee; yet thou art ſecure and ſafe, as long as God hath ſaid, "I will never leave "thee nor forſake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

Infer. 7. *Let this engage you to a conſtant attendance upon the ordinances of God, in which this drawing power of God is ſometimes put forth upon the hearts of men.*

Beloved, there are certain ſeaſons in which the Lord comes nigh to men in the ordinances and duties of his worſhip; and we know not at what time the Lord cometh forth by his Spirit upon this deſign: he many times comes in an hour when we think not of him; "I am found of them that ſought me not," Iſa. lxv. 1. It is good therefore, to be found in the way of the Spirit: Had that poor man, that lay ſo long at the pool of Bethesda, reaſoned thus with himſelf, So long have I lain here in vain expecting a cure, it is to no purpoſe to wait longer, and ſo had been abſent at that very time when the angel came down,

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he had, in all likelihood, carried his diſeaſe to the grave with him.

How doſt thou know but this very *ſabbath*, this ſermon, this prayer, which thou haſt no heart to attend, and are tempted to neglect, may be the ſeaſon, and inſtrument wherein, and by which, the Lord may do that for thy ſoul, which was never done before?

Infer. 8. *To conclude, How are all the ſaints engaged to put forth all the power and ability they have for God, who hath put forth his infinite almighty power to draw them to Chriſt!*

God hath done great things for your ſouls; he hath drawn you out of the miſerable ſtate of ſin and wrath; and that when he let others go, by nature as good as you, he hath drawn you into union with Chriſt, and communion with his glorious priviveleges. O that you would henceforth employ all the power you have, for God, in the duties of obedience, and in drawing others to Chriſt, as much as in you lies, and ſay continually with the Church, "Draw me, we will run after thee," Cant. i. 4.

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON V.

Opening the Work of the Spirit more particularly, by which the Soul is enabled to apply CHRIST.

Eph. ii. 1. *And you hath he quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

IN the former ſermons we have ſeen our union with Chriſt in the general nature of it, and the means by which it is effected, both *external*, by the preaching of the goſpel, and *internal*, by the drawing of the Father. We are now to bring our thoughts yet cloſer to this great myſtery, and conſider the bands, by which Chriſt and believers are knit together in a bleſſed union.

And if we heedfully obſerve the ſcripture-expreſſions, and ponder the nature of this union, we ſhall find there are two bands which knit Chriſt and the ſoul together, *viz.*

1. The Spirit on Chriſt's part.
2. Faith on our part.

The *Spirit* on Chriſt's part, *quickening* us with ſpiritual life, whereby Chriſt firſt takes hold of us, and *faith* on our part, when thus quickened, whereby we take hold of Chriſt: Accor-

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dingly, this union with the Lord Jesus, is expressed in scripture, sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other of these means or bands, by which it is effected. Christ is sometimes said to be in us; so Col i. 27. "Christ is in you the hope of "glory." And Rom. viii. 10. "And if Christ be in you, the "body is dead because of sin." And other times it is expressed by the other band on our part, as 1 John v. 20. "We are in "him that is true, even in his Son Christ Jesus." And 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

The difference betwixt both these, is thus aptly expressed by a late author *. "Christ is in believers by his *Spirit*, 1 John "iv. 13. The believer is in Christ by *faith*, John i. 12. Christ "is in the believer by *inhabitation*, Rom. iii. 17. The believer "is in Christ by *implantation*, Rom. vi. 35. Christ is in the "believer as the head is in the body, Col. i. 18. As the root "in the branches, John xv. 5. Believers are in Christ as the "members are in the head, Eph. i. 23. Or as the branches "are in the root, John xv. 1, 7. Christ in the believer, im-"plieth life, and influence from Christ, Col. iii. 4. The be-"liever, implieth *communion*, and *fellowship* with Christ, 1 Cor. "i. 30. When Christ is said to be in the believer, we are to "understand it in reference to *sanctification*. When the be-"liever is said to be in Christ, it is in order to justification."

Thus we apprehend, being ourselves first apprehended by Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 12. We cannot take hold of Christ, till first he take hold of us; no vital act of faith can be exercised till a vital principle be first inspired: Of both these bands of union we must speak distinctly; and first of "Christ quickening "us by his Spirit, in order to our union with him," of which we have an account in the scripture before us, "You hath he "quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins:" In which words we find these two things noted, *viz.*

1. The infusion of a vital principle of grace.

2. The total indispoledness of the subject by nature.

First, The infusion of a vital principle of grace, *You hath he quickened.* These words [*hath he quickened*] are a supplement made to clear the sense of the apostle, which else would have been more obscure, by reason of that long parenthesis betwixt the first and fifth verses, "for as the † learned observe

* Mount Pisgah. p. 22, 23.

† *Illud* ὑμᾶς *regitur a* συνεζωοποιησε, v. 5. *est igitur hoc loco et* hyperbaton *it synchysis et* ἀποκοπη της περιοδου, *quæ est species* του ἀνα-

" this word υμας, you, is governed of the verb συνεζωοποιησε, *hath* " *he quickened*, ver. 5. So that here the words are tranſpoſed " from the plain grammatical order, by reaſon of the interjec- " tion of a long ſentence, therefore, with good warrant our " tranſlators have put the verb into the firſt verſe, which is re- " peated ver. 5. and ſo keeping faithfully to the ſcope, have ex- " cellently cleared the ſyntax and order of the words." Now this verb συνεζωοποιησε, *hath he quickened*, imports the firſt vital act of the Spirit of God, or his firſt enlivening work upon the ſoul, in order to its union with Jeſus Chriſt: For look, as the blood of Chriſt is the fountain of all merit, ſo the ſpirit of Chriſt is the fountain of all ſpiritual life: And until he quicken us, *(i. e.)* infuſe the principle of the divine life into our ſouls, we can put forth no hand, or vital act of faith, to lay hold upon Jeſus Chriſt.

This his quickening work, is therefore the firſt in order of nature to our union with Chriſt, and fundamental to all other acts of grace done, and performed by us, from our firſt cloſing with Chriſt, throughout the whole courſe of our obedience: and this quickening act is ſaid, ver. 5. to be together with Chriſt: Either noting (as ſome expound it) that it is the effect of the ſame power by which Chriſt was raiſed from the dead, according to Eph. i. 19. or rather, to be *quickened together with Chriſt*, notes that new ſpiritual life which is infuſed into our dead ſouls in the time of our union with Chriſt: " For it is Chriſt to " whom we are conjoined and united in our regeneration, out of " whom, as a fountain, all ſpiritual benefits flow to us, among " which, this vivification or quickening is one, * and a moſt " ſweet and precious one."

Zanchy, Bodius, and many others will have this *quickening* to comprize, both our juſtification and regeneration, and to ſtand oppoſed both to *eternal* and *ſpiritual* death, and it may well be allowed; but it moſt properly imports our regeneration, wherein the Spirit, in an ineffable and myſterious way, makes the ſoul to live to God, yea, to live the life of God, which ſoul was before *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*: In which words we have,

Secondly, In the next place, the total indiſpoſedneſs of the

ναταποδοτε, *cujus quidem anomaliæ cauſa eſt* επιμελη *interjectio ſententiæ prolixioris.* Piſcator. Pool's Synop.

* Ex *Chriſto conjuncto nobiſcum, ut capite cum membris, profluunt in nos omnia beneficia, in quorum numero eſt vivificatio.* Kolloc. in Loc.

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ſubjects by nature: For, as it is well noted by a ‡ learned man, "the apoſtle doth not ſay of theſe Epheſians that they were half "dead, or ſick, and infirm, but dead wholly; altogether dead, "deſtitute of any faculty or ability, ſo much as to think one "good thought, or perform one good act." You were dead in reſpect of *condemnation*, being under the damning ſentence of the law, and you are dead in reſpect of the privation of ſpiritual life; dead in oppoſition to juſtification, and dead in oppoſition to regeneration and ſanctification: And the fatal inſtrument by which their ſouls died is here ſhewed them; you were dead in, or by *treſpaſſes* and *ſins*; this was the ſword that killed your ſouls, and cut them off from God. Some do curiouſly diſtinguiſh betwixt treſpaſſes and ſins, as if one pointed at *original*, the other at *actual* ſins; but I ſuppoſe they are promiſcuouſly uſed here, and ſerve to expreſs the cauſe of their ruin, or means of their ſpiritual death and deſtruction: this was their caſe when Chriſt came to quicken them, *dead in ſin*, and being ſo, they could not move themſelves towards union with Chriſt, but as they were moved by the quickening Spirit of God. Hence the obſervation will be this,

Doct. *That thoſe ſouls which have union with Chriſt, are quickened with a ſupernatural principle of life by the Spirit of God in order thereunto.*

The Spirit of God is not only a living Spirit, *formally* conſidered; but he is alſo the Spirit of life, *effectively* or *caſually* conſidered: And without his breathing, or infuſing life into our ſouls, our union with Chriſt is impoſſible.

It is the obſervation of learned ‖ Camero, "that there muſt "be an *unition* before there can be an *union* with Chriſt. *Uni-* "*tion* is to be conceived *efficiently* as the work of God's Spirit, "joining the believer to Chriſt, and *union* is to be conceived "*formally*, the joining itſelf of the perſons together;" We cloſe with Chriſt by faith, but that faith being a vital act, pre-

‡ *Non vocat hic ſemimortuos aut aegrotos ac infirmos, ſed prorſus mortuos, omni facultate bene cogitandi aut agendi deſtituti.* Rolloc. in Loc.

‖ *Obſervandum eſt unionem et unitionem inter ſe differe: unio eſt rerum actus, qui forma rationem habet, nempe actus rerum unitarum qua unitæ ſunt: unitio autem actus ſignificat cauſæ efficientis*, &c. Camero de Eccleſ. p. 222.

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ſuppoſes a principle of life communicated to us by the Spirit; therefore it is ſaid, John xi. 26. "Whoſoever liveth and be-"lieveth in me, ſhall never die:" The vital act and operation of faith ſprings from this quickening Spirit: So in Rom. viii. 1, 2. The apoſtle, having in the firſt verſe opened the bleſſed eſtate of them that are in Chriſt, ſhews us, in the ſecond verſe, how we come to be in him: "The Spirit of life (ſaith he) which "is in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and "death."

There is indeed a quickening work of the Spirit, which is *ſubſequent* to regeneration, conſiſting in his exciting, recovering, and actuating of his own graces in us: and from hence is the *livelineſs* of a Chriſtian; and there is a quickening act of the Spirit *in our regeneration*, and from hence is the ſpiritual life of a Chriſtian; of this I am here to ſpeak, and, that I may ſpeak profitably to this point, I will in the doctrinal part labour to open theſe five particulars.

Firſt, What this ſpiritual life is in its nature, and properties.

Secondly, In what manner it is wrought or inſpired into the ſoul.

Thirdly, For what end, or with what deſign, this life is ſo inſpired.

Fourthly, I ſhall ſhew this work to be wholly ſupernatural.

And then, *Fifthly*, Why this quickening muſt be antecedent to our actual cloſing with Chriſt by faith.

Firſt, We ſhall enquire into the nature and properties of this life, and diſcover (as we are able) what it is. And we find it to conſiſt in that *wonderful change which the Spirit of God makes upon the frame and temper of the ſoul, by his infuſing or implanting the principles of grace in all the powers and faculties thereof.*

A change it makes upon the ſoul, and that a marvellous one, no leſs than from death to life; for though a man be *phyſically* a living man *(i. e.)* his natural ſoul hath union with his body, yet his ſoul having no union with Chriſt, he is *theologically* a dead man, Luke xv. 24. and Col. ii. 13. Alas, it deſerves not the name of life, to have a ſoul ſerving only to ſeaſon, and preſerve the body a little while from corruption: To carry it up and down the world, and only enable it to eat and drink, and talk, and laugh, and then die: Then do we begin to live, when we begin to have union with Chriſt the fountain of life, by his Spirit communicated to us: From this time we are to reckon our life * as ſome have done: There be many changes made upon

* *Hic jacet ſimilis, cujus aetas multorum annorum fuit, ipſe ſeptem duntaxat annos vixit.*

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men beſides this, many are changed from prophaneneſs to civility, and from mere civility to formality, and a ſhadow of religion, who ſtill remain in the ſtate, and power of ſpiritual death, notwithſtanding; but when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us, to quicken us with the new ſpiritual life, this is a wonderful change indeed: It gives us an *eſſe ſupernaturale*, a new ſupernatural being, which is therefore called a *new creature*, *the new man*, *the hidden man of the heart*: The natural eſſence and faculties of the ſoul remain ſtill, but it is diveſted of the old qualities, and endued with new ones, 2 Cor. v. 17. "Old "things are paſſed away, behold, all things are become new."

And this change is not made by altering and rectifying the diſorders of the life only, leaving the temper and frame of the heart ſtill carnal; but by the infuſion of a ſupernatural permanent principle into the ſoul, John iv. 14. "It ſhall be in him a "well of water:" principles are to a courſe of actions, as fountains or ſprings are to the ſtreams and rivers that flow from them, and are maintained by them: and hence is the evenneſs, and conſtancy of renewed ſouls in the courſe of Godlineſs.

Nor is this principle or habit *acquired* by accuſtoming ourſelves to holy actions, as natural habits are acquired by frequent acts, which beget a *diſpoſition*, and thence grow up to an *habit* or ſecond nature, but it is infuſed, or implanted in the ſoul by the Spirit of God. So we read, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. "A new "heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within "you:" It grows not up out of our natures, but is put or infuſed into us: as it is ſaid of the two witneſſes, Rev. xi. 11. who lay dead in a *civil ſenſe*, three days and a half, that *the ſpirit of life from God entered into them*; ſo it is here in a *ſpiritual ſenſe*, the ſpirit of life from God enters into the dead, carnal heart: it is all by way of ſupernatural infuſion.

Nor is it limited to this, or that faculty of the ſoul, but grace or life is poured into all the faculties: "Behold all things "are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. The *underſtanding*, *will*, *thoughts*, and *affections*, are all renewed by it: the whole inner *man* is changed; yea, the *tongue* and *hand*, the *diſcourſes* and *actions*, even all the *ways* and *courſes* of the outward *man* are renewed by it.

But more particularly, we ſhall diſcern the *nature* of this *ſpiritual life*, by conſidering the *properties* of it; among which, theſe are very *remarkable*.

Firſt, The ſoul that is joined to Chriſt, is quickened with a *divine life*, ſo we read in 2 Pet. i. 4. Where believers are ſaid

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to be *partakers of the divine nature:* a very high expreſſion, and warily to be underſtood. *Partakers of the divine nature,* not *eſſentially;* ſo, it is wholly incommunicable to the creature, nor yet *hypoſtatically*, and perſonally; ſo, Chriſt only was a partaker of it; but our participation of the divine nature, muſt be underſtood in a way proper to believers; that is to ſay, we partake of it by the inhabitation of the Spirit of God in us, according to 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. "Know ye not that ye are the "temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The Spirit, who is God by nature, dwells in, and actuates the ſoul whom he regenerates, and by ſanctifying cauſes it to live a *divine life*: from this life of God, the unſanctified are ſaid to be alienated, Eph. iv. 18. but believers are partakers of it.

Secondly, And being divine, it muſt needs be the moſt *excellent*, and tranſcendent life that any creature doth, or can live in this world: it ſurmounts the natural, rational, and moral life of the unſanctified, as much as the angelical life excels the life of flies, and worms of the earth.

Some think it a rare life to live in ſenſual pleaſures; but the ſcripture will not allow ſo much as the name of life to them; but tells us, "they are dead whilſt they live," 1 Tim. v. 6. certainly it is a wonderful elevation of the nature of man, to be quickened with ſuch a life as this. There are two ways wherein the bleſſed God hath honoured poor man above the very angels of heaven. One was by the hypoſtatical union of our nature in Chriſt, with the divine nature; the other is by uniting our perſons myſtically to Chriſt, and thereby communicating ſpiritual life to us: this latter is a moſt glorious privilege, and in one reſpect a more ſingular mercy than the former; for that honour which is done to our nature by the hypoſtatical union, is common to all, good and bad, even they that periſh have yet that honour; but to be implanted into Chriſt by regeneration, and live upon him as the branch doth upon the vine, this is a peculiar privilege, a mercy kept from the world that is to periſh, and only communicated to God's elect, who are to live eternally with him in heaven.

Thirdly, This life infuſed by the regenerating ſpirit, is a moſt *pleaſant life*. All delights, all pleaſures, all joys, which are not phantaſtic and deluſive, have their ſpring and origin here, Rom. viii. 6. "To be ſpiritually minded is life and peace," *(i. e.)* a moſt ſerene, placid life; ſuch a ſoul becomes, ſo far as it is influenced and ſanctified by the Spirit, the very region of life and peace: when one thing is thus predicated of another, *in caſu recto*, (ſaith a learned man) it ſpeaks their intimate

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connexion: peace is so connatural to this life, that you may either call it a life that hath peace in it, or a peace that hath life in it: yea, it hath its enclosed pleasures in it, "Such as a "stranger intermeddles not with," Prov. xiv. 10. Regeneration is the term from which all true pleasure commences; you never live a chearful day, till you begin to live to God: therefore it is said, Luke xv. 24. When the *prodigal son* was returned to his father, and reconciled, then *they began to be merry.*

None can make another, by any words, to understand what that pleasure is which the renewed soul feels diffused through all its faculties, and affections, in its communion with the Lord, and in the sealings and witnessings of his Spirit. That is a very apt and well known similitude which Peter Martyr used, and the Lord blessed to the conversion of that noble marquis Galeacus: if, said he, a man should see a company of people dancing upon the top of a remote hill, he would be apt to conclude they were a company of wild distracted people; but if he draw nearer, and behold the excellent order, and hear the ravishing sweet music that are among them, he will quickly alter his opinion of them, and be for dancing himself with them.

All the *delights* in the sensual *life*, all the pleasure that ever your *lusts* gave you, are but as the putrid, stinking *waters* of a corrupt *pond*, where *toads* lie croaking and spawning, compared to the *crystal streams* of the most pure and pleasant *fountain.*

Fourthly, This life of God, with which the regenerate are quickened in their union with Christ, as it is a *pleasant*, so it is also *a growing increasing life*, John iv. 14. "It shall be in him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It is not in our sanctification, as it is in our justification; our justification is complete and perfect, no defect is found there; but the new creature labours under many defects: all believers are equally justified, but not equally sanctified: Therefore you read, 2 Cor. iv. 16. that "the inward man is renewed day by "day:" And 2 Pet. iii. 18. Christians are exhorted "to grow "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour:" if this work were perfect, and finished at once, as justification is, there could be no renewing day by day, nor growth in grace. *Perfectum est cui nihil deest, & cui nihil addi potest:* i. e. that is perfect which wants nothing, and to which nothing can be added. The apostle indeed prays for the Thessalonians, "that "God would sanctify them," ολοτελεις,——wholly, perfectly, 1 Thess. v. 23. And this is matter of prayer and hope; for, at

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laſt, it will grow up to perfection; but this perfect holineſs is reſerved for the perfect ſtate in the world to come, and none but * deluded, proud ſpirits boaſt of it here: but when "that "which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be "done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. And upon the imperfection of the new creature in every faculty, that warfare and daily conflict ſpoken of, Gal. v. 17. and experienced by every Chriſtian, is grounded: grace riſes gradually in the ſoul, as the ſun doth in the heavens, "which ſhineth more and more unto a perfect day," Prov. iv. 18.

Fifthly, to conclude; This life with which the regenerate are quickened, is an *everlaſting life*. "This is the record, that God "hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 11. This principle of life is the ſeed of God; and that remains in the ſoul for ever, 1 John iii. 9. It is no tranſient, vaniſhing thing, but a fixed, permanent principle, which abides in the ſoul for ever; a man may loſe his *gifts*, but grace abides; the ſoul may, and muſt be, ſeparated from the body, but grace cannot be ſeparated from the ſoul: when all forſake us, this will not leave us.

This infuſed principle is therefore vaſtly different, both from the extraordinary gifts of prophecy, wherein the Spirit ſometimes was ſaid to come upon men, under the Old Teſtament, 1 Sam. x. 6, 10. and from the common vaniſhing effects he ſometimes produceth in the unregenerate, of which we have frequent accounts in the New Teſtament, Heb. vi. 4. and John v. 35. It is one thing for the Spirit to come upon a man in the way of preſent influence, and aſſiſtance, and another thing to dwell in a man as in his temple.

And thus of the nature, and quality of this bleſſed work of the Spirit in quickening us.

Secondly, Having ſeen the nature and properties of the ſpiritual life, we are concerned in the next place to enquire into the way and manner in which it is wrought, and infuſed by the Spirit: and here we muſt ſay,

Firſt of all, that the work is wrought in the ſoul very *myſteriouſly*; ſo Chriſt tells Nicodemus, John iii. 8. "The wind blow-"eth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but "canſt not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, ſo is "every one that is born of the Spirit:" There be many opinions among *philoſophers* about the original of wind; but we have no

* Perfection of ſanctification is not found in this life, unleſs in the dreams of ſome phanatics. *Ameſ.*

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certain knowledge of it: we describe it by its effects and properties, but know little of its original: and if the works of God in nature be so abstruse, and unsearchable, how much more so are these sublime, and supernatural works of the Spirit?

We are not able to solve the *Phaenomena* of nature, we can give no account of our own formation in the womb, Eccles. xi. 5. Who can exactly describe how the parts of the body are formed, and the soul infused? "It is curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," as the Psalmist speaks, Psal. cxxxix. 16. but how, we know not. Basil saith, divers questions may be moved about a *fly*, which may puzzle the greatest *philosopher*: we know little of the forms, and essences of natural things, much less of these profound, and abstruse spiritual things.

Secondly, But though we cannot pry into these secrets by the eye of reason, yet God hath revealed this to us in his word, that it is wrought by his own almighty power, Eph. i. 19. The *apostle* ascribes this work to *the exceeding greatness* of the power of God: and this must needs be, if we consider, how the Spirit of God expresses it in scripture by a new creation: *(i. e.)* a giving being to something out of nothing, Eph. ii. 10. In this it differs from all the effects of human power: for man always works upon some pre-existent matter, but here is no such matter: all that is in man, the subject of this work, is only a passive capacity, or receptivity, but nothing is found in him to contribute towards this work: this supernatural life is not, nor can it be educed out of natural principles: this wholly transcends the sphere of all natural power: but of this more anon.

Thirdly, This also we may affirm of it; that this divine life is infused into all the natural faculties and powers of the soul, not one exempted, 1 Thes. v. 23. The whole soul and spirit is the recipient subject of it: and with respect to this general infusion into all the faculties and powers of the soul, it is called a new creature; a new man; having an integral perfection, and fulness of all its parts and members: it becomes light in the mind; John xvii. 3. Obedience in the will; 1 Pet. i. 2. In the affections an heavenly temper and tenderness, Col. iii. 1, 2. And so is variously denominated, even as the sea is from the several shores it washes, though it be one and the same sea. And here, we must observe, lies one main difference betwixt a re-regenerate soul, and an hypocrite; * the one is all of a piece, as

* *Ab uno desuper principio quod convenienter voluntati operatur dependent prima, secunda et tertia. Quemadmodum minima pars ferri*

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I may say, the principle of spiritual life runs into all, and every faculty and affection, and sanctifies, or renews the whole man; whereas the change upon hypocrites is but partial and particular; he may have new light, but no new love; a new tongue, but not a new heart; this or that vice may be reformed, but the whole course of his life is not altered.

Fourthly and lastly, This infusion of spiritual life is done *instantaneously*; as all *creation*-work is: hence it is resembled to that *plastic power*, which, in a moment, made the light to shine out of darkness; just so God shines into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

It is true, a soul may be a long time under the preparatory works of the Spirit, he may be under convictions and humiliations, purposes and resolutions a long time; he may be waiting at the pool of Bethesda, attending the means and ordinances, but when the Spirit comes once to quicken the soul, it is done in a moment: even as it is in the infusion of the rational soul, the body is long ere it be prepared and moulded, but when once the *embryo* or matter is ready, it is quickened with the spirit of life in an instant: so it is here: but O what a blessed moment is this! Upon which the whole weight of our eternal happiness depends; for it is Christ in us, *(i. e.)* Christ formed in us, who is the hope of glory, Col. i. 27. And our Lord expressly tells us, John iii. 3. That except we be regenerate and born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. And thus of the way, and manner of its infusion.

Thirdly, Let the design and end of God, in this his *quickening work*, be next considered; for what end, and with what design and aim this work is wrought. And if we consult the scriptures in this matter, we shall find this principle of life is infused in order to our glorifying God, in this world, by a *life of obedience*, and our enjoying of God in the world to come.

First, Spiritual life is infused in order to a course of obedience in this world, whereby God is glorified: So we read in Eph. ii, 10. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God "hath before ordained that we should walk in them:" habits are to actions, as the root is to the fruit, it is for fruit sake that we plant the root, and ingraff the branches. So in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. "A new spirit will I also put within you, and

ferri lapidis magnetis spiritu movetur, per multos annulos ferreos extenta: ita etiam qui sunt virtute præditi, divino spiritu attracti, cum prima mansione, conjungantur, deinceps autem alii usque ad postremam. Clem. Alexand. Strom. lib. 7.

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" cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judg-
" ments and do them." This is the next, or immediate deſign and end, not only of the firſt infuſion of the principle of life into the ſoul, but of all the exciting, actuating, and aſſiſting works of the Spirit afterwards. Now this principle of ſpiritual life infuſed, hath a twofold influence into obedience.

Firſt, This makes it ſincere and true *obedience*, when it flows from an inward vital principle of Grace. The hypocrite is moved by ſome thing *ab extra*, from without, as the applauſe of men, the accommodation of fleſhly intereſts, the force of education; or if there be any thing from within that moves him, it is but ſelf-intereſt, to quiet a diſturbing conſcience, and ſupport his vain hopes of heaven: but he never acts from a new principle, a new nature, inclining him to holy actions. Sincerity mainly lies in the harmony and correſpondency of actions to their principles: from this infuſed principle it is, that men hunger and thirſt for God, and go to their duties, as men do to their meals, when they find an empty, craving ſtomach.

O reader, pauſe a little upon this ere thou paſs on, ask thy heart whether it be ſo with thee: are holy duties connatural to thee? Doth thy ſoul move and work after God by a kind of ſupernatural inſtinct? This then will be to thee a good evidence of thy integrity.

Secondly, From this infuſed principle of life, reſults the *excellency of our obedience*, as well as the ſincerity of it: for by virtue and reaſon thereof, it becomes free and voluntary, not forced and conſtrained, it drops like honey, and of its own accord, out of the comb, Cant. iv. 11. Or as waters from the fountain, without forcing, John iv. 14. An unprincipled profeſſor muſt be preſſed hard by ſome weight of affliction, ere he will yield one tear, or pour out a prayer, Pſal. lxxviii. 34. " When he ſlew them, then they ſought him."

Now the freedom of obedience is the excellency of it, God's eye is much upon that, 1 Cor. ix. 17. Yea, and the uniformity of our obedience, which is alſo a ſpecial part of the beauty of it, reſults from hence: he that acts from a principle, acts fluently and uniformly, and there is a proportion betwixt the parts of his converſation: this is it which makes us holy, ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ, *in all manner of converſation*, or in every point, and turning of our converſations, as the word imports, 1 Pet. i. 15. Whereas he that is moved by this, or that external accidental motive, muſt needs be very uneven, " like the legs of a lame man," as the expreſſion is, Prov. xxvi. 7. " which are not equal:" Now a

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word of God and then the discourse runs muddy and prophane, or carnal again: all that evenness, and uniformity that are in the several parts of a Christian's life, are the effect of this infused principle of spiritual life.

Thirdly, Another aim and design of God in the infusion of this principle of life, is thereby to prepare and qualify the soul for the enjoyment of himself in heaven: "Except a man be born "again he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. All that shall possess that inheritance must be begotten again to it, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. This principle of grace is the very seed of that glory; it is eternal life in the root and principle, John xvii. 3. by this the soul is attempered and qualified for that state and employment. What is the life of glory, but the vision of God, and the soul's assimilation to God by that vision? From both which results that unspeakable joy and delight which passeth understanding: but what vision of God, assimilation to God, or delight in God, can that soul have, which was never quickened with the supernatural principle of grace? The temper of such souls is expressed in that sad character, Zech. xi. 8. "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me." For want of this vital principle it is, that the very same duties and ordinances, which are the delights and highest pleasures of the saints, are no better than a mere drudgery and bondage to others, Mal. i. 13. Heaven would be no heaven to a dead soul; this principle of life, in its daily growth and improvement, is our meetness, as well as our evidence, for heaven: these are the main ends of its infusion.

Fourthly, In the next place, according to the method proposed, I am obliged to shew you, *that this quickening work is wholly supernatural*; it is the sole and proper work of the Spirit of God. So Christ himself expressly asserts it, in John iii. 6, 8. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born "of the Spirit is Spirit: the wind bloweth where it listeth, and "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it "cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of "the Spirit."

Believers are the birth or offspring of the Spirit, who produceth the new creature in them in an unintelligible manner, even to themselves. So far it is above their own ability to produce, that it is above their capacity to understand the way of its production: as if you should ask, Do you know from whence the wind comes? No: Do you know whither it goes? No: But you hear and feel it when it blows? Yes: Why, so is every one that is born of the Spirit: he feels the efficacy, and dis-

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cerns the effects of the Spirit on his own ſoul, but cannot underſtand, or deſcribe the manner of its production: This is not only above the carnal, but above the renewed mind to comprehend; we can contribute nothing, I mean actively, to the production of this principle of life: we may indeed be ſaid to concur paſſively, with the ſpirit in it; that is, there is found in us a capacity, aptneſs, or receptiveneſs of this principle of life: our nature is endowed with ſuch faculties and powers as are meet ſubjects to receive, and inſtruments to act this ſpiritual life: God only quickens the rational nature with ſpiritual life.

It is true alſo, that in the *progreſs of ſanctification*, a man doth actively concur with the Spirit, but in the firſt production of this ſpiritual principle he can do nothing: he can indeed perform thoſe external duties that have a remote tendency to it, but he cannot by the power of nature perform any ſaving act, or contribute any thing more than a paſſive capacity to the implantation of a new principle: as will appear by the following arguments.

Arg. 1. He that actively concurs to his own regeneration, makes himſelf to differ; but this is denied to all regenerate men, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And "what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive?"

Arg. 2. That to which the ſcripture aſcribes both *impotency* and *enmity*, with reſpect to grace, cannot actively, and of itſelf, concur to the production of it: but the ſcripture aſcribes both impotency and enmity to nature, with reſpect to grace. It denies to it a power to do any thing of itſelf, John xv. 5. And, which is leſs, it denies to it a power to ſpeak a good word, Mat. xii. 34. And, which is leaſt of all, it denies it power to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. This impotency, if there were no more, cuts off all pretence of our active concurrence; but then if we conſider that it aſcribes enmity to our natures, as well as impotency, how clear is the caſe! See Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity againſt God." And Col. i. 21. "And you that were enemies in your minds by "wicked works." So then nature is ſo far productive of this principle, as impotency and enmity can enable it to be ſo.

Arg. 3. That which is of natural production, muſt needs be ſubject to natural diſſolution; that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh, a periſhing thing, for every thing is as its principle is, and there can be no more in the effect, than there is in the cauſe: but this principle of ſpiritual life is not ſubject to diſſolution, it is the water that ſprings up into everlaſting life, John iv. 14;

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The seed of God, which remaineth in the regenerate soul, 1 John iii. 9. And all this, because it is "born not of corruptible, but "of incorruptible, seed," 1 Pet. i. 23.

Arg. 4 If our new birth be our resurrection, a new creation, yea, a victory over nature, then we cannot, actively, contribute to its production; but under all these notions it is represented to us in the scriptures; it is our resurrection from the dead, Eph. v. 14. And you know the body is wholly passive in its resurrection: but though it concurs not, yet it gives pre-existent matter: therefore the metaphor is designedly varied, Eph. iv. 24. where it is called a *creation*: in which there is neither active concurrence, nor pre-existent matter; but though creation excludes pre-existent matter, yet in producing something out of nothing, there is no reluctancy nor opposition; therefore to shew how purely supernatural this principle of life is, it is cloathed and presented to us in the notion of a victory, 2 Cor. x. 4. And so leaves all to grace.

Arg. 5. If nature could produce, or but actively concur to the production of this spiritual life, then the best natures would be soonest quickened with it; and the worst natures not at all, or at last, and least of all: but contrarily, we find the worst natures often regenerated, and the best left in the state of spiritual death: with how many sweet *homilitical* virtues was the young man adorned? Mark x. 21. yet graceless: and what a sink of sin was Mary Magdalen, Luke vii. 37. yet sanctified. Thus beautiful Rachel is barren, while Leah bears children. And there is scarce any thing that affects and melts the hearts of Christians more than this comparative consideration doth, when they consider vessels of gold cast away, and leaden ones chosen for such noble uses. So that it is plain enough to all wise, and humble souls, that this new life is wholly of supernatural production.

Fifthly, and lastly, I shall briefly represent the necessary antecedency of this quickening work of the Spirit, to our first closing with Christ, by faith: and this will easily let itself into your understandings, if you but consider the nature of the vital act of faith; which is the soul's receiving of Christ, and resting upon him for pardon and salvation: in which two things are necessarily included, *viz.*

1. The renouncing of all other hopes and dependencies.
2. The opening of the heart fully to Jesus Christ.

First, The renouncing of all other hopes and dependencies whatsoever. Self in all its acceptations, natural, sinful, and moral, is now to be denied, and renounced for ever, else Christ can never be received, Rom. x. 3. not only self in its vilest pol-

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lutions, but self in its richest ornaments, and endowments: but this is as impossible to the unrenewed and natural man, as it is for rocks or mountains to start from their centre, and fly like wandering atoms in the air: nature will rather chuse to run the hazard of everlasting damnation, than escape it by a total renunciation of its beloved lusts, or self-righteousness: this supernatural work necessarily requires a supernatural principle, Rom. viii. 2.

Secondly, The opening the heart fully to Jesus Christ, without which Christ can never be received, Rev. iii. 20. but this also is the effect of the quickening Spirit, the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus: sooner may we expect to see the flowers and blossoms open without the influence of the sun, than the heart and will of a sinner open to receive Christ without a principle of spiritual life first derived from him: and this will be past doubt to all that consider, not only the impotence of nature, but the ignorance, prejudice, and aversations of nature, by which the door of the heart is barred, and chained against Christ, John v. 40. So that nature hath neither ability, nor will, power, or desire, to come to Christ: if any have an heart opened to receive him, it is the Lord that opens it by his Almighty Power, and that in the way of an infused principle of life supernatural.

Quest. But here it may be doubted and objected, against this position. If we cannot believe till we are quickened with spiritual life, as you say, and cannot be justified till we believe, as all say, then it will follow, that a regenerate soul may be in the state of condemnation for a time, and consequently perish, if death should befal him in that juncture.

Sol. To this I return, That when we speak of the priority of this quickening work of the Spirit to our actual believing, we rather understand it of the priority of nature, than of time, the nature and order of the work requiring it to be so: a vital principle must, in order of nature, be infused before a vital act can be exerted. First, Make the tree good, and then the fruit good: and admit we should grant some priority in time also to this quickening principle, before actual faith, yet the absurdity mentioned would be no way consequent upon that concession: for as the vital act of faith quickly follows the regenerating principle, so the soul is abundantly secured against the danger objected; God never beginning any special work of grace upon the soul, and then leaving it, and the soul with it, in hazard, but preserves both to the finishing and compleating of his gracious design, Phil. i. 6.

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First Use of Information.

Infer. 1. If such be the nature and necessity of this principle of divine life, as you have heard it opened in the foregoing discourse, then hence it follows, *That unregenerate men are no better than dead men.* So the text represents them. "You hath "he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins:" (*i. e.*) spiritually dead, though naturally alive; yea, and lively too as any other persons in the world. There is a threefold consideration of objects, *viz.*

1. Naturally.
2. Politically.
3. Theologically.

First Naturally, To all those things that are natural, they are alive: they can understand, reason, discourse, project, and contrive, as well as others; they can eat, drink, and build, plant, and suck out the natural comfort of these things, as much as any others. So their life is described, Job xxi. 12. "They "take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the "organ; they spend their days in wealth," *&c.* And James v. 5. "Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth," as the fish lives in the water its natural element, and yet this natural sensual life is not allowed the name of life, 1 Tim. v. 9. such persons are *dead whilst they live;* it is a base, and ignoble life, to have a soul only to salt the body, or to enable a man for a few years to eat, and drink, and talk, and laugh, and then die.

Secondly, Objects may be considered politically, and with respect to such things, they are alive also: they can buy and sell, and manage all their worldly affairs with as much dexterity, skill, and policy, as other men; yea, "the children of this "world are wiser in their generation than the children of light," Luke xvi. 8. The entire * stream of their thoughts, projects, and studies, running in that one channel; having but one design to manage, they must needs excel in worldly wisdom: But then,

Thirdly, Theologically considered, they are dead; without life, sense, or motion, towards God, and the things that are above: their understandings are dead, 1 Cor. ii. 14. and cannot receive the things that are of God: their wills are dead, and cannot move towards Jesus Christ, John vi. 65. Their affections are dead, even to the most excellent and spiritual objects; and all their duties are dead duties, without life or spirit. This is the sad case of the unregenerate world.

* May God free me from him who is a man only of one business. *Bern.*

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Infer. 2. *This speaks encouragement to ministers and parents, to wait in hopes of success at last, even upon those that yet give them little hope of conversion at the present.*

The work you see is the Lord's, when the Spirit of life comes upon their dead souls, they shall believe, and be made willing; till then, we do but plough upon the rocks: yet let not our hand slack in duty, pray for them, and plead with them; you know not in which prayer, or exhortation, the Spirit of life may breathe upon them: *Can these dry bones live?* Yes, if the Spirit of life from God breathe upon them, they can, and shall live: what though their dispositions be averse to all things that are spiritual and serious, yet even such have been regenerated, when more sweet and promising natures have been passed by, and left under spiritual death.

It was the observation of Mr. Ward, upon his brother Mr. Daniel Rogers, (who was a man of great gifts and eminent graces, yet of a very bad temper and constitution,) Though my brother Rogers, saith he, hath grace enough for two men, yet not half enough for himself.

It may be you have prayed, and striven long with your relations and to little purpose, yet be not discouraged. How often was Mr. John Rogers, that famous successful divine, a grief of heart to his relations in his younger years, proving a wild and lewd young man, to the great discouragement of his pious friends; yet, at last, the Lord graciously changed him, so that Mr. Richard Rogers would say, when he could exercise the utmost degree of charity or hope, for any that at present were vile and naught, *I will never despair of any man for* John Roger's *sake.*

Infer. 3. *How honourable are Christians by their new birth!* "They are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor "of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. *(i. e.)* not in an impure, or mere natural way, but in a most spiritual and supernatural manner: they are the offspring of God, the children of the Most High, as well by regeneration as by adoption; which is the greatest advancement of the human nature, next to its hypostatical union with the second person. Oh what honour is this for a poor sinful creature, to have the very life of God breathed into his soul! All other dignities of nature are trifles compared with this; this makes a Christian a sacred hallowed thing, the living temple of God, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The special object of his delight.

Infer. 4. *How deplorable is the condition of the unregenerate world, in no better case than dead men!* Now to affect our

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hearts with the misery of such conditions, let us consider and compare it in the following particulars.

First, There is no *beauty* in the dead, all their loveliness goes away at death; there is no spiritual beauty or loveliness in any that are unregenerate: It is true, many of them have excellent moral *homilitical virtues*, which adorn their conversations in the eyes of men; but what are all these, but so many sweet flowers strewed over a dead corps?

Secondly, The dead have no *pleasure* nor delight; even so the unregenerate are incapable of the delights of the Christian life: "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," Rom. viii. 6 *(i. e.)* this is the only serene, placid, and pleasant life: when the *prodigal*, who was once dead, was alive, then he began to be merry, Luke xv. 24. They live in sensual pleasures, but this is to be dead while alive, in scripture-reckoning.

Thirdly, the dead have no *heat*, they are as cold as clay: so are all the unregenerate towards God and things above: their *lusts* are *hot*, but their *affections* to God *cold* and *frozen*: that which makes a gracious heart *melt*, will not make an unregenerate heart *move*.

Fourthly, The dead must be buried, Gen. xxiii. 4. "Bury my "dead out of my sight:" So must the unregenerate be buried out of God's sight for ever: buried in the lowest hell, in the place of darkness, for ever, John iii. 3. Wo to the unregenerate, good had it been for them they had never been born.

Infer. 5. *How greatly are all men concerned to examine their condition, with respect to spiritual life and death!* It is very common for men to * presume upon their union with, and interest in Christ: This privilege is, by common mistake, extended generally to all that profess the Christian religion, and practise the external duties of it, when, in truth, no more are, or can be, united to Christ, than are quickened by the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1, 2. O try your interest in Christ by this rule, if I am quickened by Christ, I have union with Christ. And,

First, If there be spiritual sense in your souls, there is spiritual life in them: there are αἰσθητήρια, senses belonging to the spiritual, as well as to the animal life, Heb. v. 14. They can feel, and sensibly groan, under soul pressures and burdens of sin, Rom. vii. 24. The dead feel not, moan not, under the burdens of sin, but the living do: they may be sensible, indeed, of the evil of sin, with respect to themselves, but not as against God; dam-

* By presuming they hope, and by hoping they perish. *Amef.*

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nation may ſcare them, but pollution doth not; hell may frigh them, but not the offending of God.

Secondly, If there be ſpiritual *hunger and thirſt*, it is a ſweet ſign of ſpiritual life; this ſign agrees to Chriſtians of a day old, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Even "new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of "the word:" If ſpiritual life be in you, you know how to expound that ſcripture, Pſal. xlii. 1. without any other interpreter than your own experience: you will feel ſomewhat like the gnawing of an empty ſtomach, making you reſtleſs during the interruption of your daily communion with the Lord.

Thirdly, If there be *ſpiritual conflicts* with ſin, there is ſpiritual life in your ſoul, Gal. v. 17. Not only a combat betwixt *light* in the higher, and *luſt* in the lower faculties; not only oppoſition to more groſs external corruptions, that carry more infamy and horror with them, than other ſins do: but the ſame faculty will be the ſeat of war; and the more inward, and ſecret any luſt is, by ſo much the more will it be oppoſed, and mourned over.

In a word the weakeſt Chriſtian may, upon impartial obſervation, find ſuch ſigns of ſpiritual life in himſelf (if he will allow himſelf time to reflect upon the bent and frame of his own heart) as deſires after God, conſcience of duties, fears, cares, and ſorrows, about ſin; delight in the ſociety of heavenly and ſpiritual men, a loathing and burden in the company of vain and carnal perſons.

Object. O! but I have a very dead heart to ſpiritual things.

Sol. It is a ſign of life that you feel, and are ſenſible of that deadneſs; and beſides, there is a great deal of difference betwixt *ſpiritual deadneſs* and *death*: the one is the ſtate of the unregenerate, the other is the *diſeaſe* of regenerate men.

Object. Some ſigns of ſpiritual life are clear to me, but I cannot cloſe with others.

Sol. If you can really cloſe with any, it may ſatisfy you, though you be dark in others: for if a child cannot go, yet if it can ſuck; but if it cannot ſuck, yet if it can cry; yea, if it cannot cry, yet if it breathe, it is alive.

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SERMON VI.

Describing that Act on our Part, by which we do actually and effectually apply CHRIST to our own Souls.

JOHN i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.*

NO sooner is the soul quickened by the Spirit of God, but it answers, in some measure, the end of God in that work, by its *active reception of Jesus Christ, in the way of believing:* What this vital act of faith is, upon which so great a weight depends, as our interest in Christ, and everlasting blessedness, this scripture before us will give you the best account of; wherein, (omitting the consideration of the coherence and context of the words) we have three things to ponder.

First, The high and glorious privilege conferred, *viz.* "Power "to become the sons of God."

Secondly, The subject of this privilege described, "As many "as received him."

Thirdly, The description explained, by way of opposition, "even as many as believe on his name."

First, The privilege conferred is a very high and glorious one, than which no created being is capable of greater; "power "to become the sons of God:" This word ἐξουσιαν is of large extent and signification, and is, by some, rendered "*this* * *right*, "by others *this dignity*, by others *this prerogative*, this *pri*-"*viiege* or *honour*:" It implies a title or right to *adoption*, not only with respect to the present benefits of it in this life, but also to that blessed inheritance which is laid up in heaven for the sons of God. And so Grotius rightly expounds it of our *consummate* sonship, consisting in the actual enjoyment of blessedness, as well as that which is *inchoate:* not only a right to pardon, favour and acceptance now, but to heaven, and the full enjoyment of God hereafter. O what an honour, dignity, and privilege is this!

* Beza, *hoc jus:* Piscator, *hanc dignitatem.* Lightfoot, *prærogativam.* Heinsius, *privilegium; nec multo aliter voce* ἐξουσιας *Hellenistæ usi videntur cum Chaldæorum* שׁלטן *expresserunt.* Heins.

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Secondly, The subjects of this privilege are described: "As "many as received him." This text describes them by that very grace, *faith*, which gives them their title and right to Christ and his benefits; and by that very act of faith, which primarily confers their right to his person, and secondarily to his benefits, *viz. receiving him*: there be many graces besides faith, but faith only is the grace that gives us right to Christ; and there be many acts of faith besides receiving, but this receiving or embraeing of Christ, is the justifying and saving act: "As many as "received him," [οσοι δε ελαβον αυτον,] *as many*, be they of any nation, sex, age, or condition. For "there is neither Greek, "nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scy-"thian, bond or free: but Christ is all, and in all," Col. iii. 11.

Nothing but unbelief bars men from Christ and his benefits. As many as [*received* † *him*;] the word signifies "to accept, "take," or, (as we fitly render), to receive, assume, or take to us, a word most aptly expressing the nature and office of faith, yea, the very justifying and saving act: and we are also heedfully to note its special object, ελαβον αυτον: The text saith not αυτα, *his*, but αυτον, *him*, *i. e.* his person, as he is clothed with his offices, and not only his benefits and privileges. These are secondary, and consequential things to our *receving him* ‡. So that it is a receiving, assuming, or accepting the Lord Jesus Christ, which must have respect to the tenders and proposals of the gospel, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed "from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17. therein is Jesus Christ revealed, proposed, and offered unto sinners, as the only way of justification and salvation; which gospel-offer, as before was opened, is therefore ordinarily necessary to believing, Rom. x. 11, 12, 13, *&c.*

Thirdly, This description is yet further explained, by this additional exegetical clause, [*even to them that believe in his name*]; here the terms are varied, though the things expressed in both be the same; what he called *receiving* there, is called *believing on his name* here, to shew us that the very essence of saving faith, consists in our receiving of Christ. By *his name*,

† Λαμβανειν and παραλαμβανειν, both signify *to receive*.

‡ The gospel offer is God's act, made by means of the word: acceptance is man's act; yet so, as it is also the gift of God; for a man cannot receive the Mediator, unless faith, which is the instrument of this acceptance, be given him by God.

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we are to understand Christ himself: it is usual to take these two, believing in him, and believing in his name, as terms convertible, and of the same importance, הוא הוא שמו ושמו, *Ipse est nomen suum, et nomen ejus ipse est* *: His name is Himself, and himself is his name. So that here we have the true nature, and precious benefits, of saving faith, excellently expressed in this scripture; the sum of which take in this proposition:

Doct. *That the receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that saving and vital act of faith, which gives the soul right both to his person and benefits.*

We cannot act spiritually, till we begin to live spiritually: Therefore the spirit of life must first join himself to us, in his quickening work, (as was shewn you in the last sermon), which being done, we begin to act spiritually, by taking hold upon, or receiving Jesus Christ, which is the thing designed to be opened in this sermon.

The soul is the life of the body, faith is the life of the soul, and Christ is the life of faith. There are several sorts of faith, besides saving faith, and in saving faith there are several acts, besides the justifying or saving act; but this receiving act, which is to be our subject this day, is that upon which both our righteousness and eternal happiness do depend. "This, as a *form*, "differences saving faith from all other kinds or sorts of "faith †;" by this it is that we are justified and saved. "To "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become "the sons of God:" yet it doth not justify and save us by reason of any proper dignity that is found in this act, but by reason of the object it receives or apprehends. The same thing is often expressed in scripture by other terms, as "Coming to "Christ," John vi. 35. *Trusting* or *staying* upon Christ, Isa. l. 10. But whatever is found in those expressions, it is all comprehended in this, as will appear hereafter. Now, the method into which I shall cast my discourse on this subject, that I may handle it with as much perspicuity and profit as I can, shall be,

First, To explain and open the nature of this receiving of Christ, and shew you what it includes.

Secondly, To prove, that this is the justifying and saving act of faith.

* Drusius.

† *Forma vel aliquid formae analogum ponitur differentiae loco.*

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Thirdly, To ſhew you the excellency of this act of faith.

Fourthly. To remove ſome miſtakes, and give you the true account of the dignity and excellency of this act.

Fifthly, And then bring home all, in a proper and cloſe application.

Firſt, In the firſt place then, I will endeavour to explain and open the nature of this receiving of Chriſt, and ſhew you what is implied in it.

And, indeed, it involves many deep myſteries, and things of greateſt weight. People are generally very ignorant and unacquainted with the importance of this expreſſion, they have very ſlight thoughts of faith, who never paſſed under the illuminating, convincing, and humbling work of the Spirit: but we ſhall find, that ſaving faith is quite another thing, and differs in its whole kind and nature from that traditional faith, and common aſſent, which is ſo fatally miſtaken for it in the world ‡.

For, *Firſt*, It is evident, that no man can receive Jeſus Chriſt in the darkneſs of natural ignorance: we muſt underſtand and diſcern who and what he is, whom we receive to be *the Lord our righteouſneſs*. If we know not his perſon, and his offices, we do not take, but miſtake Chriſt. It is a good rule in the civil law, *Non conſentit qui non ſentit*: A miſtake of the perſon invalidates the match. He that takes Chriſt for a mere man, or denies the ſatisfaction of his blood, or diveſts him of his human nature, or denies any of his moſt glorious and neceſſary of-

‡ There are divers other expreſſions by which the nature of ſaving faith is expreſſed in ſcripture, *viz*. Eating Chriſt's fleſh, and drinking his blood, John vi. 40. Coming to Chriſt, Mat. xi. 28. Having the Son, 1 John v. 12. Truſting or depending upon him, for which the Hebrew uſes three emphatical words, אמן בטח and חסה. The firſt ſignifies a firm and ſtable truſt. The ſecond, to lean or depend with ſecurity. The third, to betake one's ſelf to a ſanctuary for a protection. All which is ſuppoſed or included in our receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: in eating and drinking we muſt receive meat and drink; coming to Chriſt is neceſſarily ſuppoſed in receiving him, for there is no receiving at a diſtance. Having the Son, and receiving him, are notions of the ſame importance; and for truſting, relying with ſecurity, and betaking ourſelves to Chriſt for refuge, they are all involved in the receiving act; for as God offers him to us as the only prop of our hearts and hopes, ſo we receive him to rely upon him: And as he is held forth in the goſpel as the only *Aſylum*, or city of refuge, ſo we take or receive him, and accordingly betake our ſouls to him for refuge.

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fices, let them cry up as high as they will his ſpirituality, glory, and exemplary life and death, they can never receive Jeſus Chriſt aright: This is ſuch a crack, ſuch a flaw, in the very foundation of faith, as undoes and deſtroys all. *Ignorantis non eſt conſenſus:* All ſaving faith is founded in light and knowledge, and therefore it is called *knowledge*, Iſa. liii. 11.; and *ſeeing* is inſeparably connected with *believing*, John vi. 40. Men muſt hear and learn of the Father, before they can come to Chriſt, John vi. 45. The receiving act of faith is directed and guided by knowledge. I will not preſume to ſtate the degree of knowledge, which is abſolutely neceſſary to the reception of Chriſt; I know the firſt actings of faith are, in moſt Chriſtians, accompanied with much darkneſs and confuſion of underſtanding: but yet we muſt ſay in the general, that wherever faith is, there is ſo much light as is ſufficient to diſcover to the ſoul, its own ſins, dangers and wants; and the all-ſufficiency, ſuitableneſs, and neceſſity of Chriſt, for the ſupply and remedy of all; and without this, Chriſt cannot be received. "Come unto me, all "ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt," Mat. xi. 28.

Secondly, The receiving Chriſt neceſſarily implies the aſſent of the underſtanding of the truths of Chriſt revealed in the goſpel, *viz.* his perſon, natures, offices, his incarnation, death, and ſatisfaction; which aſſent, though it be not in itſelf ſaving faith, yet is it the foundation and ground-work of it; it being impoſſible the ſoul ſhould receive and fiducially embrace, what the mind doth not aſſent unto as true and infallibly certain ‖. Now, there are three degrees of aſſent; *conjecture*, *opinion*, and *belief*. Conjecture is but a-ſlight and weak inclination to aſſent to the thing propounded, by reaſon of the weighty objections that lie againſt it. Opinion is a more ſteady and fixed aſſent, when a man is almoſt certain, though yet ſome fear of the contrary remains with him. Belief is a more full and aſſured aſſent to the truth; to which the mind may be brought four ways.

Firſt, By the perfect intelligence of ſenſe, not hindered or deceived. So I believe the truth of theſe propoſitions, Fire is hot, water moiſt, honey is ſweet, gall is bitter.

Secondly, By the native clearneſs of ſelf-evidencing principles. So I believe the truth of theſe propoſitions, The whole is more than a part; the cauſe is before the effect.

Thirdly, By diſcourſe, and rational deduction. So I believe

‖ See Dr. Sclater, on Rom. iv. 3.

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the truth of this propoſition, Where all the parts of a thing are, there is the whole.

Fourthly, By infallible teſtimony, when any thing is witneſſed or aſſerted, by one whoſe truth is unqueſtionable *. And of this ſort is the aſſent of faith; which is therefore called our receiving the witneſs of God, 1 John v. 9. our ſetting to our ſeal that God is true, John iii. 33. This *prima veritas*, divine verity, is the very formal object of faith: into this we reſolve our faith. *Thus ſaith the Lord*, is that firm foundation upon which our aſſent is built. And thus we ſee good reaſon to believe thoſe profound myſteries of the incarnation of Chriſt; the hypoſtatical union of the two natures in his wonderful perſon; the myſtical union of Chriſt and believers; though we cannot underſtand theſe things, by reaſon of the darkneſs of our minds. It ſatisfies the ſoul to find theſe myſteries in the written word; upon that foundation it firmly builds its aſſent; and without ſuch an aſſent of faith, there can be no embracing of Chriſt: all acts of faith and religion, without aſſent, are but as ſo many arrows ſhot at random into the open air, they ſignify nothing for want of a fixed determinate object.

It is therefore the policy of Satan, by injecting or fomenting atheiſtical thoughts, (with which young converts uſe to find themſelves greatly infeſted) to undermine and deſtroy the whole work of faith. But God makes his people victorious over them: yea, and even at that time they do aſſent to the truths of the word, when they think they do not: As appears by their tenderneſs and fear of ſin, their diligence and care of duty. If I diſcern theſe things in a Chriſtian's life, he muſt excuſe me if I believe him not, when he ſaith he doth not aſſent to the truths of the goſpel.

Thirdly, Our receiving Chriſt neceſſarily implies our hearty *approbation*, liking, and eſtimation; yea, the acquieſcence of our very ſouls in Jeſus Chriſt, as the moſt excellent, ſuitable, and complete remedy for all our wants, ſins and dangers, that ever could be prepared by the wiſdom and love of God for us: We muſt receive him with ſuch a frame of heart as reſts upon,

* It is not becoming, that God, when he would ſpeak to men, ſhould confirm his words with arguments, as if otherwiſe he was not to be believed; but, as becomes himſelf, he ſpeaks as the ſupreme Judge of all things, whoſe (prerogative) it is, not to argue, but to pronounce what is truth, *&c. Lactan. de falſa religione, p. (mihi)* 179. Faith fails, where the divine authority of the ſcripture is wanting.

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and truſts in him, if ever we receive him aright; "To them "that believe he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. This is the only ſovereign plaiſter in all the world that is large enough, and efficacious enough, to cure our wounds: And therefore as Chriſt is moſt highly eſteemed, and heartily approved, as the only remedy for our ſouls; ſo the ſovereign grace and wiſdom of God are admired, and the way and method he hath taken to ſave poor ſouls, by Jeſus Chriſt, moſt heartily approved, as the moſt apt and excellent method, both for his glory, and our good, that ever could be taken: For it is a plain caſe, that none will eſpouſe themſelves with conjugal affections, to that perſon whom they eſteem not as the beſt for them that can be choſen: None will forſake and quit all for his ſake, except they account him as the ſpouſe did, "The chiefeſt of ten thouſand."

There are two things in Chriſt, which muſt gain the greateſt approbation in the ſoul of a poor, convinced ſinner, and bring it to reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt.

Firſt, That it can find nothing in Chriſt that is diſtaſtful, or unſuitable to it, as it doth experimentally find in the beſt creatures. In him is no *weakneſs*, but a fulneſs of all ſaving abilities; "Able to ſave to the uttermoſt:" No *pride*, cauſing him to ſcorn and contemn the moſt wretched ſoul that comes to him: No inconſtancy or *levity*, to cauſe him to caſt off the ſoul, whom he hath once received: No *paſſion* but a Lamb for meekneſs and patience: There is no ſpot to be found in him, but "He is alto-"gether lovely," Cant. v. 16.

Secondly, As the believer can find nothing in Chriſt that is diſtaſtful, ſo it finds nothing wanting in Chriſt that is neceſſary, or deſireable: Such is the fulneſs of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption, that is in Chriſt, that nothing is left to deſire, but the full enjoyment of him. O ſaith the ſoul, how completely happy ſhall I be, if I can but win Chriſt! I would not envy the *nobles* of the earth, were I but in Chriſt. I am hungry, and athirſt, and Chriſt is meat indeed, and drink indeed; this is the beſt thing in all the world for me, becauſe ſo neceſſary, and ſo ſuitable, to the needs of a ſoul ready to periſh. I am a law-condemned, and a ſelf-condemned ſinner; trembling for fear of the execution of the curſe upon me every moment; in Chriſt is complete righteouſneſs to juſtify my ſoul; O there is nothing better for me than Chriſt. I ſee myſelf plunged both in nature and practice, into the odious pollutions of ſin, and in Chriſt is a fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs: His blood is a fountain of *merit*, his ſpirit is a fountain of holineſs and purity: None but Chriſt, none but

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Chriſt. O the manifold wiſdom, and unſearchable love of God, to prepare, and furniſh ſuch a Chriſt, ſo fully anſwering all the needs, all the diſtreſſes, all the fears and burdens of a poor ſinner! Thus the believing ſoul approves of Chriſt as beſt for it. And thus in believing, it gives glory to God, Rom. iv. 21.

Fourthly, Receiving Chriſt conſiſts in the *conſent and choice of the will;* and this is the opening of the heart and ſtretching forth of the ſoul to receive him: "Thy people ſhall be willing "day of thy power," Pſal. cx. 3.

It is the great deſign, and main ſcope of the goſpel, to work over the wills of poor ſinners to this: And this was the great complaint of Chriſt againſt the incredulous Jews, John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

It is diſputed by ſome, whether faith can be ſeated in two diſtinct faculties, as we ſeem to place it, when we ſay it involves both the *approbation* of the *judgment*, and the *conſent* of the *will*. I will not here intangle my diſcourſe with that fruitleſs diſpute. I am of the ſame judgment with thoſe divines, that think faith cannot be expreſſed fully by any one ſingle habit, or act of the mind or will diſtinctly, for that (as * one well notes) there are ſuch deſcriptions given of it in ſcripture, ſuch things are propoſed as the object of it, and ſuch is the experience of all that ſincerely believe; as no one ſingle act, either of the mind or will, can anſwer unto: Nor do I ſee any thing repugnant to *ſcripture* or *philoſophy* if we place it in both faculties. Conſent (ſaith † Vaſquez) ſeems to denote the concourſe of the will with the underſtanding; but to leave that, it is moſt certain the ſaving, juſtifying act of faith lies principally in the conſent of the will, which conſent is the effect of the Almighty Power of God, Eph. i. 19. He allures and draws the will to Chriſt, and he *draws with the cords of a man*, (i. e.) he prevails with it by rational arguments: For the ſoul being prepared by convictions of its loſt and miſerable eſtate by ſin, and that there is but one door of hope open to it for an eſcape from the wrath to come, and that is Chriſt; being alſo ſatisfied of the

* Dr. Owen in his doctrine of Juſtification, p. 135.

† Conſent ſeems to denote the concurrence of the will with the underſtanding, by reliſhing the ſame thing which the underſtanding doth perceive. 12. Q. 15. *a.* 1. Faith is not a ſimple act, but conſiſts of diverſe parts, knowledge, aſſent, and truſt, which do not all belong to the ſame faculty. *Wendel. Theol. p.* 450.

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fulneſs, and completeneſs of his ſaving ability, and of his willingneſs to make it over for our ſalvation, upon ſuch juſt and equal terms; this cannot but prevail with the will of a poor diſtreſſed ſinner, to conſent, and chooſe him.

Fifthly and *Laſtly*, The laſt, and principle thing included in our receiving of Chriſt, is the *reſpect* that this act of acceptance hath, unto the terms upon which Chriſt is tendered to us in the goſpel ‡, to which it is moſt agreeable, 1 Cor. xv. 11. "So we "preach, and ſo ye believed:" Faith anſwers the goſpel-offer, as the impreſs upon the *wax* doth the engraving in the *ſeal*; and this is of principal conſideration, for there is no receiving Chriſt upon any other terms but his own, propoſed in the goſpel to us: He will never come lower, nor make them eaſier than they are, for any man's ſake in the world; we muſt either receive him upon theſe, or part with him for ever as thouſands do, who could be content to agree to ſome articles, but rather chooſe to be damned for ever, than ſubmit to all: This is the great controverſy betwixt Chriſt and ſinners; upon this, many thouſands break off the treaty, and part with Chriſt, becauſe he will not come to their terms; but every true believer receives him upon his own, (*i. e.*) their acceptance of him by faith, is in all things conſentaneous to the overtures made of him in the written word. So he tenders himſelf, and ſo they receive him; as will be evident in the following particulars.

Firſt, The goſpel offers Chriſt to us *ſincerely* and really, and ſo the true believer receives and accepts him; even with a *faith unfeigned*: 1 Tim. i. 5. If ever the ſoul be ſerious and in earneſt in any thing, it is ſo in this: Can we ſuppoſe the heart of him that flies for his life to the *refuge-city*, to be ſerious and in earneſt, to eſcape by flight the *avenger of blood* who purſues him? Then is the heart of a convinced ſinner ſerious in this matter; for under that notion is the work of faith preſented to us, Heb. vi. 18.

Secondly, Chriſt is offered to us in the goſpel *entirely* and *undividedly*, as cloathed with all his offices, prieſtly, prophetical, and regal; as Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, Acts xvi. 31. and ſo the true believer receives him: The *hypocrite*, like the *harlot*, is for dividing, but the ſincere believer finds the need he hath of every office of Chriſt, and knows not how to want any thing that is in him.

‡ Rom. iv. 17. υπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης. The will like melted metal, is delivered into the goſpel-mould, where it receives the ſame form and figure that the mould gives.

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His ignorance makes him neceſſary and deſireable to him as a *prophet*: His guilt makes him neceſſary as a *prieſt*: His ſtrong and powerful luſts and corruptions make him neceſſary as a *king*; and in truth he ſees not any thing in Chriſt that he can ſpare; he needs all that is in Chriſt, and admires infinite wiſdom in nothing more, than the inveſting Chriſt with all theſe offices, which are ſo ſuited to the poor ſinner's wants and miſeries. Look, as the three offices are undivided in Chriſt, ſo they are in the believer's acceptance; and before this trial no hypocrite can ſtand; for all hypocrites reject and quarrel with ſomething in Chriſt; they like his pardon better than his government. They call him, indeed, Lord and Maſter, but it is but an empty title they beſtow upon him; for let them aſk their own hearts, if Chriſt be Lord over their *thoughts*, as well as *words*: over their *ſecret*, as well as *open* actions; over their *darling* luſts, as well as others; let them aſk, who will appear to be Lord and Maſter over them, when Chriſt and the world come in competition? When the pleaſures of ſin ſhall ſtand upon one ſide, and ſufferings to death, and deepeſt points of ſelf-denial, upon the other ſide? Surely it is the greateſt affront, that can be offered to the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to ſeparate in our acceptance, what is ſo united in Chriſt, for our ſalvation and happineſs. As without any one of theſe offices, the work of our ſalvation could not be completed, ſo without acceptance of Chriſt in them all, our union with them by faith cannot be completed.

The goſpel-offer of Chriſt includes all his offices, and goſpel-faith juſt ſo receives him; to ſubmit to him, as well as to be redeemed by him; to imitate him in the holineſs of his life, as well as to reap the purchaſes and fruits of his *death*. It muſt be an entire receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ‖.

Thirdly, Chriſt is offered to us in the goſpel *excluſively*, as the alone and only Saviour of ſinners; with whoſe blood and interceſſion nothing is to be mixed; but the ſoul of a ſinner is ſingly to rely and depend on him, and no other, Acts iv. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 11. and ſo faith receives him, Pſal. lxxi. 16. "I will make "mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only." Phil. iii. 9. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, "which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of

‖ A man may as lawfully join ſaints or angels in his mediation with Chriſt, as graces. It is groſs idolatry to make the works of God a God, and it is but a more ſubtle idolatry to make the works of Chriſt, a Chriſt. *Burgeſs de Lage.*

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" Christ:" To depend partly upon Christ's righteousness, and partly upon our own, is to set one foot upon a rock, and the other in a quick-sand; either Christ will be to us all in all, or nothing at all, in point of righteousness and salvation; he affects not social honour; as he did the whole *work*, so he expects the sole *praise*; if he be not able to save to the uttermost, why do we depend upon him at all? and if he be, why do we lean upon any beside him?

Fourthly, The gospel offers Christ *freely* to sinners as the *gift*, not the *sale* of God, John iv. 10. Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. and even so faith receives him. The believer comes to Christ with an empty hand, not only as an undeserving, but as an hell-deserving sinner; he comes to Christ as to one that justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. " Unto him that worketh not, but " believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is count- " ed for righteousness:" Where by him that worketh not, he means a convinced, humbled sinner, who finds himself utterly unable to do the task the law sets him, (*i. e.*) perfectly to obey it; and therefore in a law sense is said not to work; for it is all one as to the intent and purpose of the law, not to work, and not to work perfectly: This he is convinced of, and therefore comes to Christ as one that is in himself ungodly, acknowledging the righteousness, by which alone he can stand before God, is in Christ, and not in himself, in whole, or in part; and by the way, let this encourage poor souls that are scared and daunted for want of due qualifications, from closing with and embracing Christ: There is nothing qualifies any man for Christ more than a sense of his unworthiness of him, and the want of all excellencies or ornaments, that may commend him to divine acceptance.

Fifthly, The gospel offers Christ *orderly* to sinners; first his *person*, then his *privileges*. God first gives his Son, and then with him, or as a consequent of that gift, he gives us all things, Rom. viii. 32. In the same order must our faith receive him. The believer doth not marry the *portion* first, and then the *person*, but to be found in him is the first and great care of a believer.

I deny not but it is lawful for any to have an eye to the benefits of Christ. Salvation from wrath is, and lawfully may be intended and aimed at: " Look unto me, and be saved all ye " ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22. Nor do I deny but there are many poor souls, who being in deep distress and fear, may, and often do, look mostly to their own safety at first; and that there is much confusion, as well in the actings of their faith, as

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in their condition; but sure I am, it is the proper order in believing, first to accept the person of the Lord Jesus: Heaven is no doubt very desireable, but Christ is more: "Whom have I in "heaven but thee?" Psal. lxxiii. 25. Union with Christ is, in order of nature, antecedent to the communication of his privileges, therefore so it ought to be in the order and method of believing.

Sixthly, Christ is *advisedly* offered in the gospel to sinners, as the result of God's eternal counsel, a project of grace upon which his heart and thoughts have been much set, Zech. vi. 13. The counsel of peace was betwixt the Father and Son. And so the believer receives him, most deliberately weighing the matter in his most deep and serious thoughts; for this is a time of much solicitude and thoughtfulness. The soul's espousals are acts of judgment, Hos. ii. 19. on our part, as well as on God's: We are therefore bid to sit down and count the cost, Luke xiv. 28. Faith, or the actual receiving of Christ, is the result of many previous debates in the soul: The matter hath been pondered over and over: The objections and discouragements, both from the self-denying terms of the gospel, and our own vileness and deep guilt, have been ruminated, and lain upon our hearts day and night, and after all things have been balanced in the most deep consideration, the soul is determined to this conclusion, I must have Christ, be the terms never so hard, be my sins never so great and many, I will yet go to him, and venture my soul upon him; if I perish, I perish. I have thought out all my thoughts, and this is the result, union with Christ here, or separation from God for ever must be my lot.

And thus doth the Lord open the hearts of his elect, and win the consent of their wills to receive Jesus Christ upon the deepest consideration, and debate of the matter in their own most solemn thoughts: They understand and know, that they must deeply deny themselves, take up his cross and follow him, Matth. xvi. 24. renounce not only *sinful*, but *religious* self; these are hard and difficult things, but yet the necessity and excellency of Christ make them appear eligible, and rational; by all which you see faith is another thing than what the sound of that word (as it is generally understood) signifies to the understandings of most men. This is that fiducial receiving of Christ here to be opened.

Secondly, Our next work will be to evince this receiving of Christ as hath been opened, to be that special saving faith of God's elect: This is that faith of which such great and glorious things are spoken in the gospel, which, whosoever hath shall

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be ſaved, and he that hath it not ſhall be damned: and this I ſhall evidently prove by the following arguments or reaſons.

Arg. 1. *Firſt*, That faith which gives the ſoul right and title to ſpiritual adoption, with all the privileges and benefits thereof, is true and ſaving faith.

But ſuch a receiving of Chriſt as hath been deſcribed, gives the ſoul right and title to ſpiritual adoption, with all the privileges and benefits thereof.

Therefore ſuch a receiving of Chriſt as hath been deſcribed, is true and ſaving faith.

The major propoſition is undeniable, for our right and title to ſpiritual adoption, and the privileges thereof ariſe from our union with Jeſus Chriſt; we being united to the Son of God, are, by virtue of that union, reckoned or accounted ſons, Gal. iii. 26. "You are all the children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt:" The effect of ſaving faith is union with Chriſt's perſon, the conſequent of that union is adoption, or right to the inheritance.

The minor is moſt plain in the text: "To as many as received him, to them gave he power or right to become the "ſons of God:" A falſe faith hath no ſuch privilege annexed to it; no unbeliever is thus dignified: No ſtranger entitled to this inheritance.

Arg. 2. *Secondly*, That only is ſaving and juſtifying faith, which is in all true believers, in none but true believers; and in all true believers at all times.

But ſuch a receiving of Chriſt as hath been deſcribed, is in all true believers, in none but true believers, and in all true believers at all times.

Therefore ſuch a receiving of Chriſt as hath been deſcribed, is the only ſaving and juſtifying faith.

The major is undeniable, that muſt needs contain the eſſence of ſaving faith, which is proper to every true believer, at all times, and to no other.

The minor will be as clear, for there is no other act of faith, but this of *fiducial receiving Chriſt* as he is offered, that doth agree to all true believers, to none but true believers, and to all true belivers at all times.

There be three acts of faith, * *aſſent*, *acceptance*, and *aſſurance*: The Papiſts generally give the eſſence of ſaving faith to

* The act of faith conſiſts in aſſent, by which one aſſents to any propoſition revealed by God on the authority of the revealer. *Becan. Theol. Schol. Tom.* 3. *cap.* 3. Q. 4.

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the first, *viz. assent*. The Lutherans, and some of our own, give it to the last, *viz. assurance*: But it can be neither way so. *Assent* doth not agree only to true believers, or justified persons. *Assurance* agrees to justified persons, and them only, but not to all justified persons, and that at all times.

Assent is too low to contain the essence of saving faith; it is found in the unregenerate as well as the regenerate: Yea, in devils as well as men, James ii. 19. it is supposed and included in justifying faith, but it is not the justifying or saving act. *Assurance* is as much too high, being found only in some eminent believers: and in them too but at some times: There is many a true believer, to whom the joy and comfort of assurance are denied: They may say of their union with Christ, as Paul said of his vision; whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; so they, whether in Christ or out of Christ, they cannot tell †.

A true believer may "walk in darkness, and see no light," Isa. l. 10. Nay a man must be a believer, before he know himself to be so; the *direct act* of *faith* is before the *reflex act*; so that the justifying act of faith lies neither in *assent*, nor in *assurance*. *Assent* saith, I believe that Christ is, and that he is the Saviour of the elect. *Assurance* saith, I believe, and am sure that Christ died for me, and that I shall be saved through him. So that *assent widens* the nature of faith too much, and *assurance* upon the other hand *straitens* it too much; but *acceptance*, which saith, I take Christ in all his offices to be mine, this fits it exactly, and belongs to all true believers, and to none but true believers; and to all true believers at all times: This therefore must be the justifying and saving act of faith.

Arg. 3. *Thirdly*, That, and no other, is the justifying and saving act of faith, to which the properties and effects of saving faith do belong, or in which they are only found.

But in the fiducial receiving of Christ, are the properties and effects of saving faith only found.

This therefore must be the justifying and saving act of faith.

First, By saving faith, Christ is said to "dwell in our hearts," Eph. iii. 17. but it is neither by *assent*, nor *assurance*, but by *acceptance*; and receiving him that he dwells in our hearts; not by *assent*, for then he would dwell in the unregenerate;

† Many new born Christians live like the new-born babe, *Vivit et est vitae nescius ipse suae*: The whole stock of many a believer consists in the bare direct acts of faith.

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nor by *assurance*, for he must dwell in our hearts before we can be assured of it: Therefore it is by acceptance.

Secondly, By faith we are justified, Rom. v. 1. But neither assent nor assurance, for the reasons above, do justify; therefore it must be by the receiving act, and no other.

Thirdly, The scripture ascribes great difficulties to that faith by which we are saved, as being most cross and opposite to the corrupt nature of man; but of all the acts of faith, none is clogged with like difficulties, or conflicts with greater oppositions than the receiving act doth: this act is attended with the greatest difficulties, fears, and deepest self-denial. In assent, a man's reason is convinced, and yields to the evidence of truth, so that he can do no other but assent to the truth. In assurance there is nothing against a man's will or comfort, but much for it; every one desires it: but it is not so in the acceptance of Christ, upon the self-denying terms of the gospel, as will hereafter be evinced. We conclude therefore, that in this consists the nature and essence of saving faith.

Thirdly, Having seen what the receiving of Jesus Christ is, and that it is the faith by which we are justified and saved: I next come to open the *dignity* and excellency of this faith, whose praises and *encomiums* are in all the scriptures: there you find it renowned by the title of *precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 7. *enriching faith*, Jam. ii. 5. *The work of God*, John vi. 29. The *great mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. With many more rich *epithets* throughout the scriptures bestowed upon it.

Now faith may be considered two ways, *viz.* either qualitatively, or relatively.

Considered *qualitatively*, as a saving grace, it hath the same excellency that all other precious saving graces have: as it is the fruit of the Spirit, it is more precious than gold, Prov. viii. 11, 19. And so are all other graces as well as faith: in this sense they all shine with equal glory, and that a glory, transcending all the glory of this world: but then consider faith *relatively*, as the instrument by which the righteousness of Christ is apprehended and made ours, and in that consideration it excels all other graces.

This is the grace that is singled out from among all other graces, to *receive Christ*, by which office it is dignified above all its fellows: as Moses was honoured above the many thousands of Israel, when God took him up into the *mount*, admitted him nearer to himself, than any other of all the tribes might come; for they stood without the *rail*, while Moses was received into the special presence of God, and was admitted to such views as

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others must not have: so faith is honoured above all its fellow-graces, in being singled out, and solemnly anointed to this high office in our justification: this is that precious eye that looks unto Christ as the stung Israelites did to the brazen serpent, and derives healing virtue from him to the soul. It is the grace which instrumentally saves us, Eph. ii. 8. As it is Christ's glory to be the door of salvation, so it is faith's glory to be the golden key that opens that door.

What shall I say of faith? It is the *bond* of union; the *instrument* of justification; the *spring* of spiritual peace and joy; the *means* of spiritual life and subsistence: and therefore the great *scope* and *drift* of the gospel; which aims at, and presseth nothing more, than to bring men and women to believe.

First, This is the *bond of our union* with Christ: that union is begun in our vivification, and completed in our actual receiving of Christ: the first is a bond of union on the Spirit's part, the second a bond of union on our part. "Christ dwelleth in "our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17. And therein it is a door opened to let in many rich blessings to the soul: for by uniting us to Christ, it brings us into special favour and acceptation with God, Eph. i. 6. Makes us the special objects of Christ's conjugal love and delight, Eph. v. 29. Draws from his heart sympathy, and a tender sense of all our miseries and burdens, Heb. iv. 15.

Secondly, It is the instrument of our justification, Rom. v. 1. Till Christ be received (thus received by us) we are in our sins; under guilt and condemnation; but when faith comes, then comes freedom: "By him all that believe are justified from all "things," * Acts xiii. 38 Rom. viii. 1. For it apprehends or receives the pure and perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus, wherein the soul, how guilty and sinful soever it be in itself, stands faultless, and spotless, before the presence of God: all obligations to punishment, are, upon believing, immediately dissolved: a full and final pardon sealed. O precious faith! Who can sufficiently value it.

What respect, reader, wouldst thou have to that hand that should bring thee a pardon when on the ladder, or block! Why,

* The being found in Christ has a tacit reference to the judgment of God; to us there is no condemnation, because he finds us cloathed with a righteousness, such as he requires, *i. e.* compleatly perfect, even the righteousness of Christ, by faith, imputed to us. *Bern. on the place.*

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ſuch a pardon, which thou canſt not read without tears of joy, is brought thee by the hand of faith. O ineſtimable grace! This cloaths the pure righteouſneſs of Jeſus upon our defiled ſouls, and ſo cauſes us to become the "righteouſneſs of God in "him;" or as it is 1 John iii. 7. "Righteous as he is righte-"ous:" *Non formali & intrinſica juſtitia, ſed relativa:* Not with a formal inherent righteouſneſs of our own, but with a relative imputed righteouſneſs from another.

I know this moſt excellent and moſt comfortable doctrine of imputed righteouſneſs, is not only *denied*, but *derided* by Papiſts. Stapleton calls it *ſpectrum cerebri Lutherani:* The monſtrous birth of Luther's brain! But, bleſſed be God, this comfortable truth is well ſecured againſt all attempts of its adverſaries. Let their blaſphemous mouths call it in deriſion, as they do *putative righteouſneſs, (i. e.)* a mere fancied or conceited righteouſneſs: Yet we know aſſuredly, Chriſt's righteouſneſs is imputed to us, and that in the way of faith. If Adam's ſin became ours by imputation, then ſo doth Chriſt's righteouſneſs alſo become ours by imputation, Rom. v. 17. If Chriſt were made a ſinner by the imputation of our ſins to him, who had no ſin of his own, then we are made righteous by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us, who have no righteouſneſs of our own, according to 1 Cor. v. 21. This was the way in which Abraham, the Father of them that believe, was juſtified, and therefore this is the way in which all believers, the children of Abraham, muſt, in the like manner, be juſtified, Rom. iv. 22, 23, 24. Who can expreſs the worth of faith in this one reſpect, were this all it did for our ſouls?

But, *Thirdly*, It is the *ſpring* of our ſpiritual peace and joy; and that as it is the inſtrument of our *juſtification*. If it be an inſtrument of our *juſtification*, it cannot but be the ſpring of our *conſolation*, Rom. v. 1. "Being juſtified by faith, we have "peace with God:" In uniting us with Chriſt, and apprehending and applying his righteouſneſs to us, it becomes the ſeed, or root of all the peace and joy of a Chriſtian's life. Joy, the child of faith, therefore bears its name, Phil. i. 25. "The joy of "faith," So 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. "Believing we rejoice with joy "unſpeakable:" We cannot forbear rejoicing when, by faith, we are brought to the ſight, and knowledge of ſuch a privileged ſtate: when faith hath firſt given, and then cleared our title to Chriſt, joy is no more under the ſoul's command: we cannot but rejoice, and that with joy unſpeakable.

Fourthly, It is the *means* of our ſpiritual livelihood and ſubſiſtence: all other graces, like birds in the neſt, depend upon

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what faith brings in to them: take away faith, and all the graces languiſh and die: joy, peace, hope, patience, and all the reſt, depend upon faith, as the members of the natural body do upon the veſſels by which blood and ſpirits are conveyed to them. "The life which I now live (ſaith the apoſtle) is by "the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. It provides our *ordinary food*, and *extraordinary cordials*, Pſal. xxvii. 13. "I "had fainted unleſs I had believed." And ſeeing it is all this to our ſouls,

Fifthly, In the laſt place, it is no wonder that it is the main ſcope and drift of the goſpel, to preſs and bring ſouls to believing: it is the goſpel's grand deſign to bring up the hearts of men and women to faith. The urgent *commands* of the goſpel aim at this, 1 John iii. 23. Mark i. 14, 15. John xii. 36. Hither alſo look the great *promiſes* and encouragements of the *goſpel*, John vi. 35, and 37. So Mark xvi. 16. And the oppoſite ſin of unbelief is every where fearfully aggravated, and *threatned*, John xvi. 8, 9. John iii. 18, 35. And this was the third thing promiſed, namely, a diſcovery of the tranſcendent worth and excellency of ſaving faith.

Fourthly, But leſt we commit a miſtake here, to the prejudice of Chriſt's honour and glory, which muſt not be given to another, no not to faith itſelf; I promiſed you in the fourth place, to ſhew you upon what account faith is thus dignified and honoured: that ſo we may give unto *faith*, the things that are *faith's*; and to Chriſt the things that are Chriſt's.

And I find four opinions about the intereſt of faith in our juſtification: ſome will have it to juſtify us *formally*, not relatively; *i. e.* upon the account of its own intrinſical value and worth; and this is the *popiſh* ſenſe of juſtification by faith. Some affirm, that though faith be not our perfect legal righteouſneſs, conſidered as a work of ours, yet the *act* of believing is imputed to us for righteouſneſs, *i. e.* God graciouſly accepts it inſtead of perfect legal righteouſneſs, and ſo, in his eſteem, it is our evangelical righteouſneſs. And this is the Arminian ſenſe of Juſtification by faith.

Some there are alſo, even among our reformed divines, that contend that faith juſtifies and ſaves us, as it is the condition of the new covenant. And laſtly, others will have it to juſtify us as an *inſtrument* apprehending or receiving the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: with which opinion I muſt join: when I conſider my text calls it a *receiving of Chriſt*: moſt certain it is,

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That, *First*, it doth not juſtify in the *popiſh ſenſe*, upon the account of its own proper worth and dignity: for then,

First, Juſtification ſhould be of debt, not of grace; contrary to Rom. iii. 23, 24.

Secondly, This would fruſtrate the very ſcope and end of the death of Chriſt; for if righteouſneſs come by the law, *i. e* by the way of works and deſert, then is Chriſt dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21.

Thirdly, Then the way of our juſtification by faith would be ſo far from excluding, that it would eſtabliſh boaſting, expreſly contrary to the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 26, 27.

Fourthly, Then there ſhould be no defects or imperfections in faith, for a defective and imperfect thing can never be the matter of our juſtification before God: if it juſtify upon the account of its own worth, and proper dignity, it can have no flaw nor imperfection in it, contrary to the common ſenſe of all believers. Nay,

Fifthly, Then it is the ſame thing to be juſtified by faith, and to be juſtified by works, which the apoſtle ſo carefully diſtinguiſheth and oppoſeth, Phil. iii. 9. and Rom. iv. 6. So that we conclude it doth not juſtify in the Popiſh ſenſe, for any worth or proper excellency that is in itſelf.

Secondly, And it is as evident, it doth not juſtify us in the Arminian ſenſe, *viz.* as the τὸ *credere*, the act of believing is imputed, or accepted by God, as our evangelical righteouſneſs, inſtead of perfect legal righteouſneſs. In the former opinion you have the dregs of Popery, and here you have refined Popery. Let all Arminians know, we have as high eſteem for faith, as any men in the world, but yet we will not rob Chriſt to cloath faith. We cannot embrace their opinion, becauſe,

First, We muſt then dethrone Chriſt to exalt faith: we are willing to give it all that is due to it, but we dare not deſpoil Chriſt of his glory, for faith's ſake: "*He is* the Lord our "righteouſneſs," Jer. xxiii. We dare not ſet the ſervant above the maſter. We acknowledge no righteouſneſs but what the obedience and ſatisfaction of Chriſt yields us. His blood, not our faith; his ſatisfaction, not our believing it, is the matter of our juſtification before God.

Secondly, We dare not yield this point, leſt we undermine all the comfort of Chriſtians, by ſetting their pardon and peace upon a weak, imperfect work of their own. Oh how tottering and unſtable muſt their ſtation be, that ſtand upon ſuch a bottom as this! What alterations are there in our faith, what mixtures of unbelief at all times, and prevalency of unbelief at

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ſome times; and is this a foundation to build our juſtification and hope upon? *Debile fundamentum fullit opus*: If we lay the ſtreſs here, we build upon very looſe ground, and muſt be at a continual loſs, both as to ſafety and comfort.

Thirdly, We dare not wrong the juſtice and truth of God at that rate, as to affirm that he eſteems and imputes our poor weak faith for perfect legal righteouſneſs *. We know that the judgment of God is always according to truth: if the juſtice of God requires full payment, ſure it will not ſay, it is fully ſatisfied by any acts of ours, when all that we can do, amounts not to one mite of the vaſt ſum we owe to God. So that we deſervedly reject this opinion alſo.

Thirdly, And for the third opinion, That it juſtifies as the *condition of the new covenant*, though ſome of great name and worth among our Proteſtant divines ſeem to go that way, yet I cannot ſee, according to this opinion, any reaſon why repentance may not as properly be ſaid to juſtify us as faith, for it is a condition of the new covenant as much as faith; and if faith juſtify as a condition, then every other grace that is a condition, muſt juſtify as well as faith. I acknowledge faith to be a condition of the covenant, but cannot allow that it juſtifies as a condition. And therefore muſt profeſs myſelf beſt ſatisfied in the laſt opinion, which ſpeaks it an inſtrument in our juſtification: it is the hand which receives the righteouſneſs of Chriſt that juſtifies us, and that gives it its value above all other graces: as when we ſay a diamond ring is worth one hundred pounds, we mean not the gold that receives, but the ſtone that is ſet in it, is worth ſo much. Faith conſidered as an habit, is no more precious than other gracious habits are, but conſidered as an inſtrument to receive Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, ſo it excels them all; and his inſtrumentality of faith is noted in theſe phraſes, ἐκ πίστεως, Rom. iii. 28. and διὰ τῆς πίστεως, Rom. iii. 22. *By faith, and through faith.* And thus much of the nature and excellency of ſaving faith.

* Becauſe faith receives Chriſt our righteouſneſs, and aſcribes all to the grace of God in him, therefore we are ſaid to be juſtified by it, only on account of Chriſt, and not as it is our work. *Confeſ. Helv.*

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SERMON VII.

JOHN i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.*

THE nature and excellency of saving faith, together with its relation to justification, as an instrument in receiving Christ and his righteousness, having been discoursed doctrinally already, I now come to make application of it, according to the nature of this weighty and fruitful point.

And the uses I shall make of it, will be for our,

1. Information,
2. Examination,
3. Exhortation, And
4. Direction.

First Use of Information.

Use 1. And in the first, this point yields us many, and great, and useful truths, for our information: As,

Infer. 1. Is the receiving of Christ, the vital and saving act of faith, which gives the soul right to the person and privileges of Christ? Then it follows, *That the rejecting of Christ by unbelief, must needs be the damning and soul-destroying sin, which cuts a man off from Christ, and all the benefits purchased by his blood.* If there be life in receiving, there must needs be death in rejecting Christ.

There is no grace more excellent than faith; no sin more execrable, and abominable, than unbelief. Faith is the saving grace, and unbelief the damning sin, Mark xvi. 16. "He that "believeth not, shall be damned." See John iii. 18, 36. and John viii. 24.

And the reason why this sin of unbelief is the damning sin is this, Because, in the justification of a sinner, there must be a co-operation of all the con-causes that have a joint-influence on that blessed effect: As there must be free-grace for an impulsive cause, the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause, so, of necessity, there must be faith, the instrumental cause, to receive and apply what the free-grace of God designed, and the blood of Christ purchased for us. For where there are many social causes or con-causes, to produce one effect, there the effect is not produced till the last cause be in act.

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his "name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of "sins," Acts x. 43. Faith in its place, is as necessary as the blood of Christ in its place: "It is Christ in you the hope of

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"glory," Col. i. 27. Not Chriſt in the *womb*, not Chriſt in the *grave*, nor Chriſt in *heaven*, except he be alſo *Chriſt in you*.

Though Chriſt be come in the fleſh; though he died and roſe again from the dead; yet if you believe not, you muſt for all that *die in your ſins*, John viii. 24. And what a dreadful thing is this! better die any death whatever, than die in your ſins. If you die in your ſins, you will alſo riſe in your ſins, and ſtand at the bar of Chriſt in your ſins: you can never receive remiſſion, till firſt you have received Chriſt. O curſed unbelief, which *damns* the ſoul: *diſhonours* God, 1 John v. 10. *ſlights* Jeſus Chriſt, the wiſdom of God, as if that glorious deſign of redemption by his blood, the triumph and maſter-piece of divine wiſdom, were mere *fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *fruſtrates* the great deſign of the goſpel, Gal. iv. 11. and conſequently it muſt be the ſin of ſins; the worſt and moſt dangerous of all ſins; leaving a man under the guilt of all his other ſins.

Infer. 2. If ſuch a receiving of Chriſt, as hath been deſcribed, be ſaving and juſtifying faith, *then faith is a work of greater difficulty than moſt men underſtand it to be, and there are but few ſound believers in the world.*

Before Chriſt can be received, the heart muſt be emptied, and opened: but moſt mens hearts are full of ſelf-righteouſneſs and vain-confidence: this was the caſe of the Jews, Rom. x. 3. "Be-"ing ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſta-"bliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves "to the righteouſneſs of God."

Man's righteouſneſs was once in himſelf, and what liquor is firſt put into the veſſel, it ever afterwards ſavours of it: It is with Adam's poſterity as with *bees*, which have been accuſtomed to go to their own hive, and carry all thither; if the *hive* be removed to another place, they will ſtill fly to the old place, hover up and down about it, and rather die there, than go to a new place. So it is with moſt men. God hath removed their righteouſneſs from *doing*, to *believing*; from *themſelves* to *Chriſt*; but who ſhall prevail with them to forſake ſelf? Nature will venture to be damned rather than do it: there is much ſubmiſſion in believing, and great ſelf-denial: a proud ſelf-conceited heart, will never ſtoop to live upon the ſtock of another's righteouſneſs.

Beſides, it is no eaſy thing to perſuade men to receive Chriſt as their Lord in all things, and ſubmit their necks to his ſtrict and holy precepts, though it be a great truth that "* Chriſt's yoke

* *Jugum Chriſti non deterit ſed honeſtat colla.* Bern.

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" doth not gall, but grace and adorn the neck that bears it;" that the truest and sweetest liberty is in our freedom from our lusts, not in our fulfilling them; yet who can persuade the carnal heart to believe this? And much less will men ever be prevailed withal, to forsake father, mother, wife, children, inheritance, and life itself, to follow Christ: and all this upon the account of spiritual and invisible things: and yet this must be done by all that receive the Lord Jesus Christ upon gospel-terms; yea, and before the soul hath any encouraging experience of its own, to balance the manifold discouragements of sense, and carnal reason, improved by the utmost craft of Satan to dismay it; for experience is the fruit and consequent of believing. So that it may well be placed among the great *mysteries* of godliness, that Christ is believed on in the world, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Infer. 3. Hence it will follow, *That there may be more true and found believers in the world, than know, or dare conclude themselves to be such.*

For, as many ruin their own souls by placing the essence of saving faith in naked assent, so some rob themselves of their own comfort, by placing it in full assurance. Faith, and sense of faith, are two distinct and separable mercies: you may have truly received Christ, and not receive the knowledge or assurance of it, Isa. l. 10. Some there be that say, *Thou art our God*, of whom God never said, *You are my people:* these have no *authority* to be called the sons of God: others there are, of whom God saith, *These are my people*, yet dare not call *God their God:* these have authority to be called the sons of God, but know it not. They have received Christ, that is their *safety;* but they have not yet received the knowledge and assurance of it; that is their *trouble:* the Father owns his child in the cradle, who yet knows him not to be his father.

Now there are two reasons why many believers, who might argue themselves into peace, do yet live without the comforts of their faith: and this may come to pass, either from,

First, The inevidence of the *premises.*

Secondly, Or the weighty importance of the *conclusion.*

First, It may come to pass from the inevidence of the premises. Assurance is a practical *syllogism*, and it proceeds thus:

All that truly have received Christ Jesus, they are the children of God.

I have truly received Jesus Christ,

Therefore I am the child of God.

The major proposition is found in the scripture, and there can

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be no doubt of that. The *assumption* depends upon experience, or internal sense; *I have truly received Jesus Christ:* Here usually is the stumble; many great objections lie against it, which they cannot clearly answer: As,

Obj. 1. Light and knowledge are necessarily required to the right receiving of Christ, but I am dark and ignorant, many carnal unregenerate persons know more than I do, and are more able to discourse of the mysteries of religion than I am.

Sol. But you ought to distinguish of the *kinds* and *degrees* of knowledge, and then you would see that your bewailed ignorance is no bar to your interest in Christ. There are two kinds of knowledge:

1. Natural. | 2. Spiritual.

There is a *natural knowledge*, even of spiritual objects, a spark of nature blown up by an advantageous education; and though the objects of this knowledge be spiritual things, yet the light in which they are discerned, is but a mere natural light.

And there is *a spiritual knowledge* of spiritual things, the *teaching of the anointing*, as it is called, 1 John ii. 27. *(i. e.)* the effect and fruit of the Spirit's sanctifying work upon our souls, when the experience of a man's own heart informs, and teacheth his understanding, when by feeling the workings of grace in our own souls, we come to understand its nature: this is spiritual knowledge. Now, a little of this knowledge is a better evidence of a man's interest in Christ, than the most raised and excellent degree of natural knowledge: As the philosopher truly observes; *Praestat paucula de meliori scientia degustasse, quam de ignobiliori multa:* One dram of knowledge of the best and most excellent things, is better than much knowledge of Jesus Christ, that hath life and savour in it, is more than all the common things. So it is here, a little spiritual knowledge of natural, sapless knowledge of the unregenerate, which leaves the heart dead, carnal, and barren: it is not the *quantity*, but the *kind*, not the *measure*, but *the savour:* If you know so much of the evil of sin, as renders it the most bitter and burdensome thing in the world to you, and so much of the necessity and excellency of Christ, as renders him the most sweet and desirable thing in the world to you, though you may be defective in many degrees of knowledge, yet this is enough to prove yours to be the fruit of the Spirit: you may have a sanctified heart, though you have an irregular or weak head: many that knew more than you, are in *hell;* and some that once knew as little as you, are now in *heaven: In absoluto et facili stat aeternitas:* God hath not

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prepared heaven only for clear and subtle heads. A little sanctified, and effectual knowledge of Christ's person, offices, suitableness, and necessity, may bring thee thither, when others with all their curious speculations and notions, may perish for ever.

Obj. 2. But you tell me, that *assent* to the truths of the gospel is necessarily included in saving faith, which, though it be not the justifying and saving act, yet it is pre-supposed and required to it. Now I have many staggerings and doubtings about the certainty and reality of these things; many horrid atheistical thoughts, which shake the assenting act of faith in the very foundation, and hence I doubt I do not believe.

Sol. There may be, and often is, a true and sincere *assent* found in the soul, that is assaulted with violent atheistical suggestions from Satan; and thereupon questions the truth of it. And this is a very clear evidence of the reality of our assent, that whatever doubts, or contrary suggestions there be, yet we dare not in our practice, contradict or slight those truths or duties which we are tempted to disbelieve, *ex. gr.* We are assaulted with atheistical thoughts, and tempted to slight and cast off all fears of sin, and practice of religious duties, yet when it comes to the point of practice, we dare not commit a known sin, the awe of God is upon us; we dare not omit a known duty, the tie of conscience is found strong enough to hold us close to it: in this case, it is plain we do really assent, when we think we do not. A man thinks he doth not love his child, yet carefully provides for him in health, and is full of grief and fears about him in sickness: why now, so long as I see all fatherly duties performed, and affections to his child's welfare manifested, let him say what he will as to the want of love to him, whilst I see this, he must excuse me if I do not believe him, when he saith he hath no love for him. Just so is it in this case, a man saith I do not assent to the being, necessity, or excellency of Jesus Christ; yet, in the mean time, his soul is filled with cares and fears about securing his interest in him, he is found panting and thirsting for him with vehement desires, there is nothing in all the world would give him such joy, as to be well assured of an interest in him; while it is thus with any man, let him say or think what he will of his assent, it is manifest by this he doth truly, and heartily assent, and there can be no better proof of it than these real effects produced by it.

Secondly, But if these, and other objections were never so fully answered for the clearing of the *assumption*, yet it often falls out, that believers are afraid to draw the *conclusion*, and that fear partly arises from,

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First, The weighty importance of this matter.

Secondly, The ſenſe of the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts.

First, The concluſion is of infinite importance to them, it is the everlaſting happineſs of their ſouls, than which nothing is, or can be, of greater weight upon their ſpirits: things in which we are moſt deeply concerned, are not lightly and haſtily received by us: it ſeems ſo great and ſo good, that we are ſtill apt (if there be any room for it) to ſuſpect the truth and certainty thereof, as never being ſure enough.

Thus when the women that were the firſt meſſengers and witneſſes of Chriſt's reſurrection, Luke xxiv. 10, 11. came and told the diſciples thoſe wonderful and comfortable tidings, it is ſaid, "That their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they "believed them not:" They thought it was too good to be true; too great to be haſtily received; ſo it is in this caſe.

Secondly, The ſenſe they have of the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts, and the daily workings of hypocriſy there, makes them afraid to conclude in ſo great a point as this is.

They know that very many daily cozen and cheat themſelves in this matter; they know alſo that their own hearts are full of falſeneſs and deceit; they find them ſo in their daily obſervations of them; and what if they ſhould prove ſo in this? Why then they are loſt for ever! They alſo know there is not the like danger in their fears and jealouſies, that would be in their vain confidences and preſumptions: by the one, they are only deprived of their preſent comfort, but by the other, they would be ruined for ever: and therefore chuſe rather to dwell with their own fears (though they be uncomfortable companions) than run the danger of ſo great a miſtake, which would be infinitely more fatal. And this being the common caſe of moſt Chriſtians, it follows that there muſt be many more believers in the world than do think, or dare conclude, themſelves to be ſuch.

Infer. 4. If the right receiving of Jeſus Chriſt, be true, ſaving, and juſtifying faith, *then thoſe that have the leaſt, and loweſt degree and meaſure of ſaving faith, have cauſe for ever to admire the bounty and riches of the grace of God to them therein.*

If you have received never ſo little of his bounty by the hand of providence, in the good things of this life, yet if he have given you any meaſure of true ſaving faith, he hath dealt bountifully indeed with you: this mercy alone is enough to balance all other wants and inconveniencies of this life, "poor in the

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" world, rich in faith," James ii. 5. O let your hearts take in the full ſenſe of this bounty of God to you; ſay with the apoſtle, Eph. i. 3. " Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Je-" ſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in " heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus:" and you will in this one mercy, find matter enough of praiſe and thankſgiving, wonder and admiration to your dying day, yea, to all eternity: for, do but conſider,

Firſt, The ſmalleſt meaſure of ſaving faith which is found in any of the people of God, receives Jeſus Chriſt: and in receiving him, what mercy is there which the believing ſoul doth not receive in him, and with him? Rom. viii. 32.

O believer, though the arms of thy faith be ſmall and weak, yet they embrace a great Chriſt, and receive the richeſt gift that ever God beſtowed upon the world: no ſooner art thou become a believer, but Chriſt is in thee the hope of glory; and thou haſt authority to become a ſon or daughter of God? thou haſt the broad ſeal of heaven to confirm thy title and claim to the privileges of adoption, for " to as many as received him, to them " gave he power to become the ſons of God." [*To as many,*] be they ſtrong, or be they weak, provided they really receive Chriſt by faith; there is authority or power given, ſo that it is no act of preſumption in them to ſay, God is our Father, heaven is our inheritance. O precious faith! the treaſures of ten thouſand worlds cannot purchaſe ſuch privileges as theſe: all the crowns and ſcepters of the earth, ſold at their full value, are no price for ſuch mercies.

Secondly, The leaſt degree of ſaving faith, brings the ſoul into a ſtate of perfect and full juſtification. For if it receives Jeſus Chriſt, it muſt therefore needs in him, and with him, receive a free, full, and final pardon of ſin: the leaſt meaſure of faith receives remiſſion for the greateſt ſins. " By him all that " believe are juſtified from all things," Acts xiii. 39. it unites thy ſoul with Chriſt, and then as the neceſſary conſequent of that union, there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. οὐδὲν κατάκριμα, not one condemnation, how many ſoever our ſins have been.

Thirdly, The leaſt meaſure, or degree of ſaving faith, is a greater mercy than God hath beſtowed, or ever will beſtow upon many that are far above you in outward reſpects: *All men have not faith:* nay, it is but a remnant among men that believe. Few of the *nobles* and *potentates* of the world, have ſuch a gift as this: they have houſes and lands, yea, crowns and ſceptres, but no faith, no Chriſt, no pardon; they have autho-

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rity to rule over men, but no authority to become the ſons of God, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

Say therefore in thy moſt debaſed, ſtraitned, afflicted condition, "Return to thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt "bountifully with thee."

Fourthly, The leaſt degree of ſaving faith is more than all the power of nature can produce: There muſt be a ſpecial revelation of the arm of the Lord in that work, Iſa. liii. 1. Believers are not "born of the fleſh, nor of blood, nor of the "will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. all believing motions towards Chriſt, are the effects of the Father's drawing, John vi. 44. a glorious and irreſiſtable power goes forth from God to produce it, whence it is called "the faith of the opera-"tion of God," Col. ii. 12.

So then, let not believers deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, or overlook that great and infinite mercy which is wrapt up in the leaſt degree of ſaving faith.

Infer. 5. *Learn hence the impoſſibility of their ſalvation, who neither know the nature, nor enjoy the means of ſaving faith.*

My ſoul pities and mourns over the infidel world. Ah! what will become of the millions of poor unbelievers! there is but one door of ſalvation, *viz.* Chriſt; and but one key of faith to open that door: and as that key was never given to the Heathen world; ſo it is laid aſide, or taken away from the people by their cruel guides, all over the Popiſh world; were you among them, you ſhould hear nothing elſe preſſed as neceſſary to your ſalvation but a blind, implicit faith, to believe as the church believes; that is, to believe they know not what.

To believe as the *pope* believes; that is, as an infidel believes, for ſo they confeſs he may be, * and though there be ſuch a thing, as an explicit faith ſometimes ſpoken of among them, yet it is very ſparingly diſcourſed, very falſely deſcribed, and exceedingly ſlighted by them, as the meereſt trifle in the world.

Firſt, It is but ſparingly diſcourſed of: they love not to accuſtom the peoples ears to ſuch a doctrine; one of themſelves confeſſes that there is ſo deep a ſilence of explicit, particular faith in the *Romiſh church*, that you may find many every where, that believe no more of theſe things than *Heathen philoſophers* †.

Secondly, When it is preached or written of, it is falſely de-

* For the Pope's internal faith is not neceſſary to the church. *Canus in loc. Theol. p.* 344.

† Navarr. cap. 11, p. 142.

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ſcribed: for they place the whole nature and eſſence of juſtifying and ſaving faith in a naked aſſent: which the devils have as well as men, James ii. 19. no more than this is preſſed upon the people at any time, as neceſſary to their ſalvation.

Thirdly, And even this particular explicit faith, when it is ſpoken or written of, is exceedingly ſlighted. I think if the *devil* himſelf were in the *pulpit*, he could hardly tell how to bring men to a more low and ſlight eſteem of faith; to repreſent it more as a very trifle, or a quite needleſs thing, than theſe his agents have done. Some ‡ ſay, if a man believe with a particular explicit faith, *(i. e.)* if he actually aſſent to the ſcripture-truths once in a year, it is enough. Yea, and others ‖ think it too much to oblige people to believe once in twelve months; and, for their eaſe, tell them, if they believe once in twelve years it is ſufficient: and, leſt this ſhould be too great a taſk, others * affirm, that if it be done but once in their whole life, and that at the point of death too, it is enough, eſpecially for the rude and common people. Good God! what a doctrine is here! It was a ſaying long ago of Gregory (as I remember) *Malus miniſter eſt niſus diaboli*: A wicked miniſter is the devil's *gooſhawk*, that goes a birding for hell; and O what game have theſe hawks of hell among ſuch numerous flocks of people! O bleſs God, while you live, for your deliverance from Popery; and ſee that you prize the goſpel, and means of grace, you enjoy at an higher rate, leſt God bring you once more under that yoke, which neither you nor your fathers could bear.

Second uſe for examination.

Doth ſaving faith conſiſt in a due and right receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? then let me perſuade you to examine yourſelves in this great point of faith. Reflect ſolemnly upon the tranſactions that have been betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls: think cloſe on this ſubject of meditation.

If all you were worth in the world lay in one precious ſtone, and that ſtone were to be tried by the ſkilful *Lapidary*, whether it were true or falſe, whether it would fly, or endure under the ſmart ſtroke of his hammer, ſure your thoughts could not be unconcerned about the iſſue: Why all that you are worth in both worlds depends upon the truth of your faith, which is now to be tried.

O therefore read not theſe lines with a running careleſs eye,

‡ Petr. a S. Joſeph. ſum. Art. 1. p. 6.
‖ Bonacina, Tom. 2. in 1 precept. * Jo. San. Diſp. 41. n. 32.

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but seriously ponder the matter before you: You would be loth to put to sea, though it were but to cross the *channel*, in a rotten leaky bottom: And will you dare to venture into the ocean of eternity in a false rotten faith! God forbid: You know the Lord is coming to try every man's faith as by fire, and that we must stand or fall for ever with the sincerity or hypocrisy of our faith. Surely, you can never be too exact and careful about that, on which your whole estate depends, and that for ever.

Now there are three things upon which we should have a very tender and watchful eye, for the discovery of the sincerity of our faith, and they are,

$$\text{The } \left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{Antecedents} \\ \text{Concomitants} \\ \text{Consequents} \end{matrix} \right\} \text{ of Faith.}$$

As these are, so we must judge and reckon our faith to be. And, accordingly, they furnish us with three general marks or trials of faith.

First, If you would discern the sincerity of your faith, examine whether those *antecedents*, and preparative works of the spirit, were ever found in your souls, which use to introduce and usher it into the souls of God's elect: Such are illumination, conviction, self-despair, and earnest cries to God.

First, *Illumination* is a necessary antecedent to faith: You cannot believe till God hath opened your eyes to see your sin, your misery by sin, and your remedy in Jesus Christ alone: You find this act of the Spirit to be the first, in order both of nature and time, and introductive to all the rest, Acts xxvi. 18. "To "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Sa-"tan to God." As faith without *works* (which must be a *consequent* to it) is *dead*, so faith without *light*, which must be an *antecedent* to it, is *blind*: Faith is the *hand* by which Christ is received, but knowledge is the eye by which that hand is directed.

Well then, hath God opened your eyes to see sin, and misery in another manner than ever you saw them before? For certainly, if God have opened your eyes by saving illumination, you will find as great a difference betwixt your former and present apprehensions of sin and danger, as betwixt the painted *lion* upon the wall or sign-post, and the real living *lion* that meets you roaring in the way.

Secondly, *Conviction* is an *antecedent* to believing: Where this goes not before, no faith can follow after: The Spirit first convinces of sin, then of righteousness, John xvi. 8. So Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel:" Believe it, O man,

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that breaſt of thine muſt be wounded, that vain and frothy heart of thine muſt be pierced and ſtung with conviction, ſenſe, and ſorrow for ſin: Thou muſt have ſome ſick days, and reſtleſs nights for ſin, if ever thou rightly cloſe with Chriſt by faith. It is true, there is much difference found in the ſtrength, depth, and continuance of conviction, and ſpiritual troubles in converts; for ſure it is, the child of faith is not ordinarily born without ſome pangs. Conviction is the application of that light which God makes to ſhine in our minds, to our particular caſe and condition, by the conſcience; and ſure, when men come to ſee their miſerable, and ſad eſtate by a true light, it cannot but wound them, and that to the very heart.

Thirdly, *Self-deſpair*, or a total and abſolute loſs in our ſelves about deliverance, and the way of eſcape, either by our ſelves, or any other mere creature, doth, and muſt go before faith.

So it was with thoſe believers, Acts ii. 37. "Men and bre-"thren what ſhall we do?" They are the words of men at a total loſs: It is the voice of poor diſtreſſed ſouls, that ſaw themſelves in miſery, but knew not, ſaw not, nor could deviſe any way of eſcape from it, by any thing they could do for themſelves, or any other creature for them: And hence the apoſtle uſes that emphatical word, Gal. iii. 23. *συγκλειόμενοι*, (i. e.) *ſhut up to the faith*, (i. e.) as men beſieged, and diſtreſſed in a garriſon in time of a ſtorm, when the enemy pours in upon them through the breaches, and over-powers them: There is but one *ſally-port* or gate, at which they can eſcape, and to that they all throng, as deſpairing of life, if they take any other courſe. Juſt ſo do mens convictions beſiege them, diſtreſs them, beat them off from all their holds and intrenchments, and bring them to a pinching diſtreſs in themſelves, ſhutting them up to Chriſt as the only way to eſcape. Duties cannot ſave me, reformation cannot ſave me, nor angels, nor men can ſave me; there is no way but one, *Chriſt*, or condemnation for ever.

I thought once, that a little repentance, reformation, reſtitution, and a ſtricter life, might be a way to eſcape wrath to come, but I find the bed is too ſhort, and the covering too narrow: All is but loſs, dung, droſs, in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt; If I truſt to thoſe *Egyptian reeds*, they will not only fail me, but pierce and wound me too, I ſee no hope within the whole *Horizon* of ſenſe.

Fourthly, Hence come *vehement and earneſt cries to God* for faith, for Chriſt, for help from heaven, to tranſport the ſoul out of this dangerous condition, to that ſtrong rock of ſalvation; to bring it out of this furious, ſtormy ſea of trouble,

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where it is ready to wreck every moment, into that safe and quiet harbour, Christ.

O when a man shall see his misery and danger, and no way of escape but Christ, and that he hath no ability in himself to come to Christ, to open his heart thus to receive him, but that this work of faith is wholly supernatural, the operation of God; how will the soul return again, and again upon God, with such cries as in Mark ix. 24. "Lord, help my unbelief?" "Lord "enable me to come to Christ; give me Christ or I perish for "ever; What profit is there in my blood? Why should I die "in the sight and presence of a Saviour? O Lord, it is thine "own work, a most glorious work: Reveal thine Arm in this "work upon my soul, I pray thee; give me Christ, if thou "deny me bread; give me faith, if thou deny me breath. "It is more necessary that I believe, than that I live."

O *Reader*, reflect upon days and nights that are past, the places where thou hast been conversant: Where are the bedsides, or the secret corners where thou hast besieged heaven with such cries? If God have thus enlightened, convinced, distressed thy soul, and thus set thee a mourning after Christ, it will be one good sign that faith is come into thy soul; for here are certainly the *harbingers* and fore-runners of it, that ordinarily make way for faith into the souls of men.

Secondly, If you would be satisfied of the sincerity and truth of your faith, then examine what *concomitants* it is attended with in your souls. I mean, what frames and tempers your souls were in, at that time when you think you received Christ. For certainly, in those that receive Christ, (excepting those into whose hearts, God hath in a more still and insensible way infused faith betime, by his blessing upon pious education) such concomitant frames of spirit may be remarked, as these following.

First, The heart is deeply *serious*, and as much in earnest in this matter, as ever it was, or can be, about any thing in the world. This you see in that example of the Jaylor, Acts xvi. 29. "He came in trembling and astonished:" It is the most solemn and important matter that ever the soul had before it, in this world, or ever shall, or can have: How much are the hearts of men affected in their outward straits and distresses, about the concernments of the body? Their hearts are not a little concerned in such questions as these, "What shall I eat? "what shall I drink?" wherewithal shall I and mine be fed and cloathed? but certainly the straits that souls are in about salva-

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tion, must be allowed to be greater than these; and such question as that of the Jaylor's, "Sirs! What must I do to be "saved?" make deeper impressions upon the heart, than what shall I eat, or drink? Some, indeed, have their thoughts sinking deeper into these things than others: These thoughts lie with different degrees of weight upon men; but all are most solemnly and awfully concerned about their condition: All frothiness and frolics are gone, and the heart settles itself in the deepest earnest about its eternal state.

Secondly, The heart that receives Jesus Christ, is in a frame of deep humiliation and self-abasement. O, when a man begins to apprehend the first approaches of grace, pardon, and mercy by Jesus Christ to his soul: When a soul is convinced of its utter unworthiness, and desert of hell; and can scarce expect any thing else from the just and holy God, but damnation, how do the first dawnings of mercy melt and humble them! "O "Lord, what am I that thou shouldest feed me and preserve "me! that thou shouldest but for a few years spare me, and "forbear me! but that ever Jesus Christ should love me, and "give himself for me; that such a wretched sinner as I, should "obtain union with his person, pardon, peace and salvation "by his blood! Lord, whence is this to such a worm as I? "and will Christ indeed bestow himself upon me? shall so great "a blessing as Christ ever come within the arms of such a soul "as mine? will God in very deed be reconciled to me in his "Son? what, to me! to such an enemy as I have been! shall "my sins which are so many, so horrid, so much aggravated, "beyond the sins of most men, be forgiven? O what am I, "vile dust? base wretch, that ever God should do this for "me!" And how is that scripture fulfilled and made good, Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember, and be con-"founded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy "shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast "done, saith the Lord God." Thus, that poor broken-hearted believer stood behind Christ weeping, and washing his feet with tears, as one quite melted down, and overcome with the sense of mercy to such a vile sinner, Luke vii. 38.

Thirdly, The soul that receives Jesus Christ is in a *weary condition*, restless, and full of disquietness, neither able to bear the burden of sin, nor knowing how to be discharged from it, except Christ will give it ease, Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me," that is, believe in me, "you that are weary and heavy laden:" If they do not look into their own souls, they know there is no *safety*, and if they do, there's no *comfort*. O! the burdensome sense

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of ſin overweighs them; they are ready to fall, to ſink under it.

Fourthly, The ſoul that rightly receives Chriſt, is not only in a weary, but in a *longing condition*: never did the *hart* pant more earneſtly for the water-brooks: never did the *hireling* deſire the ſhadow: never did a *condemned perſon* long for a pardon more than the ſoul longs after Jeſus Chriſt. O, ſaid David, that one would give me of the water of the well of Bethlehem to drink. O, ſaith the poor humbled ſinner, that one would give me of the opened fountain of the blood of Chriſt to drink! O for one drop of that precious blood! O for one encouraging ſmile from Chriſt! O now were ten thouſand worlds at my command, and Chriſt to be bought, how freely would I lay them all down to purchaſe him! but he is the *gift* of God. O that God would give me Chriſt, if I ſhould go in rags, and hunger and thirſt all my days in this world!

Fifthly, The ſoul in the time of its cloſing with, or receiving Chriſt, is in a *ſtate of conflict*: It hangs between hopes and fears, encouragements and diſcouragements, which occaſions many a ſad ſtand and pauſe in the way to Chriſt; ſometimes the number and nature of its ſins diſcourage it, then the riches and freeneſs of the grace of Chriſt, erects his hopes again: there's little hope, ſaith unbelief; nay, it is utterly impoſſible, ſaith Satan, that ever ſuch a wretch as thou ſhouldſt find mercy; now the hands hang down. O but then there's a neceſſity, an abſolute neceſſity; I have not the choice of two, but am ſhut up to one way of deliverance: others have found mercy, and the invitation is to all that are weary, and to all that are athirſt: he ſaith, he that cometh to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out; now new hopes inſpire the ſoul, and the hands that did hang down are again ſtrengthened.

Theſe are the *concomitant frames* that accompany faith.

3. *Mark*. Laſtly, Examine the *conſequents* and effects of faith, if you would be ſatisfied of the truth and ſincerity of it: And ſuch are,

Firſt, *Evangelical meltings*, and ingenuous thawings of the heart under the apprehenſions of grace and mercy: Zech. xii. 10. "They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and ſhall "mourn."

Secondly, *Love to Chriſt, his ways and people*, Gal. v. 6 *Faith worketh by love*, (i. e.) it repreſents the love of God, and then makes uſe of the ſweetneſs of it by way of argument, to conſtrain the ſoul to all acts of obedience, wherein it may teſtify the reality of its love to God and Chriſt.

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Thirdly, Heart *purity*, Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by "faith:" It doth not only cleanse the *hands* but the *heart*: No principle in man, besides faith, can do this: Morality may hide corruption, but faith only *purifies* the heart from it.

Fourthly, Obedience to the commands of Christ, Rom. xvi. 26. the very name of faith is called upon obedience; for it accepts Christ as Lord, and urges upon the soul the most powerful arguments in the world to draw it to obedience.

In a word, let the poor doubting believer, that questions his faith, reflect upon those things that are unquestionable in his own experience, which being well considered, will greatly tend to his satisfaction in this point.

It is very doubtful to you whether you believe, but yet in the mean while, it may be past doubt, (being a matter of clear experience) that you have been deeply convinced of sin, struck off from all carnal props and refuges, made willing to accept Jesus Christ upon what terms soever you might enjoy him; you doubt whether Christ be yours, but it is past doubt that you have a most high and precious esteem of Christ, that you heartily long for him, that you prize and love all, whether persons or things, that bear his image; that nothing in the world would please your hearts like a transformation into his likeness; that you had rather your souls should be filled with his spirit, than your houses with gold and silver. It is doubtful whether Christ be yours, but it is past doubt that one smile from Christ, one token of his love would do you more good than all the honours and smiles of the world; and nothing so grieves you, as your grieving him by sin doth: You dare not say that you have received him, nor can you deny but that you have had many sick days and nights for him; that you have gone into many secret places with earning bowels after him; whether he be yours or not, you cannot tell; but that you are resolved to be his, that you can tell; whether he will save you is but a doubt, but that you resolve to lie at his feet, and wait only on him, and never look to another for salvation, is no doubt.

Well, well; poor pensive soul, if it be so, arise, lift up thy dejected head, take thine own Christ into thy arms. These are undoubted signs of a real closure with Christ; thou makest thyself poor, and yet hast great riches: Such things as these are not found in them that despise and reject Christ by unbelief.

3. *Use of exhortation.*

3. *Use.* This point is likewise very improveable by way of exhortation, and that both to

Unbelievers and Believers.

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Firſt, To unbelievers, who from hence muſt be preſſed, as ever they expect to ſee the face of God in peace, to receive Jeſus Chriſt, as he is now offered to them in the goſpel. This is the very ſcope of the goſpel, I ſhall therefore preſs it by three great conſiderations, *viz.*

Firſt, What is in Chriſt whom you are to receive.

Secondly, What is in the offer of Chriſt by the goſpel.

Thirdly, What is in the rejecting of that offer.

Firſt motive.

Firſt, Conſider well what is in Chriſt, whom I perſuade you this day to receive: Did you know what is in Chriſt, you would never neglect or reject him as you do: For,

Firſt, "God is in Chriſt," 2 Cor. v. 19. the Deity hath choſen to dwell in his fleſh; he is "God manifeſt in fleſh," 1 Tim iii. 16. a Godhead dwelling in fleſh, is the world's wonder: ſo that in receiving Chriſt, you receive God himſelf.

Secondly, The authority of God is in Chriſt, Exod. xxiii. 21. "My name is in him: Him hath God the Father ſealed," John vi. 27. he hath the commiſſion, the great ſeal of heaven to redeem and ſave you: All power in heaven and earth is given to him, Matth. xxviii. 18. he comes in his Father's name to you, as well as in his own name.

Thirdly, The wiſdom of God is in Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 24. "Chriſt the wiſdom of God:" yea, "in him are hid all the "treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3. Never did the wiſdom of God diſplay itſelf before the eyes of angels and men, as it hath done in Chriſt. The "angels deſire to look in-"to it," 1 Pet. 1. 12. yet they are not ſo much concerned in the project and deſign of this wiſdom in redemption, as you are.

Fourthly, The *fulneſs of the Spirit* is in Chriſt; yea, it fills him ſo as it never did, nor will fill any creature, John iii. 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure to him:" all others have their limits, ſtints, and meaſures; ſome more, ſome leſs; but the Spirit is in Chriſt without meaſure. O how lovely and deſirable are thoſe men that have a large meaſure of the Spirit in them! but he is anointed with the Spirit of holineſs, *above all his fellows*, Pſal. xlv. 2, 7. Whatever grace is found in all the ſaints, which makes them deſirable and lovely, wiſdom in one, faith in another, patience in a third; they all centre in Chriſt as the rivers do in the ſea, *que faciunt diviſa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt.*

Fifthly, The righteouſneſs of God is in Chriſt, by which only a poor guilty ſinner can be juſtified before God, 2 Cor. v. 21. we are "made the righteouſneſs of God in him:" he is יהוה צדקנו

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"the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. *i. e.* "* the author "of our righteousness," or the Lord who justifies us; by that name he will be known, and called by his people, than which none can be sweeter.

Sixthly, The love of God is in Christ; yea, the very yearning bowels of divine love are in him: What is Christ, but the love of God wrapt up in flesh and blood? 1 John iv. 9, 10. "In this "was manifested the love of God towards us;" and herein is love, that God sent his Son: this is the highest flight that ever divine love made; and higher than this it cannot mount. O love, unparalleled and admirable!

Seventhly, The mercies and compassions of God are all in Christ, Jude ver. 21. Mercy is the thing that poor sinners want, it is that they cry for at the last gasp; it is the only thing that can do them good. O what would they give to find mercy in that great day? Why, if you receive Christ, you shall with him receive mercy; but out of him, there is no mercy to be expected from the hands of God; for God will never exercise mercy to the prejudice of his justice; and it is in Christ that justice and mercy meet and embrace each other.

Eighthly, To conclude, The salvations of God are in Christ, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Christ is the *door* of salvation, and faith is the *key* that opens that door to men. If you therefore believe not, *i. e.* if you so receive not Jesus Christ, as God hath offered him, you exclude yourselves from all hopes of salvation. The devils have as much ground to expect salvation as you: you see what is in Christ to induce you to receive him.

Motive 2.

Next, I beseech you, consider what there is in the offer of Christ to sinners, to induce you to receive him. Consider well to *whom*, and *how* Christ is offered in the gospel.

First, To *whom* he is offered; not to the fallen angels, but to you; they lie in chains of darkness, Jude 6. as he took not their nature, so he designs not their recovery; and therefore will have no treaty at all with them: but he is offered to you, creatures of an inferior rank and order by nature; nor is he offered to the *damned*, the treaty of peace is ended with them: Christ will never make them another tender of salvation; nor is he offered to millions of millions as good as you, now living in the world. The sound of Christ, and salvation is not come to their ears, but he is offered to you by the special favour and

* *Autorem justitiæ nostræ.* Calv. in loc.

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bounty of heaven; and will you not receive him? O! then how will the devils, the damned, and the Heathens, upbraid your folly! and say, had we had one such tender of mercy, of which you have had thousands, we would never have been now in this place of torments.

Secondly, Consider how Christ is offered to you, and you shall find that he is offered,

1. Freely, *as the gift of God*, to your souls; you are not to *purchase* him, but only to *receive* him. Isa lv. 1. "Ho, every "one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath "no money, let him come," &c.

2. Christ is offered importunately, by repeated intreaties. 2 Cor. v. 20. "As though God did beseech you, we pray you "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." O! what amazing condescension is here in the God of mercy! God now beseeches you, will you not yield to the intreaties of your God? O then what wilt thou say for thyself, when God will not hear thee, when thou shalt intreat and cry for mercy? Which brings us to

Motive 3. Consider the sin and danger that there is in refusing, or neglecting the present offers of Christ in the gospel, and surely there is much sin in it; the very malignity of sin, and the sum of all misery. lies here; for in refusing Christ,

1. You put the greatest contempt and slight upon all the attributes of God that it is possible for a creature to do; God hath made his justice, his mercy, his wisdom, and all his attributes, to shine in their brightest glory in Christ. Never was there such a display of the glory of God made to the world in any other way.

O then, what is it to reject and despise Jesus Christ, but to offer the greatest affront to the glory of God, that it is possible for men to put upon it?

2. You hereby frustrate and evacuate the very design, and importance of the gospel to yourselves; you "receive the grace "of God in vain," 2 Cor. vi. 1. As good, yea, better had it been for you, that Christ had never come into the world, or, if he had, that your lot had fallen in the dark places of the earth, where you had never heard his name; yea, good had it been for that man if he had never been born.

3. Hereby a man murthers his own soul. "I said therefore "unto you, that you shall die in your sins; for if ye believe "not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," John viii. 24. Unbelief is self-murder; you are guilty of the blood of your

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own ſouls: life and ſalvation was offered you, and you rejected it. Yea,

4. The refuſing of Chriſt by unbelief, will aggravate your damnation, above all others that periſh in ignorance of Chriſt. O 'twill be more tolerable for Heathens, than for you; the greateſt meaſures of wrath are reſerved to puniſh the worſt of ſinners, and among ſinners, none will be found worſe than unbelievers.

Seeondly, To believers, this point is very uſeful to perſuade them to divers excellent duties; among which, I ſhall ſingle out two principal ones, *viz.*

1. To bring up their faith of acceptance, to the faith of aſſurance.

2. To bring up their converſations to the principles and rules of faith.

1. You that have received Jeſus Chriſt truly, give yourſelves no reſt till you are fully ſatisfied that you have done ſo; acceptance brings you to heaven hereafter, but aſſurance will bring heaven into your ſouls now. O what a life of delight and pleaſure doth the aſſured believer live! What pleaſure is it to him to look back and conſider where once he was, and where he now is? To look forward, and conſider where he now is, and where ſhortly he ſhall be! I was in my ſins, I am now in Chriſt: I am in Chriſt now, I ſhall be with Chriſt, and that for ever, after a few days. I was upon the brink of hell, I am now upon the very borders of heaven; I ſhall be, in a little while, among the innumerable company of angels and glorified ſaints, bearing part with them in the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb, for evermore.

And why may not you, that have received Chriſt, receive the comfort of your union with him? There be all the grounds and helps of aſſurance furniſhed to your hand; there is a real union betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls, which is the very ground-work of aſſurance. † You have the ſcriptures before you which contain the ſigns of faith, and the very things within you that anſwer thoſe ſigns in the word. So you read, and ſo, juſt ſo, you might feel it in your own hearts, would you attend to your own experience. The Spirit of God is ready to ſeal you, it is his office and his delight ſo to do. O therefore give diligence to this work, attend the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, and of your own hearts more, and grieve not the holy Spirit of God, and you may arrive to the very deſire of your hearts.

† The power and conſtancy of a firm hope reigns in us. *Cypr. Serm. de patientia.*

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2. Bring up your converſations to the excellent principles and rules of faith; "As you have received Chriſt Jeſus the "Lord, ſo walk in him," Col. ii 6. Live as you believe; you received Chriſt ſincerely in your firſt cloſe with him, O maintain the like ſerioufneſs and ſincerity in all your ways, to the end of your lives: you received him intirely and *undividedly* at firſt, let there be no exceptions againſt any of his commands afterward. You received him *excluſively* to all others, ſee that you watch againſt all ſelf-righteouſneſs, and ſelf-conceitedneſs now, and mingle nothing of your own with his blood, whatever gifts or enlargements in duty God ſhall give you afterwards.

You received him *adviſedly* at firſt, weighing and conſidering the ſelf-denying terms upon which he was offered to you; O ſhew that it was real, and that you ſee no cauſe to repent the bargain, whatever you ſhall meet with in the ways of Chriſt, and duty afterwards: convince the world of your conſtancy and chearfulneſs in all your ſufferings for Chriſt, that you are ſtill of the ſame mind you were, and that Chriſt, with his croſs, Chriſt, with a priſon, Chriſt, with the greateſt afflictions, is worthy of all acceptation: "As ye have received him, ſo walk ye "in him." Let him be as ſweet, as lovely, as precious to you now, as he was the firſt moment you received him; yea, let your love to him, delights in him, and ſelf-denial for him, increaſe with your acquaintance with him, day by day.

Uſe of direction.

Uſe. Laſtly, I will cloſe all with a few words of *directions* to all that are made willing to receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and ſore it is but need that help were given to poor Chriſtians; in this matter, it is a time of trouble, fear, and great temptation; miſtakes are eaſily made, and of dangerous conſequence; attend heedfully, therefore, to a few directions.

Direction 1. Firſt, In your receiving Chriſt, *beware you do not miſtake the means, for the end.* Many do ſo, but ſee you do not. Prayer, ſermons, reformations, are means to bring you to Chriſt, but they are not Chriſt; to cloſe with thoſe duties is one thing, and to cloſe with Chriſt is another thing. If I go into a *boat*, my deſign is not to dwell there, but to be carried to the place whereon I deſire to be landed: ſo it muſt be in this caſe, all your duties muſt land you upon Chriſt; they are means to bring you to Chriſt.

Direct. 2. Secondly, *See that you receive not Chriſt for a preſent help, but for your everlaſting portion.* Many do ſo; they will enquire after Chriſt, pray for Chriſt, caſt themſelves (in

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their way) upon Christ, and the satisfaction of his blood, when the efficacy and terror of conscience is upon them, and they feel the sting of guilt within them; but as soon as the storm is over, and the rod that conscience shaked over them laid by, there's no more talk of Christ then: alas! it was not Christ, but quietness, that they sought; beware of mistaking peace for Christ.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, *In receiving Christ come empty handed unto him:* "believing on him who justifies the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. and know that the deepest sense of your own vileness, emptiness, and unworthiness, is the best frame of heart that can accompany you to Christ. Many persons stand off from Christ for want of fit qualifications; they are not prepared for Christ as they should be, *i. e.* they would not come naked and empty, but have something to commend them to the Lord Jesus for acceptance. O! this is the pride of mens hearts, and the snare of the Devil. Let him that hath no money come: You are not to come to Christ because you are qualified, but that you may be qualified with whatever you want; and the best qualification you can bring with you, is a deep sense that you have no worth nor excellency at all in you.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, *In receiving Christ, beware of dangerous delays.* O follow on that work till it be finished. You read of some that are almost persuaded, and others not far from the kingdom of God; O take heed of what the prophet says, Hosea xiii. 13. Delays here are full of danger, life is uncertain, so are means of grace too. The man-slayer needed no motives to quicken his flight to the city of refuge.

Direct. 5. Fifthly, *See that you receive all Christ, with all your heart.* To receive all Christ, is to receive his person cloathed with all his offices; and to receive him with all your heart, is to receive him into your understanding, will, and affections, Acts viii. 37. As there is nothing in Christ that may be refused, so there is nothing in you from which he must be excluded.

Direct. 6. Lastly, Understand that the opening of your hearts to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a work done by any power of your own, but the arm of the Lord is revealed therein, Isa. liii. 1. It is therefore your duty and interest to be daily at the feet of God, pouring out your souls to him in secret, for abilities to believe. And so much, as to our actual reception of Christ.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

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SERMON VIII.

Setting forth the Believer's Fellowship with CHRIST, the next End of his Application to them.

PSALM xlv. 7. ——*Therefore God thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

THE method of grace in uniting souls with Jesus Christ, hath been opened in the former discourses; thus doth the Spirit (whose office it is) make application of Christ to God's elect, the result and next fruit whereof is *communion* with Christ in his graces and benefits. Our *mystical union* is the very groundwork, and foundation of our sweet, soul-enriching *communion*, and participation of spiritual privileges; we are first ingrafted into Christ, and then suck the sap and fatness of the root: first married to the person of Christ, then endowed and instated in the privileges and benefits of Christ. This is my proper work to open at this time, and from this scripture.

"The words read, are a part of that excellent *song of love* *, "that heavenly *Epithalamium*, wherein the spiritual espousals "of Christ and the church are figuratively, and very elegantly, "celebrated and shadowed. The subject matter of this psalm "is the very same with the whole book of the Canticles;" and in this psalm, under the figure of king Solomon, and the daughter of Egypt, whom he espoused, the spiritual espousals of Christ and the church are set forth and represented to us. Among many rapturous and elegant expressions in praise of this glorious bridegroom, Christ, this is one, which you have before you: "God thy fellow hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness a- "bove thy fellows:" (*i. e.*) enriched and filled thee, in a singular and peculiar manner, with the fulness of the Spirit, whereby thou art consecrated to thy office: and by reason whereof thou outshinest and excellest all the saints, who are thy *fellows* or copartners in these graces. So that in these words you have two parts; *viz. First*, The saints *dignity*, and *Secondly*, Christ's *pre-eminency*.

First, The saints *dignity*, which consists in this, that they

* *Hic Psalmus propheticus est, continetque Epilathamium quo Christi cum ecclesia nuptiæ celebrantur, idemque habet argumentum quod canticum canticorum ejusque videtur esse epitome.* Coccejus in loc.

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are Christ's *fellows*. The Hebrew word † is very full and copious, and is translated "consorts, companions, copartners, "partakers: or, as ours read it, *fellows*:" (i. e) such as are partakers with him in the anointing of the Spirit, who do, in their measure, receive the same Spirit, every Christian being anointed, *modo sibi proportionato*, with the same grace, and dignified with the same titles, 1 John ii. 27. Rev. i. 6. Christ and the saints are in common one with another: doth the spirit of holiness dwell in him? So it doth in them too. Is Christ *king* and *priest*? Why, so are they too by the grace of union with him. He hath made us kings and priests to God, and his Father. This is the saints dignity to be Christ's fellows, consorts, or copartners; so that look, whatever spiritual grace or excellency is in Christ, it is not appropriated to himself, but they do share with him: for indeed he was filled with the fulness of the Spirit, for their sakes and use: as the sun is filled with light, not to shine to itself, but to others; so is Christ with grace. And therefore, some translate the text, not *prae consortibus*, above thy fellows; but *propter consortes*, for thy fellows ‡. Making Christ the first receptacle of grace, who first and immediately is filled from the fountain, the Godhead: but it is for his people, who receive and derive from him, according to their proportion.

This is a great truth, and the dignity of the saints lies chiefly in their partnership with Christ, though our translation, *above thy fellows*, suits best, both with the importance of the word, and scope of the place.

Secondly, But then, whatever *dignity* is ascribed herein to the saints, there is, and still must be, a *pre-eminency* acknowledged, and ascribed to Christ: if they are anointed with the spirit of grace, much more abundantly in Christ: "God thy God hath "anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

By the *oil of gladness*, understand the spirit of holiness, compared here with oil, of which there was a double use under the law, *viz.* a *civil*, and a *sacred* use. It had a sacred and a solemn use, in the inauguration and consecration of the Jewish kings and high-priests; it had also a civil, and common use, for the anointing their bodies ‖, to make their limbs more agile,

† חבריך *Consortes, participes, sodales, socios. Vox Hebræa quodcunque societatis sive communionis genus significat.* Mun.

‡ Rivet.

‖ Oil itself is pure and clear; which supplies and feeds the flame, with

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expedite, and nimble; to make the face shine, for it gave a lustre, freshness, and liveliness to the countenance. It was also used in lamps, to feed and maintain the fire, and give them light. These were the principal uses of oil. Now, upon all these accounts, it excellently expresseth, and, figuratively, represents to us the spirit of grace poured forth upon Christ and his people. For,

First, By the spirit poured out upon him, he was prepared for, and consecrated to his offices; he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, Acts x. 38.

Secondly, As this precious oil runs down from Christ, the head, to the borders of his garments, I mean, as it is shed upon believers, so it exceedingly beautifies their faces, and makes them shine with glory.

Thirdly, It renders them apt, expedite, and ready to every good work; *Non tardat uncta rota.*

Fourthly, It kindles and maintains the flame of divine love in their souls, and, like a lamp, enlightens their minds in the knowledge of spiritual things; the anointing teaches them.

"And this oil is here called *the oil of gladness* †, because "it is the cause of all joy and gladness to them that are anoint-"ed with it:" Oil was used (as you heard before) at the instalment of sovereign princes, which was the day of the gladness of their hearts; and, among the common people, it was liberally used at all their *festivals*, but never upon their days of mourning. Whence it becomes excellently expressive of the nature and use of the spirit of grace, who is the cause and author of all joy in believers, John xvii. 13.

And with this oil of gladness is Christ said to be anointed *above his fellows*, *i. e.* to have a far greater share of the spirit of grace than they: "For to every one of the saints is given grace "according to the measure of the gift of Christ," Eph. iv. 7. But to him the Spirit is not given by measure, John iii. 34.

fuel; hence the metaphor of anointing with oil used in scripture, frequently signifies the internal illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit, and the communication of the true knowledge of God, and suitable affections of soul to it. *Moller. on the place.*

† Ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως *dicitur id quod causam dat summi gaudii.* Grot. in Heb. i. 9. Αὐτος ὑμιν αἰτιος της δωρεας του πνευματος, και συμπαπαυμενος καθ ὁσον ἀνθρωπος το πνευμα και ἡμιν μεταδιδωσι. *i. e.* He is the cause of the gift of the Spirit to you, and being anointed with the Spirit as he is man, he communicates the Spirit to us also. *Œcum.*

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" It hath pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs " dwell," Col. i. 19. and " of his fulneſs we all receive grace " for grace," John i. 16. The ſaints partake with him, and through him, in the ſame ſpirit of grace, for which reaſon they are his fellows; but all the grace poured out upon believers, comes exceeding ſhort of that which God hath poured out upon Jeſus Chriſt. The words being thus opened, give us this note.

Doct. *That all true believers have a real communion, or fellowſhip, with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

From the ſaints union with Chriſt, there doth naturally, and immediately, reſult a moſt ſweet and bleſſed communion or fellowſhip with him in graces and ſpiritual privileges, Eph. i. 3. " Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who " hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places " (or things) in Chriſt: in giving us his Son, he freely gives us " all things," Rom. viii. 32. So in 1 Cor. i. 30. " Of him are ye " in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righte- " ouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption." And once more, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. " All are yours, and ye are Chriſt's." What Chriſt is, and hath, is theirs by communication to them, or improvement for them; and this is very evidently implied in all thoſe excellent ſcripture metaphors, by which our union with Chriſt is figured and ſhadowed out to us: as the *marriage-union* betwixt a man and his wife, Eph. v. 31, 32. You know that this conjugal union gives the wife intereſt in the eſtate and honour of the huſband, be ſhe never ſo meanly deſcended in herſelf ‡: The *natural union* betwixt the head and members of the body, by which alſo the myſtical union of Chriſt and believers is ſet forth, 1 Cor. xii. 12. excellently illuſtrates this fellowſhip or communion betwixt them: for from Chriſt " the whole bo- " dy fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every " joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the " meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body," as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Eph. iv. 16. The union betwixt the graff and the ſtock, which is another emblem of our union with Chriſt, John xv. 1. imports, in like manner, this communion, or partnerſhip betwixt Chriſt and the ſaints; for no ſooner doth the graff take hold of the ſtock, but the vital ſap of the ſtock is communicated to the graff, and both live by one and the ſame juice.

‡ *Ubi ego Cajus tu Caja. Uxor clareſcit in radiis mariti.*

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Now, that the ſcope of this diſcourſe be not miſtaken, let the reader *know* that I am not here treating of the ſaints communion, or fellowſhip with God in his duties, as in prayer, hearing, ſacraments, *&c.* but of that intereſt which believers have in the good things of Chriſt, by virtue of the myſtical union betwixt them through faith: there is a twofold communion of the ſaints with Chriſt.

The firſt is an *act*.

The ſecond is a *ſtate*.

There is an actual fellowſhip, or communion the ſaints have with Chriſt in holy duties, wherein Chriſtians let forth their hearts to God by deſires, and God lets forth his comforts and refreſhments again into their hearts; they open their mouths wide, and he fills them: this communion with God is the joy and comfort of a believer's life, but I am not to ſpeak of that here. It is not any act of communion, but the ſtate of communion, from which all acts of communion flow, and upon which they all depend, that I am now to treat of; which is nothing elſe but the joint intereſt that Chriſt and the ſaints have in the ſame things: as when a ſhip, an houſe, or eſtate, is among many partners, or joints heirs, every one of them hath a right to it, and intereſt in it, though ſome of them have a greater, and others a leſſer part. So it is betwixt Chriſt and his people; there is a κοινωνια, *(i. e.)* a fellowſhip or joint intereſt betwixt them, upon which ground they are called *coheirs with Chriſt*, Rom viii. 17. This communion or participation in Chriſt's benefits, depends upon the hypoſtatical union of our nature, and the myſtical union of our perſons with the Son of God: in the firſt he partakes with us, in the ſecond we partake with him: the former is the remote, the latter the next cauſe thereof.

In the explication of this point, I ſhall ſpeak to theſe four things:

1. What are thoſe things in which Chriſt and believers have fellowſhip.
2. By what means they come to have ſuch a fellowſhip with Chriſt.
3. How great a dignity this is to have fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt.
4. And then apply the whole in divers practical inferences.

Firſt, What are thoſe things in which Chriſt and believers have fellowſhip, to which I muſt ſpeak both *negatively* and *poſitively*.

1. *Negatively*, The ſaints have no fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt in thoſe things that belong to him as God; ſuch as his

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consubstantiality, coequality, and coeternity with the Father: It is the blasphemy of the wicked *Familists* to talk of being godded into God, and christed into Christ. Neither men or angels partake in these things; they are the proper and incommunicable glory of the Lord Jesus.

2. The saints have no communion or fellowship in the honour and glory of his mediatory works, *viz.* his satisfaction to God, or redemption of the elect. It is true, we have the benefit and fruit of his mediation and satisfaction; his righteousness also is imputed to us for our personal justification, but we share not in the least with Christ in the glory of this work: nor have we an inherent righteousness in us as Christ hath; nor can we justify and save others as Christ doth: we have nothing to do with his peculiar honour, and praise in these things. Tho' we have the benefit of being saved, we may not pretend to the honour of being Saviours, as Christ is to ourselves or others, "‖ Christ's righteousness is not made ours as to its universal "value, but as to our particular necessity; nor is it imputed to "us as to so many causes of salvation to others, but as to so "many subjects to be saved by it ourselves."

Secondly, But then there are many glorious and excellent things, which are in common betwixt Christ and believers, tho' in them all he hath the pre-eminence, he shines in the fulness of them, as the sun, and we with a borrowed and lesser light, but of the same kind and nature as the stars. Some of these I shall particularly, and briefly, unfold in the following particulars.

First, Believers have communion with Christ in his *names* and *titles*; they are called Christians from Christ, Eph. iii. 15. from him the whole family in heaven and earth is named: this is that worthy name the apostle speaks of, James ii. 7. He is the Son of God, and they also, by their union with him, have power or authority to become the Sons of God, John i. 12. He is the heir of all things, and they are joint-heirs with him, Rom. viii. 17. He is both king and priest, and he hath made them kings and priests, Rev. i. 6. But they do not only partake in the names and titles, but this communion consists in things as well as titles. And therefore,

Secondly, They have communion with him in his *righteousness*, (i. e.) the righteousness of Christ is made theirs, 2 Cor. v. 21. and he is "the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. It

‖ *Justitia Christi fit nostra, non quoad universalem valorem sed particularem necessitatem, et imputatur nobis non ut causis salvationis, sed ut subjectis salvandis.* Bradshaw de justificatione.

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is true, the righteousness of Christ is not inherent in us, as it is in him; but it is ours by imputation, Rom. iv. 5, 11. and our union with him is the ground of the imputation of his righteousness to us, 2 Cor. v. 21. "We are made the righteousness "of God in him," Phil. iii. 9. for Christ and believers are considered as one person, in construction of law; as a man and his wife, a *debtor* and *surety*, are one: and so his payment or satisfaction is in our name, or upon our account.

Now, this is a most inestimable privilege, the very ground of all our other blessings and mercies. O what a benefit is this to a poor sinner, that owes to God infinite more than he is ever able to pay, by doing or suffering; to have such a rich treasure of merit as lies in the obedience of Christ, to discharge, in one entire payment, all his debts to the last farthing? "Surely shall one say, "in the Lord I have righteousness," Isa. xlv. 24. even as a poor woman that owes more than she is worth, in one moment is discharged of all her obligations, by her marriage to a wealthy man.

Thirdly, Believers have communion with Christ in his holiness or sanctification, for of God he is made unto them, not only righteousness, but sanctification also; and as in the former privilege they have a stock of merit in the blood of Christ to justify them, so here they have the Spirit of Christ to sanctify them, 1 Cor. i. 30. and therefore we are said of his fulness to receive "grace for grace," John i. 16. (*i. e.*) say some, grace upon grace, manifold graces, or abundance of grace; or grace for grace, that is, grace answerable to grace: as in the seal and wax, there is line for line, and cut for cut, exactly answerable to each other; or grace for grace, that is, say others, the free grace of God in Christ, for the sanctification or filling of our souls with grace; be it in which sense it will, it shews the communion believers have with Jesus Christ in grace and holiness. Now, holiness is the most precious thing in the world, it is the image of God, and chief excellency of man: it is our evidence for glory, yea, and the first-fruits of glory. In Christ dwells the fulness of grace, and from him, our head, it is derived and communicated to us: thus he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, Heb. ii. 11. You would think it no small privilege to have bags of gold to go to, and enrich yourselves with, and yet that were but a very trifle in comparison to have Christ's righteousness and holiness to go to for your justification, and sanctification. More particularly,

Fourthly, Believers have communion with Christ *in his death*; they die with him, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ,"

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(i. e.) the death of Christ hath a real killing and mortifying influence upon the lusts, and corruptions of my heart and nature: true it is, he died for sin one way, and we die to sin another way: he died to *expiate* it, we die to it, when we *mortify* it: the death of Christ is the death of sin in believers: and this is a very glorious privilege; for the death of sin is the life of your souls: if sin do not die in you by mortification, you must die for sin by eternal damnation: if Christ had not died, the Spirit of God, by which you now mortify the deeds of the body, could not have been given unto you; then you must have lived vassals to your sins, and died at last in your sins; but the fruit, efficacy, and benefit of Christ's death is your's for the killing those sins in you, which else had been your ruin.

Fifthly, Believers have communion with Christ in *his life, and resurrection* from the dead: as he rose from the dead, so do they; and that by the power and influence of his *vivification* and resurrection: it is the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. our spiritual life is from Christ, Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he "quickned who were dead in trespasses and sins:" and hence Christ is said to live in the believer, Gal. ii. 20. "Now, I live, "yet not I; but Christ liveth in me:" and it is no small privilege to partake of the very life of Christ, which is the most excellent life that ever any creature can live; yet such is the happiness of all the saints, the life of Christ is manifest in them, and such a life as shall never see death.

Sixthly, To conclude, believers have fellowship with Jesus Christ *in his glory*, which they shall enjoy in heaven with him: they "shall be ever with the Lord," 1 Thes. iv. 17. and that is not all, (though, as one saith, it were a kind of heaven but to look through the key-hole, and have but a glimpse of Christ's blessed face) but they shall partake of the glory which the Father hath given him; for so he speaks, John xvii. 22, 24. and more particularly, they shall sit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. and when he comes to judge the world, he will come to be glorified in the saints, 2 Thes. i. 10. So that you see what glorious and inestimable things are, and will be in common betwixt Christ and the saints. His titles, his righteousness, his holiness, his death, his life, his glory. I do not say that Christ will make any saint equal with him in glory; that is impossible, he will be known from all the saints in heaven, as the sun is distinguished from the stars; but they shall partake of his glory, and be filled with his joy there; and thus you see what those things are that the saints have fellowship with Christ in.

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Secondly, Next I would open the way and means by which we come to have fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt, in theſe excellent privileges; and this I ſhall do, briefly, in the following poſitions.

Poſition 1.

Firſt, *No man hath fellowſhip with Chriſt in any ſpecial ſaving privilege by nature, howſoever it be cultivated or improved; but only by faith uniting him to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: It is not the privilege of our firſt, but ſecond birth.* * This is plain from John i. 12, 13. "But to as many as received him, to them gave "he power to become the ſons of God, even to as many as be-"lieved on his name, who are born not of fleſh, nor of blood, "nor of the will of man, but of God." We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii 3. we have fellowſhip with Satan in ſin and miſery: the wild branch hath no communication of the ſweetneſs and fatneſs of a more noble and excellent root, until it be ingrafted upon it, and have immediate union and coalition with it, John xv. 1, 2.

Poſition 2.

Believers themſelves have not an equal ſhare, one with another, in all the benefits and privileges of their union with Chriſt, but in ſome there is an equality, and in others an inequality; according to the meaſure and gift of Chriſt, to every one.

In juſtification they are all equal: the weak and the ſtrong believer are alike juſtified, becauſe it is one and the ſame perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is applied to the one and to the other, ſo that there are no different degrees of juſtification, but all that believe are juſtified from all things, Acts xiii. 39. and "there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Je-"ſus," Rom. viii. 1. be they never ſo weak in faith, or defective in degrees of grace. But there is apparent difference in the meaſures of their ſanctification, ſome are ſtrong men, and others are babes in Chriſt, 1 Cor. iii. 1. The faith of ſome flouriſhes and grows exceedingly, 2 Theſ. i. 3. the things that are in others are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. It is a plain caſe, that there is great variety found in the degrees of grace, and comfort among them that are jointly intereſted in Chriſt, and equally juſtified by him.

* The truly faithful only are members of Chriſt, not as they are men, but as they are Chriſtians; not by their firſt, but ſecond birth. *Polan. Syntag. book 6. chap. 35.*

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Position 3.

The saints have not fellowship and communion with Christ, in the fore mentioned benefits and privileges by one and the same medium, but by various mediums and ways, according to the nature of the benefits, in which they participate.

For instance, they have partnership and communion with Christ, as hath been said, in his righteousness, holiness, and glory, but they receive these distinct blessings by divers mediums of communion: we have communion with Christ in his righteousness, by the way of imputation; we partake of his holiness, by the way of infusion; and of his glory in heaven, by the beatifical vision. Our justification is a relative change, our sanctification a real change, our glorification a perfect change, by redemption, from all the remains both of sin and misery.

Thus hath the Lord appointed several blessings for believers in Christ, and several channels of conveying them from him to us; by imputed righteousness, we are freed from the guilt of sin; by imparted holiness, we are freed from the dominion of sin, and by our glorification with Christ, we are freed from all the relics and remains both of sin and misery, let in by sin upon our natures.

Position 4.

That Jesus Christ imparts to all believers, all the spiritual blessings that he is filled with, and withholds none from any that have union with him; be these blessings never so great, or they that receive them never so weak, mean, and contemptible in outward respects, Gal. iii. 27. "Ye are all the children of God by faith "in Jesus Christ" The salvation that comes by Christ is stiled the *common salvation*, Jude 3. and heaven the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, "(saith the apostle) circumcision nor uncircumsion, Barbarian, "Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all," Col. iii. 11. He means, there is no privilege in the one to commend them to God, and no want of any thing in the other to debar them from God; let men have or want outward excellencies, as beauty, honour, riches, nobility, gifts of the mind, sweetness of nature, and all such like ornaments, what is that to God? He looks not at these things, but respects them, and communicates his favour to them as they are in Christ: *He is all, and in all.* The gifts and blessings of the Spirit are given to men as they are in Christ, and without respect to any external differences made in this world among men: hence we find excellent treasures of grace in mean and contemptible persons in

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the world; poor in the world, and rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom; and as all believers, without difference, receive from Christ, so they are not debarred from any blessing that is in Christ: "All is yours, for ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. *ult.*; with Christ, God "freely gives us all things," Rom. viii. 32.

Position 5.

The communion believers have with Christ, in spiritual benefits, is a very great mystery, far above the understanding of natural men. There are no footsteps of this thing in all the works of creation, therefore the apostle calls it "The unsearchable riches "of Christ," Eph. iii. 8. ανιχνιαστον πλουτον τυ Χριστυ: The word signifies, that which hath no footsteps to trace it by: yea, it is so deep a mystery, that the angels themselves stoop down to look into it, 1 Pet. i. 12. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, "neither have it entered into the heart of man the things which "God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath "revealed them unto us by his Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

Thirdly, and lastly, I shall, in a few particulars, open the dignity and excellency of this fruit of our union with Christ, and shew you, that a greater glory and honour cannot be put upon man, than to be thus in fellowship with Jesus Christ, John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have giv-"en them, that they may be one, as we are one:" And therefore, more particularly, let it be considered,

First, With whom we are associated; even the Son of God; with him that is *over all, God blessed for ever.* Our association with angels is an high advancement, for angels and saints are fellow-servants in the same family, Rev. xix. 10. and through Christ we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22. But what is all this to our fellowship with Jesus Christ himself, and that in another manner than angels have? For though Christ be to them an head of dominion, yet not an head of vital influences, as he is to his mystical body the church: this therefore is to them a great mystery, which they greatly affect to study and pry into.

Secondly, What we are that are dignified with this title, the *fellows* or *co-partners* with Jesus Christ: Not only dust by nature, *(Dust thou art)*, but sinful dust; such wretched sinners, as, by nature, and the sentence of the law, ought to be associated with devils, and partakers with them of the wrath of the almighty God to all eternity.

Thirdly, The benefits we are partakers of, in and with the Lord Jesus Christ; and, indeed, they are wonderful and astonishing things, so far as they do already appear, but yet we see

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but little of them, comparatively, to what we ſhall ſee, 1 John iii. 1, 2. "Now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet "appear what we ſhall be, but we know that when he ſhall "appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is." O what will that be! to ſee him as he is, and to be transformed into his likeneſs.

Fourthly, The way and manner in which we are brought into this fellowſhip with Chriſt: which is yet more admirable. The apoſtle gives us a ſtrange account of it in 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that "though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that "ye through his poverty might be rich;" he empties himſelf of his glory, that we might be filled; he is made a curſe, that we might enjoy the bleſſing; he ſubmits to be crowned with thorns, that we might be crowned with glory and honour; he puts himſelf into the number of worms, Pſal. xxii. 6., that we might be made equal to the angels. O the unconceivable grace of Chriſt!

Fifthly, The reciprocal nature of that communion which is betwixt Chriſt and believers: We do not only partake of what is his, but he partakes of what is ours: he hath fellowſhip with us in all our wants, ſorrows, miſeries, and afflictions; and we have communion with him in his righteouſneſs, grace, ſonſhip and glory: he takes part of our miſery, and we take part of his bleſſedneſs; our ſufferings are his ſufferings, Col. i. 24. O what an honour is it to thee, poor wretch, to whom a great many would not turn aſide to aſk how thou doſt; to have a King, yea, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, to pity, relieve, ſympathize, groan and bleed with thee, to ſit by thee in all thy troubles, and give thee his cordials, to ſay thy troubles are my troubles, and thy afflictions are my afflictions: whatever toucheth thee, toucheth me alſo. O what name ſhall we give unto ſuch grace as this is?

Sixthly, and laſtly, Conſider the perpetuity of this privilege: Your fellowſhip with Chriſt is interminable, and abides for ever. Chriſt and the ſaints ſhall be glorified together, Rom. viii. 17. while he hath any glory they ſhall partake with him. It is ſaid indeed, 1 Cor. xv. 24. that there ſhall be a time when Chriſt will deliver up the kingdom to his Father; but the meaning is not that ever he will ceaſe to be an Head to his ſaints, or they from being his members: No, no, the relation never ceaſes; juſtification, ſanctification, and adoption, are everlaſting things, and we can never be diveſted of them.

Infer. 1. Are the ſaint's Chriſt's fellows? *What honourable*

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persons then are they! and how should they be esteemed and valued in the world! If a king, who is the fountain of honour, do but raise a man by his favour, and dignify him by bestowing some honourable title upon him, what respect and observance is presently paid him by all persons? But what are all the vain and empty titles of honour, to the glorious and substantial privileges with which believers are dignified, and raised above all other men by Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, and they are the sons of God also: he is the heir of all things, and they are joint-heirs with Christ: he reigns in glory, and they shall reign with him: he sits upon the throne, and they shall sit with him in his throne. O that this vile world did but know the dignity of believers, they would never slight, hate, abuse, and persecute them as they do. And O that believers did but understand their own happiness, and privileges by Christ, they would never droop, and sink under every small trouble at that rate they do.

Infer. 2. *How abundantly hath God provided for all the necessities and wants of believers!* Christ is a storehouse filled with blessings and mercies, and it is all for them: from him they "receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," Rom. v. 17. "Of his fulness they all receive grace for grace," John i. 16. All the fulness of Christ is made over to them for the supply of their wants: "My God shall supply all your need "(saith the apostle), according to his riches in glory by Jesus "Christ," Phil. iv. 19. If all the riches of God can supply your needs, then they shall be supplied. Say not, Christ is in the possession of consummate glory, and I am a poor creature, struggling with many difficulties, and toiling in the midst of many cares and fears in the world; for care is taken for all thy wants, and orders given from heaven for their supply: *My God shall supply all your need.* O say with a melting heart, I have a full Christ, and he is filled for me: I have his pure and perfect righteousness to justify me, his holiness to sanctify me, his wisdom to guide me, his comforts to refresh me, his power to protect me, and his all-sufficiency to supply me. O be chearful, be thankful, you have all your hearts can wish; and yet be humble; it is all from free-grace to empty and unworthy creatures.

Infer. 3. *How absurd, disingenuous, and unworthy of a Christian, is it to deny, or withhold from Christ any thing he hath, or by which he may be served, or honoured?* Doth Christ communicate all he hath to you, and can you withhold any thing from Christ? On Christ's part it is not *mine*, and *thine*, but *ours*, or *mine* and *yours*; John xx. 17. "I ascend to my Father, and "your Father; to my God, and your God." But O this cur-

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ſed idol *ſelf!* which appropriates all to its own deſigns and uſes. How liberal is Chriſt! and how penurious are we to him! Some will not part with their credit for Chriſt, when yet Chriſt abaſed himſelf unſpeakably for them. Some will not part with a drop of blood for Chriſt, when Chriſt ſpent the whole treaſure of his blood freely for us; yea, how loth are we to part with a ſhilling for Chriſt, to relieve him in his diſtreſſed members, when as yet "we know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "that though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, "that we through his poverty might be rich!" O ungrateful return! O baſe and diſingenuous ſpirits! The things Chriſt gives us are great, and the things we deny to him are ſmall: he parts with the greateſt, and yet is denied the leaſt. The things he communicates to us, are none of ours, we have no right nor title by nature, or any deſert of ours to them; the things we deny or grudge to Chriſt, are by all titles his own, and he hath the fulleſt and moſt unqueſtionable title to them all: what he gives to us, he gives to them that never deſerved it; what we withhold from him, we withhold from one that hath deſerved that, and infinitely more from us, than we have, or are.

He intereſted you freely in all his riches when you were enemies; you ſtand upon trifles with him, and yet call him your beſt and deareſt friend: he gave himſelf, and all he hath to you, when you could claim nothing from him; you deny to part with theſe things to Chriſt, who may not only claim them upon the higheſt title, his own ſovereignty, and abſolute property, but by your own act, who profeſs to have given all in covenant to him: what he gives you, returns no profit to him; but what you give or part with for him, is your greateſt advantage. O that the conſideration of theſe things might ſhame and humble your ſouls.

Infer. 4. *Then certainly no man is, or can be ſuppoſed to be a loſer by converſion, ſeeing from that day, whatever Chriſt is, or hath, becomes his.*

O what an inheritance are men poſſeſſed of by their new birth! Some men cry out, Religion will undo you; but with what eyes do theſe men ſee? Surely, you could never ſo reckon, except your ſouls were ſo incarnated, as to reckon pardon, peace, adoption, holineſs, and heaven, for nothing; that inviſibles are non-entities, and temporals the only realities. It is true, the converted ſoul may loſe his eſtate, his liberty, yea, his life for Chriſt; but what then? Are they loſers that exchange braſs for gold? or part with their preſent comforts for

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an hundred-fold advantage? Mark x. 29. So that none need be frightned at religion, for the losses that attend it, whilst Christ and heaven are gained by it: they that count religion their loss, have their portion in this life.

Infer. 5. *How securely is the saints inheritance settled upon them, seeing they are in common with Jesus Christ?* Christ and his saints are joint-heirs, and the inheritance cannot be alienated, but by his consent; he must lose his interest, if you lose yours. Indeed, Adam's inheritance was by a single title, and moreover, it was in his own hand, and so he might, (as indeed he soon did) divest himself and his posterity of it; but it is not so betwixt Christ and believers, we are secured in our inheritance by Christ our co-heir, who will never alienate it: and therefore it was truly observed by the father, *Foelicior Job in sterquilinio, quam Adamus in paradiso:* Job was happier upon the dunghill, than Adam was in paradise. The covenant of grace is certainly the best tenure; as it hath the best mercies, so it gives the fullest security to enjoy them.

Infer. 6. *How rich and full is Jesus Christ, who communicates abundantly to all the saints, and yet hath infinitely still more in himself, than hath ever been received by them all.*

Take all the faith of Abraham, all the meekness of Moses, all the patience of Job, all the wisdom of Solomon, all the zeal of David, all the industry of Paul, and all the tender-heartedness of Josiah; add to this, all the grace that is poured, (tho' in lesser measure), into all the elect vessels in the world, yet still it is far short of that which remains in Christ; "He is anointed with the "oil of gladness above his fellows:" And in all things he hath, and must ever have the pre-eminence. There are many thousand stars glittering above your heads, and one star differs from another star in glory, yet there is more light and glory in one sun, than in the many thousand stars. Grace beautifies the children of men exceedingly, but still that is true of Christ, Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into "thy lips." For all grace is secondarily, and derivatively in the saints, but it is primitively and originally in Christ, John v. 16. Grace is imperfect and defective in them, but in him it is in its most absolute perfection and fulness, Col. i. 19. In the saints it is mixed with abundance of corruption, but in Christ it is altogether unmixed, and exclusive of its opposite, Heb. vii. 26. So that as the Heathen said of moral virtue, I may much more say of Christ, That were he to be seen with mortal eyes, he would compel love and admiration from all men, for "he is altogether "lovely," Cant. v. 16.

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Infer. 7. *What delight, and singular advantage must needs be in the communion of the saints, who have communion with Jesus Christ in all his graces and benefits.*

"That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, "that ye also may have fellowship with us: And truly our fel-"lowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. O it is sweet to have fellowship with those that have fellowship with God in Jesus Christ. Christ hath communicated to the saints, varieties of graces, in different measures and degrees; and as they all receive from Christ the fountain, so it is sweet and most delightful to be improving themselves by spiritual communion one with another: Yea, for that end one is furnished with one grace more eminently than another, that the weak may be assisted by the strong, as a *modern divine* * well observes. Athanasius was prudent, and active, Basil of an heavenly, sweet temper, Chrysostome laborious, without affectation, Ambrose resolved, and grave, Luther couragious, and Calvin acute, and judicious. Thus every one hath his proper gift from Christ, the fountain of gifts and graces, 1 Cor. vii. 7. One hath quickness of parts, another solidity of judgment, but not ready and presential; one is zealous, but ungrounded; another well principled, but timerous; one is wary, and prudent; another open and plain; one is trembling, and melting; another chearful and joyous; one must impart his light, another his heat: The *eye*, the knowing man, cannot say to the *hand*, the active man, I have no need of thee. And O how sweet would it be, if gifts, graces, and experiences were frequently, and humbly imparted! But idle notions, earthly-mindedness, self-interests, and want of more communion with Christ, have, almost, destroyed the comfort of Christian fellowship every where in the world.

Infer. 8. *In a word, those only have ground to claim interest in Christ, who do really participate of his graces, and in whom are found the effects and fruits of their union and communion with him.*

If you have interest in Christ, you have communion in his graces and benefits; and if you have such communion, it will appear in your maintaining daily *actual communion with God* in duties; whereby will be produced,

First, The increase of your sanctification, by fresh participations from the fountain; as *cloth* which is often dipt into the *fat* receives the deeper dye, and livelier tincture; so will your

* Mr. Turshel.

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souls by assiduous communion with God. It will also be discerned,

Secondly, In your deeper humiliation, and spiritual sense of your own vileness: The more any man partakes of God, and is acquainted with him, and assimilated to him, the more base and vile in his own sight he still grows, Job xlii. 5, 6. Isa. vi. 5.

Thirdly, It will appear in your more vehement longings after the full enjoyment of God in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 8. and Rom. viii. 23. You that have the first fruits, will groan within yourselves after the full harvest, and satisfying fruition; you will not be so taken with things below, as to be content with the best lot on earth for your everlasting portion. O! if these communicated drops be so sweet, what is there in Christ the fountain?

And thus I have opened the method of grace in bringing home Christ and his benefits to God's elect by union, in order to communion with him.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON IX.

Containing the first general Use of Exhortation, inviting all Men to apply JESUS CHRIST.

MATTH. xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

THE *impetration* of our redemption by Jesus Christ, being finished in the first part, and the way and means by which Christ is *applied* to sinners in the foregoing part of this *treatise*; I am now orderly come to the general *use* of the whole; which in the first place shall be by way of *exhortation*, to invite and persuade all men to come to Christ; who in all the former sermons, hath been represented in his *garments of salvation*, red in his apparel, prepared and offered to sinners as their all-sufficient and only remedy: And in the following sermons will be represented in his *perfumed garments* coming out of his *ivory palaces*, Psalm xlv. 8. to allure and draw all men unto him.

For a general head to this use, which will be large, I have chosen this scripture, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and "are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

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These words are the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, in which there is a vital, ravishing sound: It is your mercy to have such a joyful sound in your ears this day. And in them I will consider their *dependance, parts,* and *scope.*

As to their dependance, it is manifest they have an immediate relation to the foregoing verse, wherein Christ opens his commission, and declares the fulness of this authority and saving power, and the impossibility of coming to God any other way. "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 whomsoever the Son will "reveal him," ver. 27.

This 28th verse is brought in proleptically to obviate the discouragements of any poor, convinced, and humbled soul, who might thus object: Lord, I am fully satisfied of the fulness of thy saving power, but greatly doubt whether ever I shall have the benefit thereof; for I see so much sin and guilt in myself, so great vileness and utter unworthiness, that I am overweighed, and even sink under the burden of it: My soul is discouraged because of sin. This objection is prevented in the words of my text, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy la-"den," *q. d.* Let not the sense of your sin and misery drive you from your only remedy: Be your sins never so many, and the sense and burden of them never so heavy, yet, for all that, *Come unto me:* You are the persons whom I invite and call. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In the words, three things are especially remarkable.

1. The soul's spiritual distress and burthen: *Weary and heavy laden.*

2. Its invitation to Christ under that burthen: *Come unto me.*

3. Its encouragement to that great duty: *I will give you rest.*

First, The soul's spiritual distress and burthen, expressed in two very emphatical words *, οι κοπιωντες και πεφορτισμενοι. "Ye "that labour and are heavy laden." The word which we tran-

* Οι κοπιωντες, *i. e.* They who labour even to fainting and tiring, for this Greek word το κοπιαν differs by this emphasis from the word πονειν, which signifies only in general to labour. *Piscator on the place,* explains it thus, Ye who feel the burden of your sins, and yet do not sink under the weight thereof. *Chrysostome* expounds it of those who are burdened with the legal rites and ceremonies; but we understand it in general, of all those who being pressed with the burden of their sins, and the sense of the malignity of their corrupt natures, do strive with all their might to throw off this depravity, and to obtain righteousness. *Musculus on the place.*

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ſtate *labour*, ſignifies a labouring even to faintneſs and tiring, to the conſumption and waſte of the ſpirits; and the other word ſignifies ſuch a preſſure by a burthen that is too heavy to be borne, that we do even ſink down under it.

There is ſome difference among expoſitors about the quality of this burthen. Chryſoſtome, and ſome others after him, expound it of the burthen of the legal *rites* and *ceremonies*, which was a heavy burthen indeed, ſuch as neither they, nor their fathers, could bear. Under the taſk and burthen of theſe legal obſervances, they did ſweat and toil to obtain a righteouſneſs to juſtify them before God, and all in vain; and this is a pious ſenſe: But others expound it of the burthen of ſin in general; the corruption of nature, and evils of practice, which ſouls are convinced have brought them under the curſe, and will bring them to hell, and therefore labour, and ſtrive, all that in them lies, by repentance, and reformation, to clear themſelves from it: but all in vain, whilſt they ſtrive in their own ſtrength. Such are they that are here called to come to Chriſt, which is the ſecond thing; namely,

Secondly, The invitation of burthened ſouls to Chriſt: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden: Come "unto me," *i. e.* believe in me, lean and reſt your burthened ſouls upon me. I am able to eaſe all your burthens; in me is that righteouſneſs and peace which you ſeek in vain in all the legal rites and ceremonies; or in your repentance, reformations, and duties; but it will give you no eaſe, it will be no benefit to you except you come unto me. Faith is often expreſſed under this notion, ſee John vi. 37. and John vii. 37. and it is to be further noted, that [*all*] burthened ſouls are invited to come, "All ye that labour." Whatever your ſin or guilt have been, whatever your fears or diſcouragements are, yet come, (*i. e.*) believe in me.

Thirdly, Here is the encouragement Chriſt gives to this duty, *And I will give you reſt*: αναπαυσω υμας. * I will refreſh you, I will give you reſt from your labour, your conſciences ſhall be pacified, your heart at reſt and quiet in that pardon, peace, and favour of God, which I will procure for you by my death. But here it muſt be heedfully noted, that this promiſe of reſt in Chriſt is not made to men ſimply, as they are ſinners, nor yet as they are burthened, and heavy laden ſinners, but as they come to Chriſt; *i. e.* as they are believers. For let a man break

* Why doſt thou ſeek that where thou canſt not find it? I am he only that can help thee. *Muſ. on the place.*

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his heart for ſin, let him weep out his eyes, let him mourn as a dove, and ſhed as many tears for ſin (if it were poſſible) as ever there fell drops of rain upon the ground, yet if he come not to Chriſt by faith, his repentance ſhall not ſave him, nor all his ſorrows bring him to true reſt. Hence note,

Doct. 1. *That ſome ſouls are heavy laden with the burthenſome ſenſe of ſin.*

Doct. 2. *That all burthened ſouls are ſolemnly invited to come to Chriſt.*

Doct. 3. *That there is reſt in Chriſt for all that come to him under the heavy burthen of ſin.*

Doct. 1. *Some ſouls are heavy laden with the burthenſome ſenſe of ſin.*

Doct. 1. I do not ſay all are ſo, for "fools make a mock at "ſin," Prov. xiv. 9. It is ſo far from being burthenſome to ſome, that it is a *ſport* to them, Prov. x. 23. But when a man's eyes are opened to ſee the evil that is in ſin, and the eternal miſery that follows it, (ſin and hell being linked together with ſuch ſtrong chains as nothing but the blood of Chriſt can looſe) then no burden is like that of ſin: "A wounded con-"ſcience who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. For let us but conſider the efficacy that the law of God hath upon the conſciences of men, when it comes in the ſpirituality and power of it, to convince and humble the ſoul of a ſinner. For then,

What inward troubles for ſin are.

Firſt, *The memory of ſin, long ſince committed, is refreſhed and revived, as if it had been but yeſterday:* There are freſh recognitions of ſin long ſince acted and forgotten, as if they had never been: What was done in our youth is fetched back again, and by a new impreſſion of fear, and horror, ſet home upon the trembling conſcience. Job xiii. 26. "Thou "writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the "ſins of my youth." Conſcience can call back the days that are paſt, and draw up a new charge upon the ſcore of old ſins, Gen. xlii. 21. All that ever we did is recorded, and entered into the book of conſcience, and now is the time to open that book, when the Lord will convince, and awaken ſinners. We read in Job xiv. 17. of ſealing up iniquities in a bag, which is an alluſion to the *Clerk of the aſſizes*, that takes all the indictments that are made againſt perſons at the *aſſizes*, and ſeals them up in a bag, in order to a trial. This is the firſt office and work of conſcience; upon which

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The *second*, namely, its *accusations*, do depend. These accusations of conscience are terrible things; who can stand before them? They are full, they are clear, and all of them referring to the approaching judgment of the great and terrible God.

Conscience dives into all sins †, secret as well as open, and into all the circumstances and aggravations of sin, as being committed against light, against mercy, against the strivings, warnings, and regrets of conscience. So that we may say of the efficacy of conscience, as it is said, Psalm. xix. 6. of the influence of the *sun*, "nothing is hid from the heat and power "thereof." "Come (saith the woman of Samaria) see a man "that hath told me all that ever I did," John iv. 29. Christ convinced her but of one sin, by this discourse, but conscience, by that one, fetched in, and charged all the rest upon her. And as the accusations of conscience are full, so they are clear and undeniable: A man becomes self-convinced, and there remains no shift, excuse, or plea, to defend himself: A thousand witnesses cannot prove any point more clearly than one testimony of conscience doth. Matth. xxii. 12. "The man was speechless, "a mute;" muzzled (as the word signifies ‡) by the clear testimony of his own conscience: These accusations are the second work or office of conscience, and they make way for the third, namely,

Thirdly, The *sentence* and *condemnation* of conscience: And truly this is an insupportable burthen: The condemnation of conscience is nothing else but its application of the condemning sentence of the law to a man's person: The law curseth every one that transgresseth it, Gal. iii. 10. Conscience applies this curse to the guilty sinnner. So that it sentences the sinner in God's name and authority, from whence there is no appeal: The voice of conscience is the voice of God, and what it pronounces in God's name and authority, he will confirm and ratify, 1 John iii. 20. "If our hearts, (*i. e.*) our consciences, condemn us, God is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things:" This is that torment which no man can endure. See the effects of it in Cain, in Judas, and in Spira; it is a real foretaste of hell-torments: This is that *Worm that never dies*, Mark ix. 44. For look, as a worm in the body is bred of the corruption that is there, so the accusations and condemnations of conscience are bred in the soul by the corruption and guilt that is there: As the worm in the

† This is the first punishment of sin, that no guilty person can be acquitted in his own conscience. *Juv. lib. 13. l. 2.*

‡ Ὁ δὲ φιμωθὴς, *et ille capistratus est.*

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body preys and bites upon the tender, ſenſible, inward parts, ſo doth conſcience touch the very quick. This is its third effect, or work, to ſentence and condemn; and this alſo makes way for a fourth, namely,

Fourthly, *To upbraid and reproach the ſinner under his miſery;* and this makes a man a very *terror to himſelf:* To be pitied in miſery is ſome relief, but to be upbraided, and reproached, doubles our affliction: You know it was one of the aggravations of Chriſt's ſufferings, to be reproached by the tongues of his enemies, whilſt he hanged in torments upon the curſed tree; but all the ſcoffs and reproaches, the bitter jeers and *ſarcaſms* in the world, are nothing to thoſe of a man's own conſcience; which will cut to the very bone.

O! when a man's conſcience ſhall ſay to him in a day of trouble, as Reuben to his afflicted brethren, Gen. xliii. 22. "Spake I "not unto you, ſaying, do not ſin againſt the child, and ye would "not hear; therefore behold alſo his blood is required." So conſcience; did I not warn you, threaten you, perſuade you, in time, againſt theſe evils; but you would not hearken to me, therefore behold now you muſt ſuffer to all eternity for it. The wrath of God is kindled againſt thy ſoul for it: This is the fruit of thy own wilful madneſs and obſtinacy. Now thou ſhalt know the price of ſinning againſt God, againſt light, and conſcience. O this is terrible! every bite of conſcience makes a poor ſoul to ſtartle, and in a terrible fright to cry, O the worm! O the bitter foretaſte of hell! A wounded ſpirit who can bear?

This is a fourth wound of conſcience, and it makes way for a fifth; for here it is as the pouring out of the vials, and the ſounding of thoſe woe-trumpets in Revelations; one woe is paſt, and another cometh. After all theſe deadly blows of conſcience upon the very heart of a ſinner, comes another as dreadful as any that is yet named; and that is,

Fifthly, The fearful expectations of wrath to come, which it begets in the ſoul of a guilty ſinner: Of this you read, Heb. x. 27. "A fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indigna-"tion:" And this makes the ſtouteſt ſinner faint and ſink under the burthen of ſin. For the tongue of man cannot declare what it is to lie down, and riſe with thoſe fearful expectations: The caſe of ſuch ſinners is ſomewhat like that which is deſcribed in Deut. xxviii. 65, 66, 67. "The Lord ſhall give thee "there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of "mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and "thou ſhalt fear day and night, and ſhalt have no aſſurance of

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"thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were "even: And at even thou shalt say, would God it were mor-"ning: For the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear," &c. Only in this it differs, in this scripture you have the terror of those described, whose temporal life hangs in doubtful suspence, but in the persons I am speaking of, it is a trembling under the apprehensions and expectations of the vengeance of eternal fire.

Believe it, friends, words cannot express what those poor creatures feel, that lie down, and rise up under these fears, and frights of conscience. Lord, what will become of me! I am free among the dead, yea, among the damned. I hang by the frail thread of a momentary life, which will, and must, break shortly, and may break the next moment, over the everlasting burnings: No pleasant bread is to be eaten in these days, but what is like the bread of condemned men.

And thus you see what the burden of sin is, when God makes it to bear upon the consciences of men, no burden of affliction is like it: Losses of dearest relations, sorrows for an only son, are not so pungent, and penetrating as these: For,

First, No creature enjoyment is pleasant under these inward troubles: In other troubles they may signify something to a man's relief; but here they are nothing; the wound is too deep to be healed by any thing but the blood of Jesus Christ: conscience requires as much to satisfy it, as God requires to satisfy him. When God is at peace with thee, (saith conscience) then will I be at peace with thee too; but till then, expect no rest nor peace from me: All the pleasures and diversions in the world shall never stop my mouth: Go where thou wilt, I will follow thee like thy shadow: Be thy portion in the world as sweet as it will, I will drop in gall and wormwood into thy cup, that thou shalt taste no sweetness in any thing, till thou hast got thy pardon.

These inward troubles for sin alienate the mind from all former pleasures and delights; there is no more taste or savour in them, than the white of an egg. Music is out of tune; all instruments jar and groan. Ornaments have no beauty; what heart hath a poor creature to deck that body, in which dwells such a miserable soul! to feed and pamper that carcase that hath been the soul's inducement to, and instrument in sin, and must be its companion in everlasting misery.

Secondly, These inward troubles for sin, put a dread into death, beyond whatever the soul saw in it before. Now it looks like the *King of terrors* indeed. You read in Heb. ii. 15. of

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ſome that through fear of death are all their life long ſubject to bondage. O what a lively comment is a ſoul in this caſe able to make upon ſuch a text! They would not ſcare at the pale horſe, nor at him that ſits on him, though his name be called *Death*, if it were not for what follows him, Rev. vi. 8. but when they conſider that hell follows, they tremble at the very name, or thoughts of death.

Thirdly, Such is the nature of theſe inward troubles of ſpirit, that they ſwallow up the ſenſe of all outward troubles: Alas! theſe are all loſt in the deeps of ſoul-ſorrows, as the little rivulets are in the vaſt ſea; he that is wounded at the heart, will not cry *Oh*, at the bite of the ſmalleſt inſect. And ſurely no greater is the proportion betwixt outward and inward ſorrows. A ſmall matter formerly would diſcompoſe a man, and put him into a fret; now ten thouſand outward troubles are lighter than a feather: For, ſaith he, "why doth the "living man complain?" Am I yet on this ſide eternal burnings! O let me not complain, then, whatever my condition be: Have I loſſes in the world, or pains upon my body? Alas! theſe are not to be named with the loſs of God, and the feeling of his wrath and indignation for evermore. Thus you ſee what troubles, inward troubles for ſin be.

How ſouls are ſupported under ſuch troubles.

Secondly, If you aſk, in the ſecond place, how it comes to paſs that any ſoul is ſupported under ſuch ſtrong troubles of ſpirit, that all that feel them do not ſink under them; that all that go down into theſe deep waters of ſorrow, are not drowned in them? The anſwer is,

Firſt, Though this be a very ſad time with the ſoul (much like that of Adam, betwixt the breach of the firſt covenant, and the firſt promiſe of Chriſt made to him) yet the ſouls that are thus heavy laden, do not ſink, becauſe God hath a moſt tender care over them, and regard to them; underneath them are the everlaſting arms, and thence it is they ſink not: Were they left to grapple with theſe troubles in their own ſtrength, they could never ſtand. But God takes care of theſe mourners, that their ſpirits do not fail before him, and the ſouls that he hath made; I mean thoſe of his elect, whom he is this way preparing for, and bringing unto Chriſt.

Secondly, The Lord is pleaſed to nouriſh ſtill ſome hope in the ſoul under the greateſt fears and troubles of ſpirit: Though it have no comfort or joy, yet it hath ſome *hope*, and that keeps up the heart. The afflicted ſoul doth, in this caſe, as the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 29. "He putteth his mouth in the duſt;

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" if yet there may be hope :" He ſaith, " It is good for a man " to hope, and quietly to wait for the ſalvation of God." There are uſually ſome glimmerings or dawnings of mercy through Chriſt, in the midnight darkneſs of inward troubles; *non dantur purae tenebrae.* In hell, indeed, there is no hope to enlighten the darkneſs, but it is not ſo upon earth.

Thirdly, The experiences of others, who have been in the ſame deeps of trouble, are alſo of great uſe to keep up the ſoul above water. The experience of another is of great uſe to prop up a deſponding mind, whilſt, as yet, it hath none of its own; and, indeed, for the ſupport of ſouls in ſuch caſes, they were recorded. 1 Tim. i. 16. " For this cauſe I obtained mercy, " that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffer- " ing, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on " him to life everlaſting :" For an encouraging * *Pattern*, an eminent precedent to all poor ſinners that were to come after him, that none might abſolutely deſpair of finding mercy through Chriſt. You know if a man be taken ſick, and none can tell what the diſeaſe is, none can ſay that ever they heard of ſuch a diſeaſe before, it is exceeding frightful; but if one and another, it may be twenty, come to the ſick man's bed-ſide, and tell him, ſir, be not afraid, I have been in the very ſame caſe that you now are, and ſo have many more, and all did well at laſt; why this is half a cure to the ſick man. So it is here a great ſupport to hear the experiences of other ſaints.

Fourthly, As the experiences of others ſupport the ſoul under theſe burdens, ſo the riches of free grace through Jeſus Chriſt uphold it: It is rich and abundant, Pſal. cxxx. 7, 8. plenteous redemption: and it is free, and to the worſt of ſinners, Iſa. i. 18. And under theſe troubles it finds itſelf in the way, and proper method of mercy, for ſo my text (a text that hath upheld many thouſand drooping hearts) ſtates it: All this gives hope and encouragement under trouble.

Fifthly, and *Laſtly*, Though the ſtate of the ſoul be ſad and ſinking, yet Jeſus Chriſt uſually makes haſte in the extremity of trouble to relieve it, by ſweet and ſeaſonable diſcoveries of

* The word Ὑποτύπωσις as well as τυπος (which is the word rendered Pattern in 1 Tim. 16.) ſignifies the firſt draught of a picture, it is here taken for example, that men might ſee what they might expect from God: That grace much more abounds, and is more powerful than ſin, and that no believer may be diffident of the forgiveneſs provided for him. *Pol. Synopſ. on the Place.*

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his grace; *cum duplicantur lateres, venit* Moſes, in the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen. It is with Chriſt as it was with Joſeph, whoſe bowels yearned towards his brethren, and he was in pain till he had told them, "I am Joſeph your brother." This is ſweetly exhibited to us in that excellent parable of the prodigal, Luke xv. when his father ſaw him, being yet a great way off, he ran and fell upon his neck, and kiſſed him. Mercy runs nimbly to help, when ſouls are ready to fall under the preſſure of ſin. And thus you ſee both how they are burthened, and how upheld under the burthen.

Why doth God make the burden of ſin lie ſo heavy upon the ſouls of ſome ſinners?

Thirdly, If it be enquired, in the laſt place, why God makes the burden of ſin preſs ſo heavy upon the hearts of poor ſinners? It is anſwered,

Firſt, He doth it to divorce their hearts from ſin, by giving them an experimental taſte of the bitterneſs and evil that is in ſin: Men's hearts are naturally glewed with delight to their ſinful courſes; all the perſuaſions and arguments in the world are too weak to ſeparate them and their beloved luſts. The morſels of ſin go down ſmoothly and ſweetly, they roll them with much delectation under their tongues, and it is but need that ſuch bitter potions as theſe ſhould be adminiſtred "to make their "ſtomachs riſe againſt ſin," as that † word uſed by the apoſtle in 2 Cor. vii. 11. ſignifies, *in that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what indignation it wrought?* It notes the riſing of the ſtomach with rage, a being angry even unto ſickneſs; and this is the way, the beſt and moſt effectual way to ſeparate the ſoul of a ſinner from his luſts; for in theſe troubles, conſcience ſaith, as it is in Jer. iv. 18. "Thy way and thy doings have procured "theſe things unto thee; this is thy wickedneſs, becauſe it is "great, becauſe it reacheth unto thy heart."

Secondly, the Lord doth this to make Jeſus Chriſt moſt welcome and deſirable to the ſoul. Chriſt is not *ſweet*, till ſin be made *bitter* to us. Matth. ix. 12. "They that be whole need "not a phyſician, but they that are ſick." If once God wounds the heart of a ſinner, with the ſtinging ſenſe of ſin, then nothing in the world is ſo precious, ſo neceſſary, ſo vehemently deſired, and panted for, as Jeſus Chriſt! O that I had Chriſt, if I did go in rags, if I did feed upon no other food all my days, but the bread and water of affliction? this is the language of a ſoul filled with the ſenſe of the evil of ſin.

† Ἀγανάκτησις, *indignatio, ſtomachatio.* Leigh's Critica, in verb.

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Thirdly, The Lord doth this to advance the riches of his free grace in the eyes of sinners. Grace never appears grace till sin appears to be sin. The deeper our sense of the evil of sin is, the deeper our apprehensions of the free grace of God in Christ will be. The louder our *groans* have been under the burden of sin, the louder will our *acclamations* and praises be for our salvation from it by Jesus Christ. "To me (saith Paul) "the chiefest of sinners, was this grace given," 1 Tim. i. 15. Never doth the grace of a prince so melt the heart of a traitor, as when trial, sentence, and all preparations for his execution have passed, before his unexpected pardon comes.

Fourthly, The Lord doth this to prevent relapses into sin: "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it "wrought!" 2 Cor. ii. 7. The burnt child dreads the fire, the bird that is delivered out of the *talons* of the *hawk*, trembles afterward at the noise of his bells. "After such a delive-"rance as this, should we again break thy commandments?" Ezra ix. 13, 14. Ask a poor penitent soul, that hath been in the deeps of sorrow for sin, Will you return to your former course of sin again? And it sounds in his ears, as if you should ask him, Will you run into the fire, will ye go to the rack again? O no, it hath cost him dear already *.

Fifthly, Lastly, This the Lord doth, to make them both skilful and compassionate in relieving others that are under like inward troubles. None can speak so judiciously, so pertinently, so feelingly to another's case, as he that hath been in the same case himself †; this furnishes them with the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary soul; by this means they are able to "comfort others with the same comforts "wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God," 2 Cor. i. 4.

Thus you have had a brief account, what the burden of sin is, how souls are supported under that burden, and why the Lord causes sin to lie so heavy upon the souls of some sinners. The improvement of all will be in a double use, *viz.*

Of information, and direction.

First use for information.

Infer. 1. Is there such a load and burden in sin? *What then*

* *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam.* i. e. I will not purchase repentance at so dear a rate.

† *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurere dico.* Virg.
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity woes, so like mine own. *Dryden.*

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was the burden that our Lord Jesus Christ felt and bare for us, upon whom the whole weight of all the sins of all God's elect lay! Isa. liii. 6. "He hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on "him." Our burden is heavy, but nothing to Christ's. O there is a vast difference betwixt that which Christ bare, and that which we bear. We feel but the single weight of our own sins; Christ felt the whole weight of all our sins. You do not feel the whole weight that is in any one sin; alas, it would sink you, if God should let it bear in all its aggravations and effects upon you. Psal. cxxx. 2, 3. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark "iniquity, O Lord who shall stand!" You would sink presently, you can no more stand under it, than under the weight of a mighty mountain. But Christ bare all the burden upon himself; his understanding was deep and large; he knew the extent of its evil, which we do not: we have many reliefs and helps under our burden, he had none; we have friends to counsel, comfort, and pity us; all his friends and familiars forsook him, and fled in the day of his trouble: we have comforts from heaven, he had frowns from heaven: "My God, my God, (saith he in "that doleful day) why hast thou forsaken me?" There is no compare betwixt our load and Christ's.

Infer. 2. If there be such a burden in sin, *then certainly sinners will pay dear for all the pleasure they find in sin, in the days of their vanity.* "What ‡ one saith of crafty counsels, we "may say of all sins; though they seem pleasant in their first "appearance, they will be found sad in the event:" they are honey in the mouth, but the gall of asps in the belly; they tickle the fancy; but rend the conscience. O sinner, thy mirth will certainly be turned into mourning, as sure as thou livest; that vain and frothy breast of thine shall be wounded; thou shalt feel the sting and pain, as well as relish the sweet, and pleasure of sin. O that thou wouldst but give thyself the leisure seriously to ponder those ‖ scriptures in the margin; methinks they should have the same effect that the hand-writing upon the plaister of the wall had upon that jovial king in the height of a frolic, Daniel v. 5. Reason thus with thine own heart, and thou wilt find the conclusion unavoidable; either I shall repent for sin, or I shall not: If I shall not, then must I howl under the wrath of God for sin, in the lowest hell for e-

‡ *Consilia callida prima specie laeta; tractatu dura; eventu tristia.* Livy.

‖ Prov. xx. 7. Ibid. xxiii. 31, 32. Job xx. 12, 13, 14. James i. 15. Rom. vi. 21.

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vermore. If I shall, then by what I have now read, of the throbs and wounds of conscience, I see what this heart of mine, this vain heart of mine, must feel in this world. O how much wiser was the choice that Moses made, Heb. xi. 25. the worst of sufferings, rather than the best of sin, the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season!

Infer. 3. Is there such a burden in sin, *then the most tender compassion is a debt due to souls afflicted and heavy laden with sin.* Their condition cries for pity, whatever their tongues do; they seem to call upon you, as Job upon his friends; "Have pity, "have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God "hath touched me," Job xix. 21. And O let all that have felt the wounds, and anguish of an afflicted conscience themselves, learn from their own experience tenderly to pity and help others. Gal. vi. 1. "You that are spiritual, restore (* or set him "in joint again) in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself."

Israel was commanded to be kind to strangers, for, saith God, you know the heart of a stranger. And surely if any case in the world require help, pity, and all compassionate tenderness, this doth; and yet how do some slight spiritual troubles upon others? Parents slight them in their own children, masters in their servants; the more brutish and wicked they. O had you but felt yourselves what they feel, you would never treat them as you do. But let this comfort such poor creatures, Christ hath felt them, and will pity and help them; yea, he therefore would feel them himself, that he might have compassion upon you. If men will not, God will pity you; if men be so cruel to persecute him whom God hath smitten, God will be so kind to pour balm into the wounds that sin hath made: if they pull away the shoulder from you, and will not be concerned about your troubles, except it be to aggravate them, God will not serve you so: but certainly you that have passed through the same difficulties, you cannot be without compassion to them that are now grappling with them.

Infer. 4. *How unexpressibly dreadful is the state of the damned, who must bear the burden of all their sins upon themselves, without relief, or hope of deliverance!* Mark. ix. 44. "where their worm "dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

O! If sin upon the soul that is coming to Christ for deliverance, be so burdensome, what is it upon the soul that is shut out from Christ, and all hopes of deliverance for ever! For, do but ponder these differences betwixt these two burdens.

* Καταρτίζει, *laxta membra in suum locum restituere.*

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First, No soul is so capacious now, to take in the fulness of the evil and misery of sin, as they are who are gone down to the place of torments. Even as the joys of God's face above are much unknown to them that have the foretastes and first-fruits of them here by faith, so the misery of the damned is much unknown, even to them that have in their consciences now, the bitterest taste and sense of sin in this world: as we have the visions of heaven, so we have the visions of hell also, but darkly through a glass.

Secondly, No burden of sin presseth so continually upon the soul here as it doth there. Afflicted souls, on earth, have intermissions, and breathing-times; but in hell there are no lucid intervals, the wrath of God there is still flowing; it is in *fluxu continuo*, Isa. xxx. 33. a stream of brimstone.

Thirdly, No burden of sin lies upon any of God's elect so long as on the damned, who do, and must bear it: our troubles about sin are but short, though they should run parallel with the line of life; but the troubles of the damned are parallel with the endless line of eternity.

Fourthly, Under these troubles, the soul hath hope, but there, all hope is cut off: all the gospel is full of hope, it breathes nothing but hope to sinners that are moving Christ-ward under their troubles; but in hell the pangs of desperation rend their consciences for ever. So that, upon all accounts, the state of the damned is inexpressibly dreadful.

Infer. 5. *If the burden of sin be so heavy, how sweet then must the pardon of sin be to a sin-burdened soul!* Is it a refreshment to a prisoner, to have his chains knocked off? A comfort to a debtor to have his debts paid, and obligations cancelled? What joy must it then be to a sin-burthened soul, to hear the voice of pardon and peace in his trembling conscience! Is the light of the morning pleasant to a man after a weary tiresome night? the spring of the year pleasant after a hard and tedious winter? They are so, indeed; but nothing so sweet as the favour, peace, and pardon of God, to a soul that hath been long restless, and anxious, under the terrors and fears of conscience. For, though after pardon and peace a man remembers sin still, yet it is as one that remembers the dangerous pits, and deep waters, from which he hath been wonderfully delivered, and had a narrow escape. O the unconceiveable sweetness of a pardon! Who can read it, without tears of joy? Are we glad when the grinding pain of the stone, or racking fits of the cholic are over? And shall we not be transported, when the accusations and condemnations of conscience are over? Tongue cannot express what these things

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are; his joy is something that no words can convey to the understanding of another, that never felt the anguish of sin.

Infer. 6. Lastly, *In how sad a case are those that never felt any burden in sin, that never were kept waking and restless one night for sin?*

There is a *burdened* conscience, and there is a *benumbed* conscience. The first is more *painful*, but the last more *dangerous*. O it is a fearful blow of God upon a man's soul, to strike it senseless and stupid, so that though mountains of guilt lie upon it, it feels no pain or pressure: and this is so much more sad, because it incapacitates the soul for Christ, and is a presage and forerunner of hell. It would grieve the heart of a man, to see a *delirious person* in the rage and height of a fever, to laugh at those that are weeping for him, call them fools, and telling them he is as well as any of them: much so is the case of many thousand souls; the God of mercy pity them.

Second use for counsel.

The only further use I shall make of this point here, shall be to direct and counsel souls that are weary, and heavy laden with the burden of sin, in order to their obtaining true rest and peace. And first,

First counsel.

Satisfy not yourselves in fruitless complaints to men. Many do so, but it is never the nearer. I grant it is lawful in spiritual distresses to complain to men, yea, and it is a great mercy if we have any near us in times of trouble, that are judicious, tender and faithful, into whose bosoms we may pour out our troubles; but to rest in this, short of Christ, is no better than a snare of the devil to destroy us. Is there not a God to go to in trouble? The best of men, in the neglect of Christ, are but physicians of no value. Be wise and wary in your choice of Christian friends, to whom you open your complaints; some are not clear themselves in the doctrine of Christ, and faith, others are of a dark and troubled spirit, as you are, and will but entangle you more. "As for me (saith Job) is my complaint to "man, and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?" Job xxi. 4. One hour betwixt Christ and thy soul in secret, will do more, to thy true relief, than all other counsellors, and comforters in the world can do.

Second counsel.

Beware of a false peace, which is more dangerous than your trouble for sin can be. Many men are afraid of their troubles, but I think they have more cause to fear their peace, a great deal.

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There is a twofold peace that ruins moſt men, peace in ſin, and peace with ſin: O how glad are ſome perſons when their troubles are gone; but I dare not rejoice with them. It is like him that rejoices his ague is gone, though it hath left him in a deep conſumption. You are got rid of your troubles, but God knows how you have left them; your wounds are ſkinned over, better they were kept open. Surely they have much to anſwer for, that help on theſe deluſions, healing the hurt of ſouls ſlightly, by crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. The falſe peace you beget in them, will be a real trouble to yourſelves in the iſſue, Jer. vi. 14.

Third counſel.

Let all that are under inward troubles for ſin, take heed of drawing deſperate concluſions againſt themſelves, and the final ſtate of their own ſouls. Though your caſe be ſad, it is not deſperate; though the night be troubleſome and tedious, keep on in the way to Chriſt, and light will ſpring up. To mourn for ſin is your duty; to conclude there is no hope for you in Chriſt, is your ſin. You have wronged God enough already, do not add a farther and greater abuſe to all the reſt, by an abſolute deſpair of mercy. It was your ſin, formerly, to *preſume beyond any promiſe*, it is your ſin, now, to *deſpair againſt many commands*. I would ſay as the apoſtle in another caſe, I would not have you mourn as men that have no hope: your condition is ſad as it is, but yet it is much better than once it was. You were once full of ſin, and void of ſenſe; now you have the ſenſe of ſin, which is no ſmall mercy. You were once quite out of the way and method of mercy, now you are in that very path wherein mercy meets the elect of God. Keep hope, therefore, at the bottom of all your troubles.

Fourth counſel.

Obſerve whether your troubles for ſin, produce ſuch fruits and effects in your ſouls, as theirs do, which end, at laſt, in Chriſt and everlaſting peace.

Firſt, One that is truly burdened with ſin, will not allow himſelf to live in the ſecret practice of ſin: either your trouble will put an end to your courſe of ſinning, or your ſinning will put an end to your troubles. Conſult 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Secondly, True ſorrow for ſin will give you very low, and vile thoughts of yourſelves; as you were covered with *pride* before, ſo you will be covered with *ſhame*, after God hath convinced, and humbled you, Rom. vi. 21.

Thirdly, A ſoul really burdened with ſin, will never ſtand in

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his own justification before God, nor extenuate and mince it in his confessions to him, Psal. li. 3, 4.

Fourthly, The burdens of sin will make a man set light by all other burdens of affliction, Lam. iii. 22. Micah vii. 9. The more you feel sin, the less you feel affliction.

Fifthly, A soul truly burdened for sin, will take no hearty joy or comfort in any outward enjoyment of this world, till Christ come and seek peace to the soul, Lam. iii. 28. Just so the soul sits alone, and keepeth silence; merry company is a burden, and music is but howling to him.

Fifth counsel.

Beware of those things that make your troubles longer than they ought to be. There be several errors and mistakes that hold poor souls much longer in their fears and terrors, than else they might be: and such are,

First, Ignorance of the nature of saving faith, and the necessity of it. Till you come to believe, you cannot have peace; and while you mistake the nature, or apprehend not the necessity of faith, you are not like to find that path of peace.

Secondly, Labouring to heal the wounds that the law hath made upon your consciences, by a more strict obedience to it for the future, in the neglect of Christ and his righteousness.

Thirdly, In observance of what God hath already done for you, in these preparatory works of the law, in order to your salvation by Jesus Christ. O! if you would but compare what you now are, with what you lately were, it would give some relief. But the last and principal thing is this:

Sixth counsel.

Hasten to Christ in the way of faith, and you shall find rest; and, till then, all the world cannot give you rest. The sooner you transact with Christ, in the way of faith, the sooner you shall be at peace, and enter into his rest; for those that believe, do now enter into rest. You may labour and strive, look this way and that, but all in vain; Christ and peace come together. No sooner do you come to him, and roll your burden on him, receive him as he offers himself, but the soul feels itself eased on a sudden; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. And thus in finishing the first, we are brought home to the second observation.

Doct. 2. *That sin-burthened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ.*

This point sounds sweetly in the ear of a distressed sinner; it is the most joyful voice that ever the soul heard: the voice of

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bleſſing from mount Gerizim, the raviſhing voice from mount Sion, "Ye are come to Jeſus the Mediator." In opening of it, I will ſhew,

1. What it is to come to Chriſt.
2. How Chriſt invites men to come to him.
3. Why his invitation is directed to burdened ſouls.

Firſt, We will enquire what it is to come to Chriſt, and how many things are included in it.

In general, to come to Chriſt, is a phraſe equipollent, or of the ſame amount with believing in Chriſt. It is an expreſſion that carries the nature and neceſſity of faith in it, and is reciprocated with believing. John vi. 35. "He that cometh to me, "ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, ſhall never "thirſt." Coming to Chriſt, is believing in Chriſt; and believing in Chriſt, is coming to Chriſt: they are *ſynonyma's*, and import the ſelf ſame thing. Only in this notion of faith, there are many rich and excellent things hinted to us, which no other word can ſo aptly convey to our minds. As,

Firſt, It hints this to us, That the ſouls of convinced and burdened ſinners do not only diſcern the *reality* of Chriſt, or that he is, but alſo the neceſſity of applying Chriſt, and that their eternal life is in their union with him: for this is moſt certain, that the object of faith muſt be determinate and fixed; the ſoul muſt believe that Chriſt is, or elſe there can be no emotions of the ſoul after him: all coming preſuppoſes a fixed term to which we come. Heb. xi. 6. "He that cometh to God, muſt "believe that God is." Take away this, and all motions after Chriſt preſently ſtop. No wonder, then, that ſouls, in their firſt motions to Chriſt, find themſelves clogged with ſo many atheiſtical temptations, ſhaking their aſſent to the truth of the goſpel at the very root and foundation of it; but they that come to Chriſt, do ſee that *he is*, and that their life and happineſs lie in their union with him; elſe they would never come to him upon ſuch terms as they do.

Secondly, Coming to Chriſt implies the ſoul's deſpair of ſalvation any other way. The way of faith is a ſupernatural way, and ſouls will not attempt it, until they have tried all natural ways to help, and ſave themſelves, and find it all in vain: therefore the text deſcribes theſe *comers to Chriſt* as weary perſons, that have been labouring and ſtriving in all other ways for reſt, but can find none; and ſo are forced to relinquiſh all their fond expectations of ſalvation in any other way, and come to Chriſt as their laſt and only remedy.

Thirdly, Coming to Chriſt notes a ſupernatural and almighty

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power, acting the soul quite above its own natural abilities in this motion. John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except "my Father which hath sent me draw him." It is as possible for the ponderous mountains to start from their bases and centres, mount themselves aloft into the air, and there fly like wandering atoms hither and thither; as it is for any man, of himself, *i. e.* by a pure natural power of his own, to come to Christ. It was not a stranger thing for Peter to come to Christ, walking upon the waves of the sea, than for his, or any man's soul, to come to Christ in the way of faith.

Fourthly, Coming to Christ, notes the voluntariness of the soul in its motion to Christ. It is true, there is no coming without the Father's drawing; but that drawing hath nothing of coaction in it; it doth not destroy, but powerfully, and with an overcoming sweetness, persuade the will. It is not forced or driven, *but it comes*; being made "willing in the day of God's power," Psal. cx. 3. Ask a poor distressed sinner, in that season, Are you willing to come to Christ? O rather than live! life is not so necessary as Christ is! O! with all my heart, ten thousand worlds for Jesus Christ, if he could be purchased, were nothing answerable to his value in mine eyes! The soul's motion to Christ is free and voluntary, it is *coming*.

Fifthly, It implies this in it, That no duties, or ordinances, (which are but the ways or means by which we come to Christ), are, or ought to be, central, and terminative to the soul: *i. e.* the soul of a believer is not to sit down, and rest in them, but to come, by them, or through them, to Jesus Christ, and take up his rest in him only. No duties, no reformations, no ordinances of God, how excellent soever these things are in themselves, and how necessary soever they are in their proper place, and use, can give rest to the weary and heavy laden soul: it cannot centre in any of them, and you may see it cannot, because it still gravitates, and inclines to another thing, even Christ, and cannot terminate in its motion till it be come to him. Christ is the term to which a believer moves, and therefore he cannot sit down by the way; or be as well satisfied as if he were at his journey's end. Ordinances and duties have the nature and use of means to bring us to Christ, but not to be to any man instead of Christ.

Sixthly, * Coming to Christ, implies an hope or expectation from Christ in the coming soul. If he hath no hope, why doth

* Come unto me, *i. e.* with the graces of faith, religious hope, and desire. *Brugensis on the place.*

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it move forward? As good ſit ſtill, and reſolve to periſh where it is, as to come to Chriſt, if there is no ground to expect ſalvation by him. Hope is the ſpring of motion and induſtry; if you cut off hope, you hinder faith: it cannot move to Chriſt, except it be ſatisfied, at leaſt, of the poſſibility of mercy and ſalvation by him. Hence it is, that when comers to Chriſt are ſtruggling with the doubts and fears of the iſſue, the Lord is pleaſed to enliven their faint hopes, by ſetting home ſuch ſcriptures as theſe, John vi. 37. "He that cometh to me, I will in "no wiſe caſt out." And Heb. vii. 25. "He is able to ſave to "the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him." This puts life into hope, and hope puts life into induſtry and motion.

Seventhly, Coming to Chriſt for reſt, implies, that believers have, and lawfully may have an eye to their own happineſs, in cloſing with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The poor ſoul comes for reſt; it comes for ſalvation; its eye and aim are upon it; and this aim of the ſoul, at its own good, is legitimated, and allowed by that expreſſion of Chriſt, John v. 40. "Ye will not "come unto me, that ye may have life." If Chriſt blame them for not coming to him, that they might have life, ſure he would not blame them, had they come to him for life.

Eightly, but *Laſtly*, and which is the principal thing in this expreſſion; Coming to Chriſt, notes the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt, to anſwer all the needs and wants of diſtreſſed ſouls, and their betaking themſelves, accordingly, to him only, for relief, being content to come to Chriſt for whatever they need, and live upon that fulneſs that is in him. If there were not an all-ſufficiency in Chriſt, no ſoul would come to him; for this is the very ground upon which men come. Heb. vii. 25. "He is "able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come to God by him:" Εις το παντελες, to the uttermoſt: In the greateſt plunges, difficulties, and dangers. He hath a fulneſs of ſaving power in him, and this encourages ſouls to come unto him. One beggar uſes not to wait at the door of another, but all at the doors of them they conceive able to relieve them. And as this notes the fulneſs of Chriſt as our Saviour, ſo it muſt needs note the emptineſs and humility of the ſoul as a comer to him. This is called ſubmiſſion, in Rom. x. 3. Proud nature muſt be deeply diſtreſſed, humbled, and moulded into another temper, before it will be perſuaded to live upon thoſe terms, to come to Chriſt for every thing it wants, to live upon Chriſt's fulneſs in the way of grace and favour, and have no ſtock of its own to live upon. O! this is hard, but it is the way of faith.

Secondly, In the next place, let us ſee how Chriſt invites men

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to come to him, and you shall find the means employed in this work, are either *internal*, and *principal*, namely, the Spirit of God, who is Christ's vicegerent, and comes to us in his name and room, to persuade us to believe, John xv. 26.; or *external*, namely, the preaching of the gospel by commissionated ambassadors, who, *in Christ's stead, beseech men to be reconciled to God, i. e.* to come to Christ by faith, in order to their reconciliation and peace with God. But all means and instruments, employed in this work of bringing men to Christ, entirely depend upon the blessing and concurrence of the Spirit of God, without whom they signify nothing. How long may ministers preach before one soul comes to Christ, except the Spirit cooperate in that work! Now as to the manner in which men are persuaded, and their wills wrought upon to come to Christ, I will briefly note several acts of the Spirit, in order thereunto.

First, There is an *illustrating work* of the Spirit, upon the minds of sinners, opening their eyes, to see their danger and misery; till this be discovered, no man stirs from his place: It is sense of danger that rouzes the secure sinner, that distresses him, and makes him look about for deliverance, crying, *What shall I do to be saved?* And it is the discovery of Christ's ability to save, which is the ground and reason, (as was observed above), of its motion to Christ. Hence, *seeing the Son*, is joined with believing, or *coming to him*, in John vi. 40.

Secondly, There is the *authoritative call*, or commanding voice of the Spirit in the word; a voice that is full of awful majesty and power. 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." This call of the Spirit to come to Christ, removes one great obstruction, namely, the fear of presumption out of the soul's way to Christ, and, instead of presumption in coming, makes it rebellion, and inexcusable obstinacy, to refuse to come. This answers all pleas against coming to Christ, from our unworthiness and deep guilt, and mightily encourages the soul to come to Christ, whatever it hath been, or done.

Thirdly, There are soul-encouraging, *conditional promises*, to all that do come to Christ in obedience to the command. Such is that in my text, *I will give you rest:* And that in John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." And these breathe life and encouragement into poor souls, that fear, and are daunted through their own unworthiness.

Fourthly, There are *dreadful threatnings*, denounced by the Spirit in the word, against all that refuse or neglect to come to Christ, which are of great use to engage and quicken souls in

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their way to Christ. Mark xvi. 16. "He that believes not, shall "be damned. Die in his sins." John. viii. 14. "The wrath of "God shall remain on him," John iii. *ult.* Which is as if the Lord had said, Sinners, do not dally with Christ, do not be always treating, and never concluding, or resolving: for if there be justice in heaven, or fire in hell, every soul that comes not to Christ, must, and shall perish to all eternity. Upon your own heads let the blood and destruction of your own souls be for ever, if you will not come unto him.

Fifthly, There are *moving examples* set before souls in the word, to prevail with them to come, alluring and encouraging examples of such as have come to Christ, under the deepest guilt and discouragement, and yet found mercy. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I "am chief: howbeit, (or nevertheless) for this cause I have "obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth "all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should here-"after believe in him to life everlasting." Who would not come to Christ after such an example as this? And if this will not prevail, there are dreadful examples recorded in the word, setting before us the miserable condition of all such as refuse the calls of the word to come to Christ. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. "By "which also he went and preached to the spirits which are "in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the "long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." The meaning is, the sinners that lived before the flood, but now are in hell, clapt up in that prison, had the offers of grace made them, but despised them, and now lie for their disobedience in prison, under the wrath of God for it, in the lowest hell.

Sixthly, and *lastly*, There is an effectual *persuading*, overcoming, and victorious work of the Spirit upon the hearts and wills of sinners, under which they come to Jesus Christ. Of this I have spoken at large before, in the *fourth sermon*, and therefore shall not add any thing more here. This is the way and manner in which souls are prevailed with to come to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, In the last place, if you enquire why Christ makes his invitations to weary and heavy laden souls, and to no other, the answer is briefly this:

First, Because in so doing, he follows the commission which he received from his Father; for so you will find it runs, in Isa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord "hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath

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" ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to " the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are " bound." You ſee here how Chriſt's commiſſion directs him: his Father ſent him to poor broken-hearted ſinners, and he will keep cloſe to his commiſſion. " He came not to call the righ- " teous, but ſinners, (*i. e.* ſenſible burdened ſinners) to repen- " tance." Matth ix. 13. " I am not ſent, (ſaith he), but unto " the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael." Thus his inſtructions and commiſſions from the Father, limit him only to ſenſible and burdened ſouls, and he will be faithful to his commiſſion.

Secondly, The very order of the Spirit's work in bringing men to Chriſt, ſhews us to whom the invitation and offers of grace in Chriſt are to be made. For none are convinced of righteouſneſs, *i. e.* of complete and perfect righteouſneſs, which is in Chriſt for their juſtification, until firſt they be convinced of ſin; and, conſequently, no man will, or can come to Chriſt by faith, till convictions of ſin have awakened and diſtreſſed them, John xvi. 8, 9. This being the due order of the Spirit's operation, the ſame order muſt be obſerved in goſpel-offers and invitations.

Thirdly, It behoves, that Chriſt ſhould provide for his own glory, as well as for our ſafety; and not expoſe one, to ſecure the other; but ſave us in that way which will bring him moſt honour and praiſe. And certainly ſuch a way is this, by firſt convincing, humbling, and burdening the ſouls of men, and then bringing them home to reſt in himſelf.

Alas! let thoſe that never ſaw, or felt the evil of ſin, be told of reſt, peace, and pardon in Chriſt, they will but deſpiſe it, as a thing of no value. Luke v. 31. " The whole need not a phy- " ſician, but thoſe that are ſick." Bid a man that thinks himſelf ſound and whole, go to the phyſician, and he will but laugh at the motion; if you offer him the richeſt compoſition, he will refuſe it, ſlight it, and, it may be, ſpill it upon the ground: Ay, but if the ſame man did once feel an acute diſeaſe, and were made to ſweat and groan under ſtrong pains, if ever he come to know what ſick days, and reſtleſs nights are, and to apprehend his life to be in imminent hazard; then meſſengers are ſent, one after another, in poſt-haſte to the phyſician; then he begs him, with tears, to do what in him lies for his relief: he thankfully takes the bittereſt potions, and praiſes the care and ſkill of his phyſician, with tears of joy. And ſo the patient's ſafety and the phyſician's honour are both ſecured. So is it in this Method of grace. The uſes follow.

Infer. 1. If ſin-burdened ſouls are ſolemnly invited to come

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to Christ, *Then it follows, that whatever guilt lies upon the conscience of a poor humbled sinner, it is no presumption, but his duty, to come to Christ, notwithstanding his own apprehended vileness, and great unworthiness.*

Let it be carefully observed, how happily that universal particle *all*, is inserted in Christ's invitation, for the encouragement of sinners: "Come unto me, [all] ye that labour:" *q. d.* Let no broken-hearted sinner exclude himself, when as he is not by me excluded from mercy: my grace is my own, I may bestow it where I will, and upon whom I will. It is not I, but Satan, that impales and incloses my mercy from humbled souls that are made willing to come unto me: he calls that your presumption, which my invitation makes your duty.

Object. 1. But I doubt my case is excepted by Christ himself, in Matth. xii. 31. where blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is exempted from pardon; and I have had many horrid blasphemous thoughts injected into my soul.

Sol. Art thou a burdened, and heavy laden soul? If so, thy case is not in that, or any other scripture exempted from mercy; for the unpardonable sin is always found in an impenitent heart: as that sin finds no pardon with God, so neither is it followed with contrition and sorrow in the soul that commits it.

Object. 2. But if I am not guilty of that sin, I am certainly guilty of many great and heinous abominations of another kind, too great for me to expect mercy for; and therefore I dare not go to Christ.

Sol. The greater your sins have been, the more need you have to go to Jesus Christ. Let not a *motive* to Christ be made an *obstacle* in your way to him. Great sinners are expressly called, Isa. i. 18. great sinners have come to Christ, and found mercy, 1 Cor. vi. 7. and, to conclude, it is an high reproach, and dishonour to the blood of Christ, and mercy of God, which flows so freely through him, to object the greatness of sin to either of them. Certainly you have not sinned beyond the *extent of mercy*, or beyond the *efficacy of the blood of Christ*; but pardon and peace may be had, if you will thus come to Christ for it.

Object. 3. Oh! but it is now too late; I have had many thousand calls by the gospel, and refused them; many purposes in my heart to go to Christ, and quenched them: my time, therefore, is past, and now it is to no purpose.

Sol. If the time of grace be past, and God intends no mercy for thee, how comes it to pass thy soul is now filled with trouble and distress for sin? Is this the frame of a man's heart that is past hope? Do such signs as these appear in men that are hope-

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leſs? Beſide, the time of grace is a *ſecret* hid in the breaſt of God; but coming to Chriſt is a *duty* plainly revealed in the *text:* And why will you object a thing that is ſecret and uncertain, againſt a duty that is ſo plain and evident? Nor do you yourſelves believe what you object; for at the ſame time that you ſay your ſeaſons are over, it is too late; you are, notwithſtanding, found repenting, mourning, praying, and ſtriving to come to Chriſt. Certainly, if you knew it were too late, you would not be found labouring in the uſe of means. Go on, therefore, and the Lord be with you. It is not preſumption, but obedience, to come when Chriſt calls, as here he doth; "Come "unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden."

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *That none have cauſe to be troubled, when God makes the ſouls of their friends or relations ſick with the ſenſe of ſin.* It was the ſaying (as I remember) of Hierom to Sabinian, Nothing (ſaid he) makes my heart ſadder, than that nothing can make my heart ſad. It is matter of joy, to all that rightly underſtand the matter, when God ſmites the heart of any man with the painful ſenſe of ſin; of ſuch ſickneſs it may be ſaid, "This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the "glory of God." Yet how do many carnal relations lament and bewail this, as a miſery, as an undoing to their friends and acquaintance; as if then they muſt be reckoned loſt, and never till then, that Chriſt is finding and ſaving them. O! if your hearts were ſpiritual, and wiſe, their groans for ſin would be as muſic in your ears. When they go alone to bewail their ſin, you would go alone, alſo, to bleſs God for ſuch a mercy; that ever you ſhould live to ſuch a happy day: You would ſay, Now is my friend in the bleſſed pangs of the new birth; now is he in the very way of mercy: never in ſo hopeful a condition, as now. I had rather he ſhould groan now, at the feet of Chriſt, than groan hereafter, under the wrath of God, for ever. O! parents, beware, as you love the ſouls of your children, that you do not damp and diſcourage them, tempt or threaten them, divert or hinder them, in ſuch caſes as this; leſt you bring the *blood* of their *ſouls* upon your own heads.

Infer. 3. It alſo follows, from hence, *That thoſe to whom ſin was never any burthen, are not yet come to Chriſt, nor have any intereſt in him.* We may as well ſuppoſe a child to be born without any pangs, as a ſoul to be born again, and united to Chriſt, without any ſenſe or ſorrow for ſin. I know many have great *frights of conſcience,* that never were made duly ſenſible of the evil of ſin; many are afraid of *burning,* that never

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were afraid of *sinning*. Slight and transient troubles some have had, but they vanished like an early cloud, or morning dew. Few men are without checks and throbs of conscience, at one time or other; but, instead of going to the closet, they run to the *alehouse* or *tavern*, for a cure. If their sorrow for sin had been right, nothing but the sprinkling of the blood of Christ could have appeased their consciences, Heb. x. 22. How cold should the consideration of this thing strike to the hearts of such persons! Methinks, *reader*, if this be thy case, it should send thee away with an aking heart; thou hast not yet tasted the bitterness of sin, and if thou do not, then shalt thou never taste the sweetness of Christ, his pardons, and peace.

Infer. 4. *How great a mercy is it for sin-burthened souls to be within the sound and call of Christ in the gospel!*

There be many thousands in the Pagan and Popish parts of the world, that labour under distresses of conscience, as well as we, but have no such reliefs, or means of peace and comfort, as we have, that live within the joyful sound of the gospel. If the conscience of a Papist be burdened with guilt, all the relief he hath, is, to afflict his body, to quiet his soul; a penance, or pilgrimage, is all the relief they have: If a Pagan be in trouble for sin, he hath no knowledge of Christ, nor notion of a satisfaction made by him; the voice of *nature* is, Shall I give my *first-born* for my *transgression*, the *fruit* of my *body* for the sin of my soul? The damned endure the terrible blows and wounds of conscience, for sin; they roar under that terrible lash, but no voice of peace, or pardon is heard among them. It is not, "Come unto me, ye that labour, and are heavy "laden;" but "depart from me, ye cursed."

Blessed are your ears, for you hear the voice of peace; you are come to Jesus the Mediator, and to the blood of sprinkling. O you can never set a due value upon this privilege.

Infer. 5. *How sweet, and unspeakably relieving, is the closing of a burthened soul with Jesus Christ, by faith! It is rest to the weary soul.*

Soul-troubles are spending, wasting troubles; the pains of a distressed conscience are the most acute pains. A poor soul would fain be at rest, but knows not where; he tries this duty, and that, but finds none: At last, in a way of believing, he casts himself, with his burthen of guilt and fear, upon Christ, and there is the rest his soul desired. Christ and rest come together; till faith bring you to the bosom of Jesus, you can find no true rest: The soul is rolling and tossing, sick and weary, upon the billows of its own guilt and fears. Now the soul

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is come like a ſhip toſſed with ſtorms and tempeſts, out of a raging ocean, into the quiet harbour! or like a *loſt ſheep* that hath been wandering in wearineſs, hunger, and danger, into the fold. Is a ſoft bed, in a quiet chamber, ſweet, to one that is ſpent, and tired with travel? Is the ſight of a ſhore ſweet to the *ſhipwrecked mariner*, that looks for nothing but death? Much more ſweet is Chriſt to a ſoul that comes to him preſſed in conſcience, and broken in ſpirit, under the ſinking weight of ſin.

How did the Italians rejoice, after a long and dangerous voyage, to ſee Italy again! crying, with loud and united voices, which made the very heavens ring again, * Italy! Italy! But no ſhore is ſo ſweet, to the weather-beaten paſſenger, as Chriſt is to a broken-hearted ſinner: This brings the ſoul to a ſweet repoſe. Heb. iv. 3. "We which have believed, do enter into "reſt." And this endears the way of faith to their ſouls, ever after.

Infer. 6. *Learn hence, the uſefulneſs of the law to bring ſouls to Jeſus Chriſt.* It is utterly uſeleſs, as a *covenant* to *juſtify* us; but exceeding uſeful, to convince and humble us: It cannot relieve, nor eaſe us; but it can, and doth awaken, and rouze us. It is a fair glaſs, to ſhew us the face of ſin, and, till we have ſeen that, we cannot ſee the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

The law, like the *fiery-ſerpent*, ſmites, ſtings, and torments the conſcience; this drives us to the Lord Jeſus, lifted up in the goſpel, like the *brazen ſerpent* in the wilderneſs, to heal us. The uſe of the law, is, to make us feel our *ſickneſs*; this makes us look out for a *Phyſician*: "I was alive once, without the "law, (ſaith Paul) but when the commandment came, ſin re-"vived, and I died," Rom. vii. 9. The hard, vain, proud hearts, of men, require ſuch an hammer, to break them to pieces.

Infer. 7. *It is the immediate duty of weary and heavy-laden ſinners to come to Chriſt, by faith, and not ſtand off from Chriſt, or delay to accept him, upon any pretence whatſoever.*

Chriſt invites, and commands ſuch to come unto him; it is therefore your ſin to neglect, draw back, or defer, whatever ſeeming reaſons, and pretences, there may be to the contrary. When the *Goaler* was brought (where I ſuppoſe thee now to be) to a pinching diſtreſs, that made him cry, "Sirs, what muſt I "do to be ſaved?" the very next counſel the apoſtles gave him, was, "Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be

* *Italiam, Italiam, læto clamore ſalutant.* Virg.

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" ſaved," Acts xvi. 30, 31. And, for your encouragement, know, he that calleth you to come, knows your burthen, what your ſins have been, and troubles are, yet he calls you: If your ſin hinder not Chriſt from *calling*, neither ſhould it hinder you from *coming*. He that calls you, is able to eaſe you, " to " ſave, to the uttermoſt, all that come to God by him," Heb. vii. 25. Whatever fulneſs of ſin be in you, there is a greater fulneſs of ſaving power in Chriſt. Moreover, he that calls you to come, never yet rejected any poor burthened ſoul that came to him; and hath ſaid he never will. John vi. 37. " He that " cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out." Fear not, therefore, he will not begin with thee, or make thee the firſt inſtance and example of the feared rejection.

And, *Laſtly*, Bethink thyſelf, what wilt thou do, and whither wilt thou go, in this caſe, if not to Jeſus Chriſt? Nothing ſhall eaſe, or relieve thee, till thou doſt come to him. Thou art under an happy neceſſity to go to him: with him, only, is found reſt for the weary ſoul. Which brings us to the third and laſt obſervation.

Doct. 3. *That there is reſt in Chriſt, for all that come unto him, under the heavy burthen of ſin.*

Reſt, is a ſweet word, to a weary ſoul; all ſeek it, but none, but believers, find it. *We which have believed*, (ſaith the apoſtle) * *do enter into reſt*, Heb. iv. 3. " He doth not ſay, they " *ſhall*, but they do, enter into reſt: noting their ſpiritual reſt " to be already begun, by faith, on earth, in the tranquility of " conſcience, and ſhall be conſummated in heaven, in the full " enjoyment of God." There is a ſweet calm upon the troubled ſoul after believing, an eaſe, or reſt of the mind, which is an unſpeakable mercy to a weary poor ſoul. Chriſt is to it, as the Ark was to the Dove, when ſhe wandered over the watery world, and found no place to reſt the ſoal of her foot. Faith centers the unquiet ſpirit of man in Chriſt, brings it to repoſe itſelf, and its burthen, on him. It is the ſoul's dropping *anchor* in a ſtorm, which ſtays and ſettles it.

The great debate, which coſt ſo many anxious thoughts, is now iſſued into this reſolution; I will venture my all upon Chriſt, let him do with me as ſeemeth him good. It was impoſſible for the ſoul to find reſt, whilſt it knew not where to beſtow itſelf, or how to be ſecured from the wrath to come; but when

* *Non dicit* εισηλθομεν, *ingreſſi ſumus, ſed* εισερχομεθα, *ingredimur, ſignificans, initia quietis fideles nunc habere: Plenam quietem ſuo tempore conſecuturos.* Pareus in loc.

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all is embarked, in Christ, for eternity, and the soul fully resolved to lean upon him, and to trust to him, now it feels the very *initials* of eternal rest in itself: It finds an heavy burthen unloaded from its shoulders; it is come, as it were, into a new world; the case is strangely altered. The word *rest*, in this place, notes †, (and is so rendered by some) a *recreation*: it is restored, renewed, and recreated, as it were, by that sweet repose it hath upon Christ. Believers, know, that faith is the sweetest recreation you can take. Others seek to divert and lose their troubles, by sinful recreations, vain company, and the like; but they little know what the recreation, and sweet restoring rest, that faith gives the soul, is. You find, in Christ, what they seek, in vain, among the creatures. Believing is the highest recreation known in this world. But to prevent mistakes, three *Cautions* need to be premised, lest we do, *in ipso limine impingere*, stumble at the threshold, and so lose our way all along afterward.

Caution 1.

You are not to conceive, that all the soul's fears, troubles, and sorrows, are presently over, and at an end, as soon as it is come to Christ, by faith. ‡ They will have many troubles in the world, after that, it may be, more than ever they had in their lives: "Our flesh (saith Paul) had no rest," 2 Cor. vii. 5. They will be infested with many temptations, after that; that, it may be, the assaults of Satan may be more violent, upon their souls, than ever. *Horribilia de Deo, terribilia de fide:* injections that make the very bones to quake, and the belly to tremble; They will not be freed from sin: that rest remains for the people of God; not from inward trouble, and grief of soul, about sin; These things are not to be expected presently.

Caution 2.

We may not think all believers do immediately enter into the full, actual sense of rest and comfort, but they presently enter into the state of rest. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. *i. e.* we enter into the state of peace immediately. "Peace is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright "in heart," Psal. cxvii. 11. And he is a rich man, that hath a thousand acres of corn in the ground, as well as he that hath so much in his barn, or the money in his purse. They have rest and peace in the seed of it, when they have it not in the fruit;

† I will give you recreation from weariness, troubles, and burdens. *Vatab. et Erasm.*

‡ Luther, upon his conversion, was so buffeted by Satan, that neither heat, blood, sensation, or speech remained.

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they have reſt in the promiſe, when they have it not in poſſeſſion: and he is a rich man that hath good bonds, and bills, for a great ſum of money, if he have not twelvepence in his pocket. All believers have the promiſe, have reſt, and peace, granted them, under God's own hand, in many promiſes, which faith brings them under; and we know that the truth and faithfulneſs of God ſtands engaged to make good every line, and word, of the promiſe, to them. So that though they have not a full, and clear actual ſenſe and feeling of reſt, they are, nevertheleſs, by faith, come into the ſtate of reſt.

Caution 3.

We may not conceive, that faith itſelf is the ſoul's reſt, but the means and inſtrument of it only. We cannot find reſt in any work, or duty of our own, but we may find it in Chriſt, whom faith apprehends for juſtification and ſalvation.

Having thus regarded the point againſt miſapprehenſions, by theſe needful cautions, I ſhall next ſhew you, how our coming to Chriſt, by faith, brings us to reſt in him. And here let it be conſidered, what thoſe things are, that burden, grieve and diſquiet the ſoul, before its coming to Chriſt; and how it is relieved and eaſed in all thoſe reſpects, by its coming to the Lord Jeſus: And you ſhall find,

Firſt, That one principal ground of trouble, is the guilt of ſin upon the conſcience, of which I ſpake in the former point. The curſe of the law lies heavy upon the ſoul, ſo heavy, that nothing is found, in all the world, able to relieve it, under that burden; as you ſee in a condemned man, ſpread a table in priſon, with the greateſt dainties, and ſend for the rareſt muſicians, all will not charm his ſorrow: but if you can produce an authentic pardon, you eaſe him preſently. Juſt ſo it is here; faith plucks the thorn out of the conſcience, which ſo grieved it, unites the ſoul with Chriſt, and then that ground of trouble is removed: for "there is no condemnation to them that are in "Chriſt Jeſus," Rom. viii. 1. The ſame moment the ſoul comes to Chriſt, it is paſſed from death to life, is no more under the law, but grace. If a man's debt be paid by this ſurety, he need not fear to ſhew his face boldly abroad; he may freely meet the ſerjeant at the priſon-door.

Secondly, The ſoul of a convinced ſinner is exceedingly burdened with the uncleanneſs and filthineſs, wherwith ſin hath defiled and polluted it. Conviction diſcovers the univerſal pollution of heart and life, ſo that a man loaths and abhors himſelf, by reaſon thereof: if he do not look into his own corruptions, he cannot be ſafe; and if he do, he cannot bear the ſight of

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them; he hath no quiet; nothing can give reſt, but what gives relief againſt this evil: And this, only, is done by faith, uniting the ſoul with Jeſus Chriſt. For though it be true, that the pollution of ſin be not preſently, and perfectly taken away, by coming to Chriſt; yet the burden thereof is exceedingly eaſed: for, upon our believing, there is an heart-purifying principle planted in the ſoul, which doth, by degrees, cleanſe that fountain of corruption, and will, at laſt, perfectly free the ſoul from it. Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith;" and being once in Chriſt, he is concerned for the ſoul, as a member, now, of his own myſtical body, to purify and cleanſe it, that, at laſt, he may preſent it perfect to the Father, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, Eph. v. 26. The reigning power of it is gone, immediately, upon believing, and the very exiſtence and being of it ſhall at laſt be deſtroyed. O! what reſt muſt this give, under thoſe troubles for ſin?

Thirdly, It was an intolerable burden to the ſoul, to be under the continual fears, alarms, and frights of death, and damnation; its life hath been a life of bondage, upon this account, ever ſince the Lord opened his eyes to ſee his condition. Poor ſouls lie down with tremblings, for fear what a night may bring forth. It is a ſad life, indeed, to live in continual bondage to ſuch fears; but faith ſweetly relieves the trembling conſcience, by removing the guilt which breeds its fears. The ſting of death is ſin. When guilt is removed, fears vaniſh. "Smite, "Lord, ſmite, ſaid Luther, for my ſins are forgiven ‡." Now, if ſickneſs come, it is another thing than it was wont to be. Iſa. xxxiii. 24. "The inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick, the "people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquities." A man ſcarce feels his ſickneſs, in compariſon to what he did, whilſt he was without Chriſt and hope of pardon.

Fourthly, A convinced ſinner, out of Chriſt, ſees every thing againſt him; nothing yields any comfort, yea, every thing increaſes and aggravates his burden, when he looks to things paſt, preſent, or to come. If he reflects upon things paſt, his ſoul is filled with anguiſh, to remember the ſins committed, and the ſeaſons neglected, and the precious mercies that have been abuſed: if he looks upon things preſent, the caſe is doleful and miſerable; nothing but trouble and danger, Chriſtleſs and comfortleſs; and if he looks forward, to things to come, that gives him a deeper cut, to the heart, than any thing elſe; for though

‡ *Feri, Domine, feri, nam a peccatis meis abſolutus ſum.* Luth.

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it be ſad and miſerable, for the preſent, yet he fears it will be much worſe hereafter; all theſe are but the beginning of ſorrows. And thus the poor, awakened ſinner, becomes a *Magor Miſſabib;* fear round about.

But, upon his coming to Chriſt, all things are marvellouſly altered; a quite contrary face of things appear to him; every thing gives him hope and comfort, which way ſoever he looks. So ſpeaks the apoſtle, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All things are yours, "(ſaith he) whether life or death, or things preſent, or things "to come; all is yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's:" They are ours, *i. e.* for our advantage, benefit, and comfort. More particularly upon our coming to Chriſt,

Firſt, Things paſt are ours, they conduce to our advantage and comfort. Now the ſoul can begin to read the gracious end and deſign of God, in all its preſervations and deliverances; whereby it hath been reſerved for ſuch a day as this. O! it melts his heart to conſider, his companions in ſin and vanity are cut off, and he ſpared; and that for a day of ſuch mercy, as the day of his eſpouſals with Chriſt, is. Now all his paſt ſorrows, and deep troubles of ſpirit, which God hath exerciſed him with, begin to appear the greateſt mercies that ever he received; being all neceſſary and introductive to this bleſſed union with Chriſt.

Secondly, Things preſent are ours, though it be not yet with us as we would have it; Chriſt is not ſure enough, the heart is not pure enough; ſin is too ſtrong, and grace is too weak; many things are yet out of order; yet can the ſoul bleſs God, for this, with tears of joy and praiſe, being full of admiration and holy aſtoniſhment, that it is as it is; and that he is where he is, though he be not yet where he would be. O! it is a bleſſed life to live as a poor recumbent, by acts of truſt and affiance, though, as yet, it have but little evidence; that it is reſolved to truſt all with Chriſt, though it be not yet certain of the iſſue. O this is a comfortable ſtation, a ſweet condition, to what it was, either when it wallowed in ſin, in the days before conviction, or was ſwallowed up in fears and troubles for ſin, after conviction: now it hath hope, though it want aſſurance; and hope is ſweet, to a ſoul coming out of ſuch deep diſtreſſes. Now it ſees the remedy, and is applying it; whereas, before, the wound ſeemed deſperate. Now all heſitations, and debates, are at an end in the ſoul; it is no longer unreſolved what to do; all things have been deeply conſidered, and, after conſideration, iſſued into this reſolve, or decree of the will. I will go to Chriſt; I will venture all, upon his command and call; I will embark my

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eternal intereſts in that bottom; here I fix, and here I reſolve to live and die. O! how much better, is this, than that floating life it lived before, rolling upon the billows of inward fears, and troubles, not able to drop anchor any where, nor knowing where to find an harbour?

Thirdly, *Things to come are ours;* and this is the beſt, and ſweeteſt of all: Man is a proſpecting creature, his eye is much upon things to come, and it will not ſatisfy him, that it is well at preſent, except he have a proſpect that it ſhall be ſo hereafter. But now the ſoul hath committed itſelf, and all its concernments, to Chriſt, for eternity, and this being done, it is greatly relieved againſt evils to come.

I cannot (ſaith the believer) think all my troubles over, and that I ſhall never meet any more afflictions; it were a fond vanity to dream of that; but I leave all theſe things where I have left my ſoul: he that hath ſupported me under inward, will carry me through outward troubles, alſo. I cannot think all my *temptations*, to ſin, paſt; O! I may yet meet with ſore aſſaults from Satan, yet it is infinitely better to be watching, praying, and ſtriving againſt ſin, than it was when I was obeying it in the luſts of it. God, that hath delivered me from the love of ſin, will, I truſt, preſerve me from ruin by ſin. I know, alſo, death is to come; I muſt feel the pangs and agonies of it: but yet the aſpect of death is much more pleaſant than it was. I come, Lord Jeſus, to thee, who art the death of death, whoſe death hath diſarmed death of its ſting; for I fear not its dart, if I feel not its ſting. And thus you ſee, briefly, how by faith, believers enter into reſt; how Chriſt gives reſt, even at preſent, to them that come to him, and all this but as a beginning of their everlaſting reſt.

Infer. 1. Is there reſt in Chriſt for weary ſouls that come unto him? *Then, certainly, it is a deſign of Satan againſt the peace and welfare of men's ſouls, to diſcourage them from coming to Chriſt in the way of faith.*

He is a reſtleſs ſpirit himſelf, and would make us ſo too; it is an excellent note of † Minutius Felix, "Thoſe deſperate and "reſtleſs ſpirits (ſaith he) have no other pleaſure, but in bring-"ing us to the ſame miſery themſelves are in:" He goeth about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour. It frets and grates his proud and envious mind, to ſee others find reſt,

† *Ad ſolamen calamitatis ſuae, non deſinunt perditi perdere.* Minut. Felix.

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when he can find none; an effectual plaister, applied to heal our wound, when his own must bleed to eternity: And he obtains his end fully, if he can but keep off souls from Christ. Look, therefore, upon all those objections, and discouragements, raised in your hearts against coming to Christ, as so many artifices, and cunning devices of the devil, to destroy and ruin your souls. 'Tis true, they have a very specious and colourable appearance; they are gilded over with pretences of the Justice of God, the heinous nature of sin, the want of due and befitting qualifications for so holy and pure a God, the lapsing of the season of mercy, and an hundred others, of like nature: but, I beseech you, lay down this as a sure conclusion, and hold it fast; that whatever it be that discourages and hinders you from coming to Christ, is directly against the interest of your souls, and the hand of the devil is certainly in it.

Infer. 2. Hence, also, it follows, *that unbelief is the true reason of all that disquietness, and trouble, by which the minds of poor sinners are so rack'd and tortur'd.*

If you will not believe, you cannot be established; till you come to Christ, peace cannot come to you: Christ and peace are undivided. Good souls, consider this; you have tried all other ways, you have tried duties, and no rest comes; you have tried reformation, restitution, and a stricter course of life; yet your wounds are still open, and fresh bleeding: these things, I grant, are, in their places, both good, and necessary; but, of themselves, without Christ, utterly insufficient to give what you expect from them: why will you not try the way of faith? Why will you not carry your burthen to Christ? O! that you would be persuaded to it, how soon would you find, what so long you have been seeking in vain! How long will you thus oppose your own good? How long will you keep yourselves upon the rack of conscience? Is it easy to go under the throbs and wounds of an accusing and condemning conscience; You know it is not: you look for peace, but no good comes; for a time of healing, and behold trouble. Alas! it must, and will be so, still, until you are in the way of faith, which is the true and only method to obtain rest.

Infer. 3. *What cause have we all to admire the goodness of God, in providing for us a Christ, in whom we may find rest to our souls!*

How hath the Lord filled and furnished Jesus Christ with all that is suitable to a believer's wants! Doth the guilt of sin terrify his conscience? Lo, in him is perfect righteousness, to remove that guilt, so that it shall neither be imputed to his per-

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ſon, nor reflected by his conſcience, in the way of condemnation, as it was before. In him, alſo, is a fountain opened, for waſhing and for cleanſing the filth of ſin from our ſouls; in him is the fulneſs both of *merit*, and of *ſpirit*, two ſweet ſprings of peace to the ſouls of men: well might the apoſtle ſay, "Chriſt, "the wiſdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 30. and well might the Church ſay, "He is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 16. Had not God provided Jeſus Chriſt for us, we had never known one hour's reſt to all eternity.

Infer. 4. *How unreaſonable, and wholly inexcuſable, in believers, is the ſin of backſliding from Chriſt!* Have you found reſt in him, when you could not find it in any other! Did he receive, and eaſe your ſouls, when all other perſons and things were *phyſicians of no value?* And will you, after this, backſlide from him again? O what madneſs is this! "Will a man "leave the ſnow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of "the field? Or ſhall the cold, flowing waters, that come from "another place, be forſaken?" No man, that is in his wits, would leave the pure, cold, refreſhing ſtream, of a cryſtal fountain, to go to a filthy puddle, lake, or an empty ciſtern; ſuch the beſt enjoyments of this world are, in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt.

That was a melting expoſtulation of Chriſt's with the diſciples, John vi. 67, 68. when ſome had forſaken him, "will ye, alſo, "go away?" And it was a very ſuitable return, they made, Lord, whither away from thee ſhould we go! *q. d.* From thee, Lord! No, no; where can we mend ourſelves? be ſure of it, when ever you go from Chriſt, ye go from reſt to trouble. Had Judas reſt? Had Spira reſt? and do you think you ſhall have reſt? No, no, "The backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his "own ways," Prov. xiv. 14. "Curſed be the man that depart-"eth from him, he ſhall be as the heath in the deſart, that "ſeeth not when good cometh, and ſhall inhabit the parched "places of the wilderneſs," Jer. xvii. 5. If fear of ſufferings, and worldly temptations, ever draw you off from Chriſt, you may come to thoſe ſtraits, and terrors of conſcience, that will make you wiſh yourſelves back again with Chriſt in a priſon, with Chriſt at a ſtake.

Infer. 5. *Let all that come to Chriſt, learn to improve him, to the reſt and peace of their own ſouls, in the midſt of all the troubles, and outward diſtreſſes, they meet with in the world.*

Surely reſt may be found in Chriſt, in any condition; he is able to give you peace in the midſt of all your troubles here. So he tells you in John xvi. 33, "Theſe things have I ſpoken to

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" you, that in me you might have peace; in the world ye shall " have tribulation." By peace, he means not a deliverance from troubles, by taking off affliction from them, or taking them away, by death, from all afflictions; but it is something they enjoy from Christ, in the very midst of troubles, and amidst all their afflictions, that quiets, and gives them rest, so that troubles cannot hurt them. Certainly, believers, you have peace in Christ, when there is little in your own hearts; and your hearts might be filled with peace, too, if you would exercise faith upon Christ for that end. 'Tis your own fault, if you be without rest, in any condition, in this world. Set yourselves to study the *fulness* of Christ, and to clear your *interest* in him; believe what the scriptures reveal of him, and live as you believe, and you will quickly find the peace of God filling your hearts and minds.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced, by one Motive drawn from the first Title of CHRIST.

MATTH. ix. 12. *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*

HAVING opened, in the former discourses, the *nature*, and *method*, of the *application* of Christ to sinners; it remains, now, that I press it upon every soul, as it expects peace, and pardon from God, to *apply* and *put on Jesus Christ; (i. e.)* to get union with him, by faith, whilst he is yet held forth in the free, and gracious tenders of the gospel. To which purpose, I shall now labour, in this general *use of exhortation* in which my last subject engaged me; wherein divers arguments will be further urged, both from

1. The titles, and
2. The privileges, of Jesus Christ.

The titles of Christ are so many motives, or arguments, fitted to persuade men to come unto him. Amongst which, *Christ, as the physician of souls*, comes under our first consideration, in the text before us.

The occasion of these words of Christ, was the call of Matthew the publican, who having first opened his heart, next o-

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pened his houſe to Chriſt, and entertains him there. This ſtrange and unexpected change, wrought upon Matthew, quickly brings in all the neighbourhood, and many Publicans and ſinners reſorted thither; at which the ſtomachs of the proud Phariſees began to ſwell. From this occaſion, they took offence at Chriſt, and, in this verſe, Chriſt takes off the offence, by ſuch an anſwer as was fitted, both for their *conviction*, and his own *vindication*. But when Jeſus heard that, he ſaid unto them, The whole have no need of a phyſician, but they that are ſick."

He gives it, ſaith one, as a reaſon why he converſed ſo much with Publicans and ſinners, and ſo little among the Phariſees, becauſe there was more work for him; Chriſt came to be a phyſician to ſick ſouls; Phariſees were ſo well, in their own conceit, that Chriſt ſaw they would have little to do with him; and ſo he applied himſelf to thoſe who were more ſenſible of their ſickneſs.

In the words, we have an account of the *temper*, and *ſtate*, both of,

1. The ſecure and unconvinced ſinner.
2. The humbled and convinced ſinner. And,
3. Of the carriage of Chriſt, and his different reſpect to both.

Firſt, The ſecure ſinner is here deſcribed, both with reſpect to his own apprehenſions of himſelf, as one that is *whole*, and alſo by his low value and eſteem for Chriſt, he ſees no need of him; "The whole have no need of the phyſician."

Secondly, The convinced and humbled ſinner, is here, alſo, deſcribed, and that both by his ſtate and condition, he is *ſick*; and by his valuation of Jeſus Chriſt, he greatly needs him: they that are ſick need the *phyſician*.

Thirdly, We have here Chriſt's carriage, and different reſpect to both; the former he rejects, and paſſeth by, as thoſe with whom he hath no concernment; the latter he converſes with, in order to their cure.

The words, thus opened, are fruitful in obſervations. I ſhall neither note, nor inſiſt upon any, beſide this one, which ſuits the ſcope of my diſcourſe, *viz.*

Doct. *That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the only phyſician for ſick ſouls.*

The world is a great *hoſpital*, full of ſick and dying ſouls, all wounded by one and the ſame mortal weapon, ſin. Some are ſenſeleſs of their miſery, feel not their pains, value not a phyſician; others are full of ſenſe, as well as danger; mourn under the apprehenſion of their condition, and ſadly bewail it. The merciful God hath, in his abundant compaſſion to the periſhing

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world, sent a physician from heaven, and given him his orders, under the great seal of heaven, for his office, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. which he opened, and read, in the audience of the people. Luke iv. 18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he "hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he "hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," *&c.* He is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations: he is *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord that healeth us; and that as he is *Jehovah Tzidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness. The *brazen serpent* that healed the Israelites in the wilderness, was an excellent type of our great physician Christ, and is expressly applied to him, John iii. 14. He rejects none that come, and heals all whom he undertakes; but, more particularly, I will,

First, Point at those diseases which Christ heals in sick souls, and by what means he heals them.

Secondly, The excellency of this physician above all others: there is none like Christ, he is the only physician for wounded souls.

First, We will enquire into the diseases which Christ, the physician, cures; and they are reducible to two heads, *viz.*

1. Sin; and,
2. Sorrow.

First, *The disease of sin*; in which three things are found exceeding burdensome to sick souls.

1. The guilt,
2. The dominion,
3. The inherence of sin; all cured by this physician, and how.

First, The guilt of sin; this is a mortal wound, a stab in the very heart of a poor sinner. It is a fond, and groundless distinction, that Papists make of sins *mortal* and *venial*; all sin, in its own nature, is mortal; Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of "sin is death." Yet though it be so in its own nature, Christ can, and doth cure it, by the sovereign balsam of his own precious blood; Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption, through "his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of "his grace." This is the deepest, and deadliest wound, the soul of man feels in this world: What is guilt, but the obligation of the soul to everlasting punishment and misery? It puts the soul under the sentence of God to eternal wrath; the condemning sentence of the great and terrible God; than which, nothing is found more dreadful, and insupportable: put all pains, all poverty, all afflictions, all miseries, in one scale, and God's condemnation in the other, and you weigh but so many feathers, against a talent of lead.

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This diſeaſe, our great phyſician, Chriſt, cures, by remiſſion, which is the diſſolving of the obligation to puniſhment; the looſing of the ſoul that was bound over to the wrath and condemnation of God, Col. i. 13, 14. Heb. vi. 12. Micah vii. 17, 18, 19. This remiſſion being made, the ſoul is immediately cleared from all its obligations to puniſhment. Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation." All bonds are cancelled, the guilt of all ſins is healed, or removed, original and actual, great and ſmall. This cure is performed upon ſouls, *by the blood of Chriſt*: nothing is found, in heaven, or earth, beſides his blood, that is able to heal this diſeaſe. Heb. ix. 22. "Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion;" nor is it any blood that will do it, but that, only, which dropped from the wounds of Chriſt. Iſa. liii. 5. "By his ſtripes we are "healed." His blood, only, is innocent, and precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. blood of infinite worth, and value; blood of God, Acts xx. 18. blood prepared for this very purpoſe, Heb. x. 5. This is the blood that performs the cure; and how great a cure is it! for this cure, the ſouls of believers ſhall be praiſing and magnifying their great phyſician in heaven, to all eternity; Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins, "in his own blood, *&c.* to him be glory and dominion, for "ever and ever."

Secondly, The next evil in ſin cured by Chriſt, is the dominion of it over the ſouls of poor ſinners. Where ſin is in dominion, the ſoul is in a very ſad condition; for it darkens the underſtanding, depraves the conſcience, ſtiffens the will, hardens the heart, miſplaces and diſorders all the affections; and thus every faculty is wounded, by the power and dominion of ſin over the ſoul. How difficult is the cure of this diſeaſe! it paſſes the ſkill of angels, or men, to heal it; but Chriſt undertakes it, and makes a perfect cure of it, at laſt, and this he doth by his Spirit. As he cures the guilt of ſin by pouring out his blood for us; ſo he cures the dominion of ſin, by pouring out his Spirit upon us. Juſtification is the cure of guilt, ſanctification the cure of the dominion of ſin. For,

Firſt, As the dominion of ſin darkens the *underſtanding*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ſo the Spirit of holineſs, which Chriſt ſheds upon his people, cures the darkneſs and blindneſs of that noble faculty, and reſtores it again, Eph. v. 8. They that were darkneſs, are hereby light in the Lord; the anointing of the Spirit, teacheth them all things, 1 John ii. 27.

Secondly, As the dominion of ſin depraved and defiled the

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conſcience, Tit. i. 15. wounded it to that degree, as to diſable it to the performances of all its offices, and functions; ſo that it was neither able to apply, convince, or tremble at the word: So, when the Spirit of holineſs is ſhed forth, O what a tender ſenſe fills the renewed conſcience! For what ſmall things will it check, ſmite, and rebuke! How ſtrongly will it bind to duty, and bar againſt ſin!

Thirdly, As the dominion of ſin ſtiffened the will, and made it ſtubborn, and rebellious; ſo Chriſt, by ſanctifying it, brings it to be pliant, and obedient to the will of God. "Lord (ſaith "the ſinner,) what wilt thou have me to do!" Acts ix. 6.

Fourthly, As the power of ſin hardeneth the heart, ſo that nothing could affect it, or make any impreſſion upon it; when ſanctification comes upon the ſoul, it thaws, and breaks it, as hard as it was, and makes it diſſolve, in the breaſt of a ſinner, in godly ſorrow, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "I will take away the heart "of ſtone out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of "fleſh." It will now melt, ingenuouſly, under the threatnings of the word, 2 Kings xxii. 19. or the ſtrokes of the rod, Jer. xxxi. 18. or the manifeſtations of grace and mercy, Luke vii. 38.

Fifthly, As the power of ſin miſplaced and diſordered all the affections, ſo ſanctification reduces them again, and ſets them right, Pſal. iv. 6, 7. And thus you ſee how ſanctification becomes the rectitude, health, and due temper of the ſoul, ſo far as it prevails, curing the diſeaſes that ſin, in its dominion, filled the ſoul with. True it is, this cure is not perfected in this life; there are ſtill ſome remains of the old diſeaſes, in the holieſt ſouls, notwithſtanding ſin be dethroned from its dominion over them: but the cure is begun, and daily advances towards perfection, and at laſt will be compleat, as will appear in the cure of the next evil of ſin; namely,

Thirdly, The *inherence* of ſin in the ſoul: this is a ſore diſeaſe, the very core and root of all our other complaints and ailes. This made the holy apoſtle bemoan himſelf, and wail ſo bitterly, Rom. vii. 17. becauſe of "ſin that dwelt in him:" And the ſame miſery is bewailed by all ſanctified perſons, all the world over.

'Tis a wonderful mercy to have the guilt and dominion of ſin cured, but we ſhall never be perfectly ſound, and well, till the exiſtence, or in-dwelling of ſin, in our natures, be cured too: when once that is done, then we ſhall feel no more pain, nor ſorrows for ſin: and this our great *phyſician* will at laſt perform for us, and upon us. But as the cure of guilt was by our *juſtification*, the cure of the dominion of ſin by our *ſanctification*;

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so the third and last, which perfects the whole cure, will be by our *glorification*; and, till then, it is not to be expected. For it is a clear case, that sin, like ivy in the old walls, will never be gotten out till the walls be pulled down, and then it is pulled up by the roots. This cure Christ will perform in a moment, upon our dissolution. For it is plain,

First, That none but perfected souls, freed from all sin, are admitted into heaven, Eph. v. 27. Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xxi. 27.

Secondly, It is as plain, that no such personal perfection, and freedom is found in any man, on this side death, and the grave, 1 John i. 8. 1 Kings viii. 46. Phil. iii. 12. a truth, sealed by the sad experience of all the saints on earth.

Thirdly, If such freedom, and perfection must be before we can be perfectly happy, and no such thing be done in this life; it remains that it must be done immediately upon their *dissolution*, and at the very time of their glorification: as sin came in at the time of the union of their souls and bodies in the womb, so it will go out at the time of their separation by death; then will Christ put the last hand to this glorious work, and perfect that cure which hath been so long under his hand, in this world: and thenceforth sin shall have no power upon them, it shall never tempt them more, it shall never defile them more, it shall never grieve and sadden their hearts any more: henceforth it shall never cloud their evidences, darken their understandings, or give the least interruption to their communion with God. When sin is gone, all these, its mischievous effects, are gone with it. So that I may speak it to the comfort of all gracious hearts, according to what the Lord told the Israelites, in Deut. xii. 8, 9. (to which I allude, for illustration of this most comfortable truth) "Ye shall not do after all the things that ye do "here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes, "for ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance "which the Lord your God giveth you." Whilst you are under Christ's cure upon earth, but not perfectly healed, your understandings mistake, your thoughts wander, your affections are dead, and your communion with God is daily interrupted; but it shall not be so in heaven, where the cure is perfect: you shall not there know, love, or delight in God, in the manner you do this day; for you are not, as yet, come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. And so much as to the diseases of sin, and Christ's method of curing them.

Secondly, As Sin is the disease of the *saints*, so, also, is *sorrow*; the best *saints* must pass thro' the valley of *Bacha*, to

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heaven. How many tears fall from the eyes of the *saints*, upon the account of outward, as well as inward troubles; even after their reconciliation with God? "Through much tribula-" tion we must enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. It would be too great a digression, in this place, to note but the more general heads, under which almost infinite particulars, of troubles and afflictions, are found: it shall suffice only to shew, that whatever distress, or trouble, any poor soul is in, upon any account whatsoever; if that soul belongs to Jesus Christ, he will take care of it, *for the present*, and deliver it, at last, by a complete cure.

First, Christ cures troubles, by *sanctifying* them to the souls of his, that are under affliction, and makes their very troubles *medicinal*, and healing to them. Trouble is a *scorpion*, and hath a deadly sting; but Christ is a wise *physician*, and extracts a sovereign oil out of this *scorpion*, that heals the wound it makes. By afflictions, our wise physician purges our corruptions, and so prevents, or cures, greater troubles, by lesser; inward sorrows, by outward ones. Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, shall the ini-" quity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take " way his sin."

Secondly, Christ cures outward *troubles*, by inward *consolations*, which are made to rise in the inner man, as high as the waters of affliction do upon the outward man, 2 Cor. i. 5. One drop of spiritual comfort, is sufficient to sweeten a whole ocean of outward trouble. It was an high expression of an afflicted father, whom God comforted, just upon the death of his dear and only son, † with some clearer manifestations of his love than was usual: "O, said he, might I but have such consolations as " these, I could be willing (were it possible) to lay an only son " into the grave every day I have to live in this world." Thus all the troubles of the world are cured by Christ. John xvi. 33. "In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall " have peace."

Thirdly, Christ cures all outward sorrows and troubles in his people *by death*, which is their removal from the place of sorrows, to peace and rest for evermore. Now God wipes all tears from their eyes, and the days of their mourning are at an end; the then put off the garments and spirit of mourning, and enter into peace, Isa. lvii. 2. They come to that place, and state, where tears and sighs are things unknown to the inhabitants;

† *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo, cum anima sit in cælo.* i. e. The body has no feeling, when the soul is in heaven.

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one ſtep beyond the ſtate of this mortality, brings us quite out of the ſight and hearing, of all troubles and lamentations. Theſe are the diſeaſes of *ſouls; ſin,* and *ſorrow;* and thus they are cured by Chriſt, the *phyſician.*

Secondly, Next I ſhall ſhew you, that Jeſus Chriſt is the only *phyſician* of ſouls, none like him for a ſick *ſinner:* And this will be evident, in divers reſpects.

Firſt, None ſo *wiſe,* and judicious, as Jeſus Chriſt, to underſtand, and comprehend the nature, depth, and danger of ſoul-diſeaſes. O how ignorant and unacquainted are men with the ſtate and caſe of afflicted ſouls! But "Chriſt hath the tongue "of the learned, that he ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in "ſeaſon to him that is weary," Iſa. l. 4. He only underſtands the weight of ſin, and depth of inward troubles of ſin.

Secondly, None ſo able to cure, and heal the wounds of afflicted ſouls, as Chriſt is; he, only, hath thoſe medicines that can cure a ſick ſoul. The blood of Chriſt, and nothing elſe, in heaven or earth, is able to cure the mortal wounds which guilt inflicts upon a trembling conſcience: let men try all other receipts, and coſtly experience ſhall convince them of their inſufficiency. Conſcience may be benumbed by ſtupefactive medicines, prepared by the devil for that end; but pacified it can never be, but by the blood of Chriſt, Heb. xvi. 22.

Thirdly, None ſo tender-hearted, and ſympathizing with ſick ſouls, as Jeſus Chriſt; he is full of bowels and tender compaſſions to afflicted ſouls: he is one that can have compaſſion, becauſe he hath had experience, Heb. v. 2. If I muſt come into the chirurgeon's hands with broken bones, give me ſuch an one, to chuſe, whoſe own bones have been broken, who hath felt the anguiſh in himſelf. Chriſt knows what it is, by experience, having felt the anguiſh of inward troubles, the weight of God's wrath, and the terrors of a forſaking God, more than any, or all the ſons of men: this makes him tender over diſtreſſed ſouls. Iſa. xlii. 3. "A bruiſed reed he will not break, and ſmoking flax "he will not quench."

Fourthly, None cures, in ſo wonderful a method, as Chriſt doth; he heals us by his ſtripes, Iſa. liii. 5. The phyſician dies, that the patient may live; his wounds muſt bleed, that ours may be cured: he feels the ſmart and pain, that we might have eaſe and comfort. No phyſician, but Chriſt, will cure others at this rate.

Fifthly, None ſo ready to relieve a ſick ſoul, as Chriſt; he is within the call of a diſtreſſed ſoul at all times. Art thou ſick for ſin, weary of ſin, and made truly willing to part with ſin?

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lift up but thy ſincere cry to the Lord Jeſus for help, and he will quickly be with thee. When the prodigal, the emblem of a convinced, humbled ſinner, ſaid, in himſelf, I will return to my father, the father ran to meet him, Luke xv. 20. He can be with thee in a moment.

Sixthly, None ſo willing to receive and undertake all diſtreſſed and afflicted ſouls, as Jeſus Chriſt is: he refuſes none that come to him. John vi. 37. "He that cometh unto me, I will "in no wiſe caſt out." Whatever their ſins have been, or their ſorrows are; however they have wounded their own ſouls with the deepeſt gaſhes of guilt; how deſperate and helpleſs ſoever their caſe appears, in their own, or others eyes; he never puts them off, or diſcourages them, if they be but willing to come, Iſa. i. 18, 19.

Seventhly, None ſo happy and ſucceſsful, as Chriſt; he never fails of performing a perfect cure upon thoſe he undertakes: never was it known that any ſoul miſcarried in his hands, John iii. 15, 16. Other phyſicians, by miſtakes, by ignorance, or careleſſneſs, fill church yards, and caſt away the lives of men; but Chriſt ſuffers none to periſh, that commit themſelves to him.

Eightly, None ſo free and generous, as Chriſt; he doth all *gratis*: he ſells not his medicines, though they be of infinite value; but freely gives them; Iſa. lv. 1. "He that hath no mo-"ney, let him come." If any be ſent away, it is the rich, Luke i. 53. not the poor and needy: thoſe that will not accept their remedy as a free gift, but will needs purchaſe it at a price.

Ninthly, and laſtly, None rejoice in the recovery of ſouls, more than Chriſt doth. O! it is unſpeakably delightful to him to ſee the efficacy of his blood upon our ſouls; Iſa. liii. 11. "He "ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul, (*i. e.* the ſucceſs of his death "and ſufferings) and ſhall be ſatisfied." When he foreſaw the ſucceſs of the goſpel upon the world, it is ſaid, Luke x. 21. "In "that hour Jeſus rejoiced in Spirit." And thus you ſee, there is no phyſician like Chriſt, for ſick ſouls.

The uſes of this point are,

For information and direction.

Firſt, From whence we are informed of many great and neceſſary truths, deducible from this: As,

Infer. 1. *How inexpreſſible is the grace of God, in providing ſuch a phyſician as Chriſt, for the ſick and dying ſouls of ſinners!* O bleſſed be God, that there is a *balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there!* that their caſe is not deſperate, forlorn and remedileſs, as that the devils and damned is. There is but one caſe excepted from cure, and that, ſuch as is not incident to any ſenſible,

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afflicted soul, Mat. xii. 31. and this only excepted, all manner of sins and diseases are capable of a cure. Though there be such a disease as is incurable, yet take this for thy comfort, never any soul was sick (*i. e.*) sensibly burthened with it, and willing to come to Jesus Christ for healing: for under that sin the will is so wounded, that they have no desire to Christ. O inestimable mercy! that the sickest sinner is capable of a perfect cure! There be thousands, and ten thousands, now in heaven and earth, who said once, Never was any case like theirs; so dangerous, so hopeless. The greatest of sinners have been perfectly recovered by Christ, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 11. O mercy, never to be duly estimated!

Infer. 2. *What a powerful restraint from sin, is the very method ordained by God for the cure of it!* Isa. liii. 5. "By his stripes "we are healed." The physician must die, that the patient might live; no other thing but the blood, the precious blood of Christ, is found in heaven or earth able to heal us, Heb. ix. 22, 26. This blood of Christ must be freshly applied to every new wound sin makes upon our souls, 1 John ii. 1, 2. every new sin wounds him afresh, opens the wounds of Christ anew. O think of this, again and again, you that so easily yield to the solicitations of Satan: Is it so easy, and so cheap, to sin, as you seem to make it? Doth the cure of souls cost nothing? True, it is free to us, but was it so to Christ? No, no, it was not; he knows the price of it, though you do not: Hath Christ healed you by his stripes, and can you put him under fresh sufferings for you so easily? Have you forgot also your own sick days and nights for sin, that you are careless in resisting and preventing it? Sure it is not easy for saints to wound Christ, and their own souls, at one stroke. If you renew your sins, you must also renew your sorrows and repentance, Psal. li. title. 2 Sam. xii. 13. you must feel the anguish and pain of a troubled spirit again, things with which the saints are not unacquainted; of which they may say, as the church, "Remembring my affliction, the wormwood and "the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance," Lam. iii. 19. Yea, and if you will yet be remiss in your watch, and so easily incur new guilt, though a pardon in the blood of Christ may heal your souls, yet some rod or other, in the hand of a displeased father, shall afflict your bodies, or smite you in your outward comforts, Psal. lxxxix. 23.

Infer. 3. *If Christ be the only physician of sick souls, what sin and folly is it for men to take Christ's work out of his hands, and attempt to be their own physician?*

Thus do those that superstitiously endeavour to heal their

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ſouls, by afflicting their bodies; not Chriſt's blood, but their own, muſt be the plaiſter: and as blind Papiſts, ſo, many carnal and ignorant Proteſtants ſtrive, by confeſſion, reſtitution, reformation, and ſtricter courſe of life, to heal thoſe wounds that ſin hath made upon their ſouls, without any reſpect to the blood of Chriſt: but this courſe ſhall not profit them at all. It may, for a time, divert, but can never heal them: the wounds, ſo ſkinned over, will open and bleed again. God grant it be not when our ſouls ſhall be out of the reach of the true and only remedy.

Infer. 4. *How ſad is the caſe of thoſe ſouls, to whom Chriſt hath not yet been a phyſician?* They are mortally wounded, by ſin, and are like to die of their ſickneſs; no ſaving, healing applications have hitherto been made unto their ſouls: and this is the caſe of the greateſt part of mankind, yea, of them that live under the diſcoveries of Chriſt in the goſpel. Which appears by theſe ſad ſymptoms.

Firſt, In that their eyes have not yet been opened, to ſee their ſin and miſery; in which illumination, the cure of ſouls begins, Acts xxvi. 18. To this day he hath not given them eyes to ſee, Deut. xxix. 4. but that terrible ſtroke of God, which blinds and hardens them, is too viſibly upon them, mentioned in Iſa. vi. 9, 10. No hope of healing, till the ſinner's eyes be opened to ſee his ſin and miſery.

Secondly, In that nothing will divorce and ſeparate them from their luſts; a ſure ſign they are not under Chriſt's cure, nor were ever made ſick of ſin. O if ever Chriſt be a phyſician to thy ſoul, he will make thee loathe what now thou loveſt, and ſay to thy moſt pleaſant and moſt profitable luſts, *Get ye hence*, Iſa. xxx. 22. Till then, there is no ground to think that Chriſt is a phyſician to you.

Thirdly, In that they have no ſenſible and preſſing need of Chriſt, nor make any earneſt enquiry after him, as, moſt certainly, you would do, if you were in the way of healing and recovery. Theſe, and many other ſad ſymptoms, do too plainly diſcover the diſeaſe of ſin, to be in its full ſtrength upon your ſouls; and if it ſo continue, how dreadful will the iſſue be? See Iſa. vi. 9, 10.

Infer. 5. *What cauſe have they to be glad, that are under the hand and care of Chriſt, in order to a cure, and who do find, or may, upon due examination, find their ſouls are in a very hopeful way of recovery!* Can we rejoice when the ſtrength of a natural diſeaſe is broken, and nature begins to recover eaſe and vigour again? And ſhall we not much more re-

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joice, when our souls begin to mend, and recover sensibly, and all comfortable signs of health and life appear upon them? particularly, when the understanding, which was ignorant and dark, hath the light of life beginning to dawn into it; such is that in 1 John ii. 27. When the will, which was rebellious and inflexible to the will of God, is brought to comply with that holy will, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. When the heart, which was harder than an adament, is now brought to contrition for sin, and can mourn as heartily over it, as ever a father did for a dead son, a beloved, and only son; when its aversations from God are gone, at least have no such power as once they had; but the thoughts are now fixed much upon God, and spiritual things begin to grow pleasant to the soul; when times of duty come to be longed for; and the soul never better pleased than in such seasons: when the hypocrisy of the heart is purged out, so that we begin to do all that we do heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, Col. iii. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 4.: when we begin to make conscience of secret sins, Psal. cxix. 113., and of secret duties, Matth. vi. 5, 6.: when we have an equal respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 8., and our hearts are under the holy, and awful eye of God, which doth, indeed, over-awe our souls, Gen. xvii. 1. O what sweet signs of a recovering soul are these! Surely such are in the skilful hand of the great Physician, who will perfect what yet remains to be done.

Second use for direction.

In the last place, this point yields us matter of advice and direction to poor souls that are under the disease of sin; and they are of two sorts, which I will distinctly speak to: *viz. First,* Such as are under their first sickness of spiritual sorrow for sin, and know not what course to take: or, *Secondly,* Such as have been longer in the hands of Christ the Physician, but are troubled to see the cure advance so slowly upon them, and fear the issue.

First, As to those that are in their first troubles for sin, and know not what course to take for ease and safety; I would address to them these following counsels.

First, Shut your ears against the dangerous counsels of carnal persons, or relations; for as they themselves are unacquainted with these troubles, so also are they with all proper remedies: and it is very usual with the devil to convey his temptations to distressed souls, by such hands; because, by them, he can do it with least suspicion. It was Augustine's complaint, that his

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own father took little care for his soul; and many parents act, in this case, as if they were employed by Satan.

Secondly, Be not too eager to get out of trouble, but be content to take God's way, and wait his time. No woman that is wise, would desire to have her travail hastened one day before the due time; nor will it be your interest to hasten too soon out of trouble. It is true, times of trouble are apt to seem tedious; but a false peace will endanger you more than a long trouble: a man may lengthen his own troubles to the loss of his own peace, and may shorten them to the hazard of his own soul.

Thirdly, Open your case to wise, judicious, and experienced Christians, and especially the ministers of Christ, whose office it is to counsel and direct you in these difficulties; and let not your troubles lie, like a secret, smothering fire, always in your own breasts. I know men are more ashamed to open their sins under convictions, than they were to commit them before conviction: but this is your interest, and the true way to your rest and peace. If there be with you, or near you, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew you your righteousness, and remedy, as it lies in Christ; neglect not your own souls, in a sinful concealment of your case: it will be the joy of their hearts to be employed in such work as this.

Fourthly, Be much with God in secret, open your hearts to him, and pour out complaints into his bosom. The cii. Psalm bears a title very suitable to your case and duty; yea, you will find if your troubles work kindly, and God intend a cure upon your souls, that nothing will be able to keep God and your souls asunder: whatever your incumbrances in the world be, some time will be daily redeemed, to be so spent betwixt you and God.

Fifthly, Plead hard with God, in prayer, for help and healing. "Heal my soul, (saith David) for I have sinned against thee," Psal. xli. 4. Tell him Christ hath his commission sealed for such as you are: he was sent to "bind up the broken-hearted," Isa. lxi. 1. Tell him he came into the world, "to seek and "save that which was lost," and so are you now, in your own account and apprehensions. Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou pursue a dried leaf? And why is my heart wounded with the sense of sin, and mine eyes open to see my danger and misery? Are not these the first dawnings of mercy upon sinners? O let it appear, that the time of mercy, even the set time, is now come.

Sixthly, Understand your peace to be in Christ only, and faith to be the only way to Christ and rest; let the great enquiry of your souls be after Christ and faith; study the nature and ne-

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ceſſity of theſe, and cry to God, day and night, for ſtrength to carry you to Chriſt in the way of faith.

Secondly, As to thoſe that have been longer under the hands of Chriſt, and yet are ſtill in troubles, and cannot obtain peace, but their wounds bleed ſtill, and all they hear in ſermons, or do in the way of duty, will not bring them to reſt; to ſuch I only add two or three words for a cloſe.

Firſt, Conſider whether you ever rightly cloſed with Chriſt ſince your firſt awakening, and whether there be not ſome way of ſin, in which you ſtill live: if ſo, no wonder your wounds are kept open, and your ſouls are ſtrangers to peace.

Secondly, If you be conſcious of no ſuch flaw in the foundation, conſider how much of this trouble may ariſe from your conſtitution and natural temper, which being melancholy, will be doubtful and ſuſpicious; you may find it ſo in other caſes of leſs moment, and be ſure Satan will not be wanting to improve it.

Thirdly, Acquaint yourſelves more with the nature of true juſtifying faith; a miſtake in that hath prolonged the troubles of many: if you look for it in no other act but aſſurance, you may eaſily overlook it, as it lies, in the mean time, in your affiance or acceptance. A true and proper conception of ſaving faith would go far in the cure of many troubled ſouls.

Fourthly, Be more thankful to ſhun ſin, than to get yourſelves clear of trouble: it is ſad to walk in darkneſs, but worſe to lie under guilt. Say, Lord, I would rather be grieved myſelf, than be a grief to thy Spirit. O keep me from ſin, how long ſoever thou keep me under ſorrow. Wait on God in the way of faith, and in a tender ſpirit towards ſin, and thy wounds ſhall be healed at laſt by thy great Phyſician.

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XI.

Containing the Second Motive to enforce the general Exhortation, from a ſecond Title of CHRIST.

Luke i. 72. *To perform the mercy promiſed to our fathers, and remember his holy covenant.*

THIS ſcripture is part of Zechariah's prophecy, at the riſing of that bright ſtar John, the harbinger and fore-

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runner of Christ: They are some of the first words he spake after God had loosed his tongue, which, for a time, was struck dumb for his unbelief. His tongue is now unbound, and at liberty to proclaim to all the world, the unspeakable riches of mercy through Jesus Christ, in a song of praise. Wherein note,

The mercy celebrated, *viz.* redemption by Christ, ver. 68.

The description of Christ by place and property, ver. 69.

The faithfulness of God in our redemption this way, ver. 70.

The benefit of being so redeemed by Christ, ver. 71.

The exact accomplishment of all the promises made to the *fathers* in sending Christ, the mercy promised into the world, ver. 72. "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers," *&c.* In these words we find two parts, *viz.*

1. A mercy freely promised.

2. The promised mercy faithfully performed.

First, You have a mercy freely promised, *viz.* by God the Father, from the beginning of the world, and often repeated and confirmed in several succeeding ages, to the fathers, in his covenant-transactions.

This mercy is Jesus Christ, of whom he speaks in this prophecy; the same which he stiles "An horn of salvation in the "house of David," ver. 69.

The mercy of God in scripture, is put either for,

1. His free favour to the creature. Or,

2. The effects and fruits of that favour.

It is put for the free and undeserved favour of God to the creature, and this favour of God may respect the creature two ways, either as *undeserving*, or as *ill-deserving*.

It respected innocent man, as *undeserving*; for Adam could put no obligation upon his benefactor. It respecteth fallen man, as *ill-deserving*. Innocent man could not merit favour, and fallen man did merit wrath: the favour or mercy of God to both is every way free; and that is the first acceptation of the word *mercy*: but then it is also taken for the effects and fruits of God's favour, and they are either

1. Principal and primary: or,

2. Subordinate and secondary.

Of secondary and subordinate mercies, there are multitudes, both temporal, respecting the body, and spiritual, respecting the soul; but the principal and primary mercy is but one, and that is Christ, the first-born of mercy; the capital mercy, the comprehensive root-mercy, from whom are all other mercies; and therefore called by a singular emphasis in my text, *The mercy*, *i. e.* the mercy of all mercies; without whom no drop of saving

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mercy can flow to any of the sons of men; and in whom are all the tender bowels of divine mercy yearning upon poor sinners. *The mercy*, and *the mercy promised*. The first promise of Christ was made to Adam, Gen. iii. 15. and was frequently renewed afterwards, to Abraham, to David, and, as the text speaks, *unto the fathers*, in their respective generations.

Secondly, We find here also, the promised mercy faithfully performed: "To perform the mercy promised." What mercy soever the love of God engaged him to promise, the faithfulness of God stands engaged for the performance thereof. Christ, the promised mercy, is not only performed, *truly*, but he is also performed, according to the promise in all the circumstances thereof, *exactly*. So he was promised to the fathers, and just so performed to us their children: Hence the note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ, the mercy of mercies, was graciously promised, and faithfully performed by God to his people.*

Three things are here to be opened:

First, Why Christ is stiled *the mercy*.

Secondly, What kind of mercy Christ is to his people.

Thirdly, How this mercy was performed.

First, Christ is the mercy, *emphatically* so called; the peerless, invaluable, and matchless mercy: Because he is the prime fruit of the mercy of God to sinners. The mercies of God are infinite; mercy gave the world, and us, our being; all our protections, provisions, and comforts, in this world, are the fruits of mercy, the free gifts of divine favour: But Christ is the first and chief; all other mercies, compared with him, are but fruits from that root, and streams from that fountain of mercy; the very bowels of divine mercy are in Christ, as in ver. 78. according to the tender mercies, or, as the Greek, the yearning bowels of the mercy of God.

Secondly, Christ is the *mercy*, because all the mercy of God to sinners, is dispensed, and conveyed through Christ to them, John i. 16. Col. ii. 3. Eph. iv. 7. Christ is the *medium* of all divine communications, the *channel* of grace; through him are both the *decursus et recursus gratiarum*; the flows of mercy from God to us, and the returns of praise from us to God. Fond and vain, therefore, are all the expectations of mercy out of Christ; no drop of saving mercy runs beside this channel.

Thirdly, Christ is the *mercy*, because all inferior mercies derive both their *nature*, *value*, *sweetness*, and *duration* from Christ, the fountain-mercy of all other mercies.

First, They derive their *nature* from Christ; for out of him, those things which men call mercies, are rather traps, and snares,

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than mercies to them, Prov. i. 32. The time will come, when the *rich*, that are chriſtleſs, will wiſh, O that we had been poor! And *nobles*, that are not ennobled by the new birth, O that we had been among the low rank of men! All theſe things that paſs for valuable mercies, like *cyphers*, ſignify much when ſuch an important figure as Chriſt ſtands before them, elſe they ſignify nothing to any man's comfort or benefit.

Secondly, They derive their *value*, as well as nature, from Chriſt: For how little, I pray you, doth it ſignify to any man to be rich, honourable, politic, and ſucceſsful in all his deſigns in the world, if, after all, he muſt lie down in hell?

Thirdly, All other mercies derive their *ſweetneſs* from Chriſt, and are but inſipid things without him. There is a twofold ſweetneſs in things; one *natural*, another *ſpiritual*: Thoſe that are out of Chriſt can reliſh the firſt, believers only reliſh both: They have the natural ſweetneſs that is in mercy itſelf, and a ſweetneſs ſupernatural, from Chriſt and the covenant, the way in which they receive them. Hence it is, that ſome men taſte more ſpiritual ſweetneſs in their *daily bread*, than others do in the *Lord's Supper*; and the ſame mercy, by this means, becomes a feaſt to ſoul and body at once.

Fourthly, All mercies have their *duration*, and perpetuity, from Chriſt; all chriſtleſs perſons hold their mercies upon the greateſt contingencies, and terms of uncertainty; if they be continued during this life, that is all: There is not one drop of mercy after death. But the mercies of the ſaints are continued to eternity; the end of their mercies on earth, is the beginning of their better mercies in heaven. There is a twofold end of mercies, one *perfective*, another *deſtructive*; the death of the ſaints perfects and completes their mercies, the death of the wicked deſtroys and cuts off their mercies: For theſe reaſons, Chriſt is called the mercy.

Secondly, In the next place, let us enquire what manner of mercy Chriſt is; and we ſhall find many lovely, and tranſcendent properties to commend him to our ſouls.

Firſt, He is a *free*, and undeſerved mercy, called upon that account, *The gift of God*, John iv. 10. And to ſhew how free this gift was, God gave him to us when we were enemies, Rom. v. 8. Needs muſt that mercy be free, which is given, not only to the undeſerving, but to the ill-deſerving; the benevolence of God was the ſole, impulſive cauſe of this gift, John iii. 16.

Secondly, Chriſt is a *full* mercy, repleniſhed with all that anſwers to the *wiſhes*, or *wants* of ſinners; in him, alone, is found whatever the juſtice of an angry God requires for ſatisfaction, or the

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neceſſities of ſouls require for their ſupply. Chriſt is full of mercy, both *extenſively*, and *intenſively*: in him are all kinds, and ſorts of mercies; and in him are the higheſt and moſt perfect degrees of mercy; "For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould "all fulneſs dwell," Col. i. 19.

Thirdly, Chriſt is the *ſeaſonable* mercy, given by the Father to us in due time, Rom. v. 6. In the fulneſs of time, Gal. iv. 4. a ſeaſonable mercy in his *exhibition* to the world in *general*, and a ſeaſonable mercy in his *application* to the ſoul in *particular*: the wiſdom of God pitched upon the beſt time for his incarnation, and it takes the very propereſt for his application. When a poor ſoul is diſtreſſed, loſt, at its wits end, and ready to periſh; then comes Chriſt: All God's works are done in ſeaſon, but none more ſeaſonable than this great work of ſalvation by Chriſt.

Fourthly, Chriſt is the *neceſſary mercy*, there is an abſolute neceſſity of Jeſus Chriſt; hence in ſcripture he is called the "bread of life," John vi. 48. he is bread to the hungry; he is the "water of life," John vii. 37. as cold water to the thirſty ſoul. He is a ranſom for captives, Mat. xx. 28. a garment to the naked, Rom. xiii. *ult.* Bread is not ſo neceſſary to the hungry, nor water to the thirſty, nor a ranſom to the captive, nor a garment to the naked; as Chriſt is to the ſoul of a ſinner: The breath of our noſtrils, the life of our ſouls, is in Jeſus Chriſt.

Fifthly, Chriſt is a *fountain-mercy*, and all other mercies flow from him: A believer may ſay with Chriſt, "All my "ſprings are in thee;" from his merit, and from his ſpirit, flow our redemption, juſtification, ſanctification, peace, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and bleſſedneſs in the world to come: "In that day ſhall there be a fountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1.

Sixthly, Chriſt is a *ſatisfying mercy*; he that is full of Chriſt, can feel the want of nothing. "I deſire to know nothing, "but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Chriſt bounds and terminates the vaſt deſires of the ſoul: He is the very ſabbath of the ſoul. How hungry, empty, and ſtraitned, on every ſide, is the ſoul of man, in the abundance and fulneſs of all outward things, till it come to Chriſt? the weary motions of a reſtleſs ſoul, like thoſe of a river, cannot be at reſt till they pour themſelves into Chriſt, the ocean of bleſſedneſs.

Seventhly, Chriſt is a *peculiar mercy*, intended for, and applied to a remnant among men; ſome would extend redemption as large as the world, but the goſpel limits it to thoſe, only, that believe; and thoſe believers are, upon that account, called

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a *peculiar people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. The offers of Chriſt, indeed, are large, and general; but the application of Chriſt is but too few, Iſa. liii. 1. The greater cauſe have they, to whom Chriſt comes, to lie with their mouths in the duſt, aſtoniſhed, and overwhelmed with the ſenſe of ſo peculiar and diſtinguiſhing a mercy.

Eightly, Jeſus Chriſt is a *ſuitable mercy*, fitted, in every reſpect, to all our needs and wants, 1 Cor. i. 20. wherein the admirable wiſdom of God is illuſtriouſly diſplayed; "Ye are "complete in him," (ſaith the apoſtle) Col. ii. 20. Are we enemies? He is *reconciliation*: Are we ſold to ſin and Satan? He is *redemption*: Are we condemned by the law? He is the Lord our righteouſneſs: Hath ſin polluted us? He is a *fountain opened* for ſin, and for uncleanneſs: Are we loſt, by departing from God? he is the *way* to the Father. Reſt is not ſo ſuitable to the weary, nor bread to the hungry, as Chriſt is to the ſenſible ſinner.

Ninthly, Chriſt is an *aſtoniſhing and wonderful mercy*; his Name is called *wonderful*, Iſa. ix. 6. and as his name is, ſo is he, a wonderful Chriſt: His Perſon is a wonder. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the "fleſh:"

His abaſement wonderful, Phil. ii. 6. His love is a wonderful love; his redemption full of wonders; angels deſire to look into it. He is, and will be admired by *angels* and *ſaints* to all *eternity*.

Tenthly, Jeſus Chriſt is *an incomparable, and matchleſs mercy*: "as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, ſo is my be-"loved among the ſons," (ſaith the enamoured ſpouſe) Cant. ii. 3. Draw the compariſon how you will, betwixt Chriſt and all other enjoyments, you will find none, in heaven or earth, to equal him: He is more than all *externals*, as the light of the *ſun* is more than that of a *candle*: Nay, even the worſt of Chriſt is better than the beſt of the world; his reproaches are better than the world's pleaſures, Heb. xi. 25. He is more than all *ſpirituals*, as the *fountain* is more than the *ſtream*. He is more than juſtification, as the *cauſe* is more than the *effect*; more than ſanctification, as the *perſon* himſelf is more than the image, or *picture*. He is more than all peace, all comfort, all joys, as the *tree* is more than the *fruit*. Nay, draw the compariſon betwixt Chriſt and things external, and you will find him better than they; for what is heaven without Chriſt? Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" If Chriſt ſhould ſay to the ſaints take heaven among you, but as for me I will withdraw myſelf from you; the ſaints would weep, even in heaven itſelf,

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and say, Lord, heaven will be no more heaven to us, except thou be there; who art by far the better half of heaven.

Eleventhly, Christ is an *unsearchable mercy*; who can fully express his wonderful name? Prov. xxx. 4. Who can tell over his *unsearchable riches?* Eph. iii. 8. Hence it is, that souls never tire in the study or love of Christ, because new wonders are eternally rising out of him: He is a deep which no line of any created understanding, angelical or human, can fathom.

Twelfthly, and *lastly*, Christ is an *everlasting mercy*; "the "same yesterday, to day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. All other enjoyments are perishable, time-eaten things; time, like a moth, will fret them out: But the riches of Christ are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. The graces of Christ are durable graces, John iv. 14. All the creatures are flowers, that appear and fade in their month; but this Rose of Sharon, this Lilly of the Valley never withers. Thus you see the mercy performed, with its desirable properties.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened, is the manner of God's performing his mercy to his people; which the Lord did,

1. Really, and truly, as he had promised him.

2. Exactly agreeable to the promises and predictions of him.

First, Really, and truly: as he had promised, so he made good the promise. Acts ii. 36. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The manifestation of Christ in the flesh, was no phantasm, or delusion, but a most evident and palpable truth. 1 John i. 1. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, "which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." A truth so certain, that the assertors of it appealed to the very enemies of Christ for the certainty thereof, Acts ii. 22. Yea, not only the sacred, but prophane writers, witness to it; not only the *evangelists* and *apostles*, but even the *heathen* writers of those times, both *roman* and *jewish*, as Suetonius, Tacitus, Plinius the younger, and Josephus the *jewish antiquary*, do all acknowledge it.

Secondly, As God did really, and truly perform Christ the promised mercy, so he performed this promised mercy *exactly*, agreeable to the promises, types, and predictions made of him to the fathers, even the most minute circumstances thereof. This is a great truth for our faith to be established in: Let us therefore cast our eyes, both upon the *promises*, and *performances* of God, with respect to Christ, the mercy of mercies. See how he

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was repreſented to the fathers, long before his manifeſtation in the fleſh; and what an one he appeared to be when he was really exhibited in it.

Firſt, As to his perſon and qualifications, as it was *foretold*, ſo it was *fulfilled*. His original was ſaid to be unſearchable, and eternal, Micah v. 2. and ſo he affirmed himſelf to be, Rev. i. 11. "I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt." John vi. 31, 32. "Before Abraham was, I am." His two natures, united into one perſon, were plainly foretold, Zech. xiii. 7. *The man my Fellow*; and ſuch a one God performed, Rom ix. 5. His immaculate purity and holineſs were foretold Dan. ix. 24. "To a-"noint the moſt Holy;" ſome render it, *the great Saint*, the Prince of Saints; and ſuch a one he was indeed, when he lived in this world. John viii. 46. "Which of you convinceth me of "ſin?" His Offices were foretold, the prophetical Office predicted, Deut. xviii. 15. and fulfilled in him, John i. 18. His prieſtly Office foretold, Pſal. cx. 4. fulfilled, Heb. ix. 14. his kingly Office foretold, Micah v. 2. and in him fulfilled; his very enemies being judges, Matth. xxvii. 37.

Secondly, As to his birth, the time, place, and manner thereof were foretold to the fathers, and exactly performed, to a tittle.

Firſt, The time prefixed, more generally in *Jacob's prophecy*, Gen. xliv. 10. When the Scepter ſhould depart from Judah, as, indeed, it did in Herod the Idumean: More particulary in Daniel's ſeventy weeks, from the decree of Darius, Dan. ix. 24. anſwering exactly to the time of his birth; ſo cogent, and full of proof, that Porphyry, the great enemy of Chriſtians, had no other evaſion, but that this prophecy was deviſed after the event: Which yet the Jews (as bitter enemies to Chriſt, as himſelf) will by no means allow to be true. And, laſtly, the time of his birth was exactly pointed at in Haggai's prophecy, Hag. ii. 7, 9. compared with Mal. iii 1. He muſt come whilſt the ſecond temple ſtood; at that time was a general expectation of him, John i. 19. and at that very time he came, Luke ii. 38.

Secondly, The place of his birth was foretold to be Bethlehem Ephrata, Micah v. 2. and ſo it was Mat. ii. 5, 6. to be brought up in Nazareth, Zech. vi. 12. "Behold the man whoſe name is "the branch." The word is *Netzer*, whence is the word Nazarite. And there, indeed, was our Lord brought up, Mat. ii. 23.

Thirdly, His parent was to be a *virgin*, Iſa. vii. 14. punctually fulfilled, Mat. i. 20, 21, 22, 23.

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Fourthly, His ſtock, or tribe, was foretold to be Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. and it is evident (ſaith the apoſtle) "that our Lord "ſprang out of Judah," Heb. vii. 14.

Fifthly, His *harbinger*, or forerunner, was foreteld, Mal. iv. 5, 6. fulfilled in John the Baptiſt, Luke i. 16, 17.

Sixthly, The obſcurity, and meanneſs of his birth were predicted, Iſa. liii. 2. Zech. ix. 9. to which the event anſwered, Luke ii. 12.

Thirdly, His doctrine, and miracles were foretold, Iſa. xvi. 1, 2. Ib. xxxv. 4, 5. the accompliſhment whereof in Chriſt, is evident in the hiſtory of all the *evangeliſts*.

Fourthly, His death for us was foretold by the prophets, Dan. ix. 26. "The Meſſiah ſhall be cut off, but not for himſelf:" Iſa. liii. 5. "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions." And ſo he was, John xi. 50. The very kind, and manner of his death, was prefigured in the brazen ſerpent, his type; and anſwered in his death upon the croſs, John iii. 14.

Fifthly, His Burial in the *tomb* of a rich man, was foretold, Iſa. liii. 9. and accompliſhed moſt exactly, Mat. xxvii. 59, 60.

Sixthly, His reſurrection from the dead was typed out in Jonah, and fulfilled in Chriſt's abode three days and nights in the grave, Mat. xii. 49.

Seventhly, The wonderful ſpreading of the goſpel in the world, even to the Iſles of the Gentiles, was propheſied of, Iſa. xlix. 6. to the truth whereof we are not only the witneſſes, but the happy inſtances and examples of it. Thus the promiſed mercy was performed.

Infer. 1. *If Chriſt be the mercy of mercies, the medium of conveying all other mercies, from God to men: then, in vain, do men expect, and hope for mercy of God, out of Jeſus Chriſt.*

I know many poor ſinners comfort themſelves with this, when they come upon a bed of ſickneſs; I am ſinful, but God is merciful: and it is very true, God is merciful; plenteous in mercy; his mercy is great above the heavens; mercy pleaſeth him: and all this they that are in Chriſt ſhall find experimentally, to their comfort and ſalvation. But what is all this to thee, if thou art Chriſtleſs? There is not one drop of ſaving mercy that comes in any other channel than Chriſt, to the ſoul of any man.

But muſt I then expect no mercy out of Chriſt? This is a hard caſe; very uncomfortable doctrine. Yes, thou mayeſt be a Chriſtleſs, and covenantleſs ſoul, and yet have variety of temporal mercies, as Iſhmael had, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. God may give thee the fatneſs of the earth, riches, honours, pleaſures,

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a numerous and prosperous posterity; will that content thee? Yes, yes, if I may have heaven too: No, no, neither heaven, nor pardon, nor any other spiritual, or eternal mercy, may be expected out of Christ, Jude, ver. 21. O deceive not yourselves in this point; there are two bars betwixt you and all spiritual mercies, *viz.* the guilt of sin, and the filth of sin: and nothing, but your own union with Christ, can remove these, and so open the passage for spiritual mercies to your souls.

Why, but I will repent of sin, strive to obey the commands of God, make restitution for the wrongs I have done, cry to God for mercy, bind my soul with vows, and strong resolutions against sin, for time to come: will not all this lay a groundwork for hope of mercy to my soul? No, no, this will not, this cannot do it.

First, All your *sorrows*, tears, and mournings for sin, cannot obtain mercy: could you shed as many tears for any one sin that ever you committed, as all the children of Adam have shed upon any account whatsoever, since the creation of the world; they will not purchase the pardon of that one sin: for the law accepts no short payment; it requires plenary satisfaction, and will not discharge any soul without it: nor can it acknowledge, or own your souls to be such. The repentance of a soul finds, through Christ, acceptance with God, but out of him 'tis nothing.

Secondly, All your *strivings* to obey the commands of God, and live more strictly for time to come, will not obtain mercy. Mat. v. 20. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righte-"ousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter "into the kingdom of heaven."

Thirdly, Your *restitution*, and reparation of wrongs you have done, cannot obtain mercy: Judas restored, and yet was damned. Man is repaired, but God is not. Remission is the act of God, 'tis he must loose your consciences from the bond of guilt, or they can never be loosed.

Fourthly, All your *cries* to God for mercy, will not prevail for mercy, if you be out of Christ, Mat. vii. 22. Job xxvii. 29. A righteous judge will not reverse the just sentence of the law, though the prisoner at the bar fall upon his knees, and cry, Mercy, mercy.

Fifthly, Your *vows* and engagements to God for time to come, cannot obtain mercy; for they being made in your own strength, 'tis impossible you should keep them; and if you could, yet it is impossible they should obtain remission and mercy: should you never sin more for time to come, yet how shall God

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be satisfied for sins past? Justice must have satisfaction, or you can never have remission, Rom. iii. 25, 26. and no work wrought by man can satisfy divine justice; nor is the satisfaction of Christ made over to any for their discharge, but to such, only, as are in him; therefore, never expect mercy out of Christ.

Infer. 2. *Is Christ, the mercy of mercies, greater, better, and more necessary than all other mercies; then let no inferior mercy satisfy you for your portion.*

God hath mercies of all sorts to give, but Christ is the chief, the prime mercy of all mercies: O be not satisfied without that mercy. When * Luther had a rich present sent him, "he protested God should not put him off so:" and David was of the same mind, Psal. xvii. 14. If the Lord should give any of you the desires of your hearts in the good things of this life, let not that satisfy you, whilst you are Christless. For,

First, What is there in these earthly enjoyments, whereof the vilest men have not a greater fulness than you? Job xxi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Psal. xvii. 10. and lxxiii. 3, 12.

Secondly, What comfort can all these things give to a soul already condemned, as thou art? John iii. 18.

Thirdly, What sweetness can be in them, whilst they are all unsanctified things to you? enjoyments, and sanctification, are two distinct things, Psal. xxxvii. 16. Prov. x. 22. Thousands of unsanctified enjoyments will not yield your souls one drop of solid spiritual comfort.

Fourthly, What pleasure can you take in these things, of which death must, shortly, strip you naked? You must die, you must die; and whose then shall all those things be, for which you have laboured? Be not so fond, to think of leaving a great name behind you; 'tis but a poor felicity (as Chrysostome well observes) to be tormented where thou art, and praised where thou art not †: the sweeter your portion hath been on earth, the more intolerable will your condition be in hell; yea, these earthly delights do not only increase the torments of the damned, but also prepare (as they are instruments of sin) the souls of men for damnation. Prov. i. 32. "Surely the prosperity of fools shall "destroy them." Be restless, therefore, till Christ, the mercy of mercies, be the root and fountain, yielding and sanctifying all other mercies to you.

Infer. 3. *Is Christ, the mercy of mercies, infinitely better than*

* *Valde protestatus sum, me nolle sic ab eo satiari.* Luth.

† For then the devouring flame burns up those whom carnal pleasure pollutes.

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all other mercies; then let all that be in Christ be content, and well satisfied, whatever other inferior mercies the wisdom of God sees fit to deny them. You have a Benjamin's portion, a plentiful inheritance in Christ; will you yet complain? Others have houses, splendid and magnificent upon earth; but you have "an house made without hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. Others are cloathed with rich and costly apparel, your souls are clothed with the white, pure robes of Christ's righteousness. Isa. lxi. 10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, "my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath cloathed me "with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the "robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with "ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." Let those that have full tables, heavy purses, rich lands, but no Christ; be rather objects of your pity, than envy: it is better, like store-cattle, to be kept lean and hungry; than, with the fatted ox, to tumble in flowery meadows, thence to be led away to the shambles. God hath not a better mercy to give than Christ, thy portion; in him all necessary mercies are secured to thee, and thy wants and straits sanctified to thy good. O! therefore, never open thy mouth to complain against the bountiful God.

Infer. 4. Is Christ *the mercy*, (i. e.) he in whom all the tender mercies of God towards poor sinners are; *then let none be discouraged in going to Christ, by reason of the sin and unworthiness that are in them:* his very name is *mercy*, and as his name is, so is he. Poor drooping sinner, encourage thyself in the way of Faith; the Christ to whom thou art going, is mercy itself to broken-hearted sinners, moving towards him in the way of faith: doubt not that mercy will repulse thee; it is against both its name, and nature, so to do. Jesus Christ is so merciful to poor souls, that come to him, that he hath received and pardoned the chiefest of sinners; men that stood as remote from mercy, as any in the world, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Those that shed the blood of Christ, have yet been washed in that blood from their sin, Acts ii. 36, 37. Mercy receives sinners, without exception of great and heinous ones. John vii 37. "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Gospel invitations run, in general terms, to all sinners that are heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28. When Mr. Bilney, the martyr, heard a minister preaching at this rate, O thou old sinner, who hast been serving the devil these fifty or sixty years; dost thou think that Christ will receive thee now? O! said he, what a preaching of Christ is here? Had Christ been thus preached to me in the day

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of my trouble for sin, what had become of me? But, blessed be God, there is a sufficiency, both of merit, and mercy, in Jesus Christ, for all sinners, for the vilest among sinners, whose hearts shall be made willing to come unto him. So merciful is the Lord Jesus Christ, that he moves first, Isa. lxii. 1, 2. so merciful, that he upbraids none, Ezek. xviii. 22. so merciful, that he will not despise the weakest, if sincere, desires of souls, Isa. xlii. 3. so merciful, that nothing more grieves him, than our unwillingness to come unto him for mercy, John v. 40. so merciful, that he waiteth, to the last, upon sinners, to shew them mercy, Rom. x. 21. Mat. xxiii. 37. in a word, so merciful, that it is his greatest joy when sinners come unto him, that he may shew them mercy, Luke xv. 5, 22.

Object. But yet it cannot enter into my thoughts that I should obtain mercy.

Sol. First, You measure God by yourselves, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. "If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Man will not, but the merciful God will, upon the submission of the enemies to him.

Secondly, You are discouraged, because you have not tried. Go to Jesus Christ, poor distressed sinners; try him, and then report what a Christ thou findest him to be.

Object. But I have neglected the time of mercy, and now it is too late.

Sol. How know you that? Have you seen the book of life, or turned over the records of eternity? Or do you not unwarrantably intrude into the secrets of God, which belong not to you? Besides, if the treaty were at an end, how is it that thy heart is now distressed for sin, and sollicitous after deliverance from it?

Object. But I have waited long, and yet see no mercy for me.

Sol. May not mercy be coming, and you not see it? Or have you not waited at the wrong door? If you wait for the mercy of God through Christ, in the way of humiliation and faith, and continue waiting; assuredly mercy shall come at last.

Infer. 5. *Hath God performed the mercy promised to the Fathers, the great mercy, the capital mercy, Jesus Christ; then let no man distrust God for the performance of lesser mercies, contained in any other promises of the scripture.* The performance of this mercy secures the performance of all other mercies to us. For,

First, Christ is a greater mercy than any other which yet remains to be performed, Rom. viii. 32.

Secondly, This mercy virtually comprehends all other mercies, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

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Thirdly, The promises that contain all other mercies, are ratified and confirmed to believers in Christ, 2. Cor. i. 20.

Fourthly, It was much more improbable that God would bestow his own Son upon the world, than that he should bestow any other mercy upon it. Wait, therefore, in a comfortable expectation of the fulfilling of all the rest of the promises in their seasons. Hath he given thee Christ? He will give thee bread to eat, raiment to put on, support in troubles, and whatsoever else thy soul or body stands in need of: The blessings contained in all other promises, are fully secured by the performance of this great promise; thy pardon, peace, acceptance with God now, and enjoyment of him for ever, shall be fulfilled: The great mercy, Christ, makes way for all other mercies to the souls of believers.

Infer. 6. Lastly, *How mad are they that part with Christ, the best of mercies, to secure and preserve any temporal lesser mercies to themselves!* Thus Demas and Judas gave up Christ to gain a little of the world; O soul-undoing bargain! How dear do they pay for the world, that purchase it with the loss of Christ, and their own peace for ever!

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the mercy of mercies.

* *

SERMON XII.

Containing a third Motive to enliven the general Exhortation, from a third Title of CHRIST.

CANT. v. Part of Verse 16.——*Yea, He is altogether lovely.*

AT the ninth verse of this chapter, you have a query propounded to the *spouse*, by the *daughters* of *Jerusalem*: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" To this question the spouse returns her answer in the following verses, wherein she asserts his excellency in general. Ver. 10. "He is "the chiefest among ten thousands;" confirms that general assertion, by an enumeration of his particular excellencies, to ver. 16. where she closes up her *character* and *encomium* of her beloved, with an elegant *epiphonema*, in the words that I have read; "Yea, he is altogether lovely."

The words, you see, are an affirmative proposition, setting forth the transcendent loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and naturally resolve themselves into three parts, *viz.*

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1. The subject.
2. The predicate.
3. The manner of predication.

First, The *subject*, *He*, *viz.* the Lord Jesus Christ, after whom she had been seeking, for whom she was sick of love; concerning whom these daughters of Jerusalem had enquired: whom she had endeavoured so *graphically* to describe in his particular excellencies. This is the great and excellent *subject* of whom she here speaks.

Secondly, The *predicate*, or what she affirmeth, or saith of him, *viz.* That he is a *lovely one*, *Machamaddim*, desires; according to the import of the * original, "which signifies earnestly "to desire, covet; or long after that which is most pleasant, "grateful, delectable, and admirable;" The original word is both in the *abstract*, and of the *plural number*, which speaks Christ to be the very essence of all delights and pleasures; the very soul and substance of them. As all the rivers are gathered into the ocean, which is the congregation or meeting-place of all the waters in the world: so Christ is that ocean in which all true delights and pleasures meet.

Thirdly, The *manner of predication*: He is [*altogether*] lovely, *Totus*, *totus desiderabilis*; lovely in all, and in every part: as if she had said, Look on him, in what respect or particular you will; cast your eye upon this lovely object, and view him any way; turn him in your serious thoughts, which way you will; consider his person, his offices, his works, or any other thing belonging to him; you shall find him *altogether lovely*: There is nothing ungrateful in him; there is nothing lovely without him. Hence note,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ is the loveliest person souls can set their eyes upon.* Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children "of men."

That is said of Jesus Christ, which cannot be said of any creature; that he is "altogether lovely." In opening this lovely point, I shall,

1. Weigh the importance of this phrase, "altogether lovely."
2. Shew you in what respects Christ is so.

First, Let us weigh this excellent expression, and particularly consider what is contained in it, and you shall find this expression, "Altogether lovely:"

* *Significat appetere, expetere quod jocundum, gratum, voluptuosum, utile et amabile est.* Pag.

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First, That it excludes all unlovelineſs, and diſtaſtefulneſs, from Jeſus Chriſt. So † Vatablus; "There is nothing in him "which is not amiable:" The excellencies of Jeſus Chriſt are perfectly excluſive of all their oppoſites; there is nothing of a contrary nature, or quality found in him, to alloy, or debaſe his excellency. And in this reſpect Chriſt infinitely tranſcends the moſt excellent and lovelieſt creatures. For whatſoever lovelineſs is found in them, it is not without a diſtaſteful tang; the faireſt pictures muſt have their *ſhadows*: The moſt orient, and tranſplendent ſtones, muſt have their *foils* to ſet off their beauty; the beſt creature is but a bitter ſweet, at beſt: If there be ſomewhat pleaſing, there is alſo ſomewhat diſtaſting; if there be gracious and natural excellencies in the ſame perſon, to delight us, yet there is, alſo, ſome natural corruption intermixed with it, to diſtaſte us. But it is not ſo in our altogether lovely Chriſt; his excellencies are pure, and unmixed; he is a ſea of ſweetneſs, without one drop of gall.

Secondly, ‡ *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) as there is nothing unlovely found in him, ſo all that is in him is wholly lovely; as every ray of God is precious, ſo every thing that is in Chriſt is precious: Who can weigh Chriſt in a pair of balances, and tell you what his worth is? "His price is above rubies, and all that thou "canſt deſire is not to be compared with him," Prov. viii. 11.

Thirdly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) He is comprehenſive of all things that are lovely; he ſeals up the ſum of all lovelineſs: *Quae faciunt diviſa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt*; Things that ſhine as ſingle ſtars, with a particular glory, all meet in Chriſt, as a glorious conſtellation. Col. i. 19. "It pleaſed the Father "that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell." Caſt your eyes among all created beings, ſurvey the univerſe, obſerve ſtrength in one, beauty in a ſecond, faithfulneſs in a third, wiſdom in a fourth; but you ſhall find none excelling in them all, as Chriſt doth. Bread hath one quality, water another, raiment another, phyſic another; but none hath all in itſelf, as Chriſt hath: He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirſty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded; and whatever a ſoul can deſire, is found in him, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Fourthly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) Nothing is lovely in *oppoſition* to him, or in ſeparation from him. If he be altogether lovely, then whatſoever is oppoſite to, or ſeparate from him, can

† *Nihil in eo quod non eſt amabile.*

‡ The more excellent he is, the more is he to be ſought after by earneſt prayers and deſires. *Brightman.*

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have no loveliness in it; take away Christ, and where is the loveliness of any enjoyment? The best creature-comfort out of Christ, is but a broken cistern; it cannot hold one drop of true comfort, Psal. lxxiii. 26. It is with the creature, the sweetest and loveliest creature, as with a beautiful image in the glass: turn away the face, and where is the image? Riches, honours, and comfortable relations, are sweet, when the face of Christ smiles upon us through them; but without him, what empty trifles are they all?

Fifthly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) Transcending all created excellencies, in beauty and loveliness; so much it speaks. If you compare Christ and other things, be they never so lovely, never so excellent, and desirable; Christ carries away all loveliness from them: "He is (saith the apostle) before all things," Col. i. 17. Not only before all things, in time, nature and order; but before all things, in dignity, glory, and true excellency: In all things he must have the pre-eminence. For let us but compare Christ's excellency with the creatures, in a few particulars, and how evidently will the transcendent loveliness of Jesus Christ appear! For,

First, All other loveliness is *derivative* and secondary; but the loveliness of Christ is *original* and *primary*. Angels and men, the world, and all the desirables in it, receive what excelency they have from him; they are streams from the fountain: But as the waters, in the fountain itself, are more abundant; so more pure and ‖ pleasant than the streams: And the farther any thing departs and is removed from its fountain and original, the less excellency there is in it.

Secondly, The loveliness and excellency of all other things, is but *relative*, and *respective*, consisting in its reference to Christ, and subserviency to his glory; but Christ is lovely, considered *absolutely* in himself: He is desirable for himself, other things are so for him.

Thirdly, The beauty and loveliness of all other things, is fading and perishing; but the loveliness of Christ is fresh to all eternity: the sweetness of the best creatures is a fading flower; if not before, yet certainly at death, it must fade away. Job iv. 21. "Doth not their excellency, which is in them, go away?" Yes, yes, whether natural excellencies of the body, or acquired endowments of the mind, lovely features, amiable qualities, attracting

‖ *Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ.* Waters drink more pleasantly from the fountain itself.

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excellencies; all these, like pleasant flowers, are withered, faded, and destroyed, by death; "but Christ is still the same, yester-"day, to day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8.

Fourthly, The beauty and loveliness of creatures are *ensnaring*, and dangerous; a man may make an *idol* thereof, and dote, beyond the bounds of moderation, upon them; but there is no danger of excess in the love of Christ: The soul is then in the healthiest frame and temper, when it is most sick of love to Christ, Cant. v. 8.

Fifthly, The loveliness of every creature is of a *cloying* and glutting nature; our estimation of it abates, and sinks by our nearer approach to it, or longer enjoyment of it; creatures, like pictures, are fairest at a due distance: but it is not so with Christ; the nearer the soul approacheth him, and the longer it lives in the enjoyment of him, still the more sweet and desirable is he.

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, All other loveliness is *unsatisfying*, and straitening to the soul of man; there is not room enough in any one, or in all the creatures, for the soul of man to dilate and expatiate itself; but it still feels itself confined, and narrowed within those strait limits *: And this comes to pass from the inadequateness, and unsuitableness of the creature, to the nobler and more excellent soul of man; which like a ship in a narrow river, hath not room to turn; and, besides, is ever, and anon, striking ground, and foundering in those shallows. But Jesus Christ is every way adequate to the vast desires of the soul; in him it hath sea room enough; there it may spread all its sails, no fear of touching the bottom. And thus you see what is the importance of this phrase, *Altogether lovely*.

Secondly, Next I promised to shew you in what respects Jesus Christ is altogether lovely. And,

First, *He is altogether lovely in his person:* a Deity dwelling in flesh, John i. 14. The wonderful union and perfection of the divine and human nature in Christ, render him an object of admiration, and adoration to angels and men, 1 Tim. iii. 16. God never presented to the world such a vision of glory before: And then, consider how the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ is repleniished with all the graces of the Spirit, so as never

* *Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis:*
Æstuat infelix angusto in limite mundi.

One world is not sufficient for the Macedonian youth; (*viz.* Alexander) he frets for being confined within the narrow boundary of the world.

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any of all the saints was filled; O how lovely doth this render him! John iii. 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him:" This makes him fairer than the children of men, grace being poured into his lips, Psal. xlv. 2. If a small measure of grace in the saints, makes them such sweet and desirable companions; what must the riches and fulness of the Spirit of grace, filling Jesus Christ without measure, make him in the eyes of believers? O what a glory and a lustre must it stamp upon him!

Secondly, *He is altogether lovely in his offices:* for let us but consider the suitableness, fulness, and comfortableness of them.

First, The *suitableness* of the offices of Christ to the miseries and wants of men; and we cannot but adore the infinite wisdom of God in his investiture with them; we are, by nature, blind and ignorant, at best but groping in the dim light of nature after God, Acts xvii. 27. Jesus Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, Isa. xlix. 6. When this great prophet came into the world, then did the day-spring from on high visit us, Luke i. 78. The state of nature is a state of alienation from, and enmity against God; Christ comes into the world an atoning sacrifice, making peace by the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20. All the world, by nature, are in bondage and captivity to Satan, a lamentable thraldom; Christ comes, with a kingly power, to rescue sinners, as a prey from the mouth of the terrible one.

Secondly, Let the *fulness* of his offices be also considered, by reason whereof he is able "to save to the uttermost, all that "come to God by him," Heb. vii. 25. The three offices, comprising in them all that our souls do need, become an universal relief to all our wants; and therefore,

Thirdly, Unspeakably *comfortable* must the offices of Christ be to the souls of sinners. If light be pleasant to our eyes, how pleasant is that light of life springing from the Sun of righteousness! Mal. iv. 2. If a pardon be sweet to a condemned malefactor, how sweet must the sprinkling the blood of Jesus be to the trembling conscience of a law-condemned sinner? If a rescue from a cruel tyrant be sweet to a poor captive, how sweet must it be to the ears of enslaved sinners, to hear the voice of liberty and deliverance proclaimed by Jesus Christ? Out of the several offices of Christ, as out of so many fountains, all the promises of the new covenant flow, as so many soul-refreshing streams of peace and joy: all the promises of illumination, counsel and direction flow out of the *prophetical office;* all the promises of reconciliation, peace, pardon and acceptation flow out of the *priestly office*, with the sweet streams of joy, and spiritual com-

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forts depending thereupon: all the promiſes of converting, increaſing, defending, directing, and ſupplying grace, flow out of the *kingly office* of Chriſt; indeed, all promiſes may be reduced to the three offices: ſo that Jeſus Chriſt muſt needs be *altogether lovely* in his offices.

Thirdly, Jeſus Chriſt is altogether *lovely* in his relations.

Firſt, He is a lovely *Redeemer*. Iſa. lxi. 1. He came to open the priſon-doors to them that are bound. Needs muſt this Redeemer be a lovely one, if we conſider the *depth of miſery* from which he redeemed us, even "from the wrath to come," 1 Theſſ. i. 10. How lovely was Titus, in the eyes of the poor enthralled Greeks, whom he delivered from their bondage! this endeared him to them unto that degree, that when their liberty was proclaimed, they even trod one another to death to ſee the herald that proclaimed it; and all the night following, with inſtruments of muſic, danced about his tent, crying with united voices, "a Saviour, a Saviour." Or, whether we conſider the *numbers redeemed*, and the *means* of their redemption. Rev. v. 9. "And they ſang a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to "take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt "ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of eve-"ry kindred and tongue, and people, and nation." He redeemed us not with ſilver and gold, but with his own precious blood, by way of price, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. with his out-ſtretched and glorious arm, by way of *power*, Col. i. 13. he redeemed us *freely*, Eph. i. 7. *fully*, Rom. viii. 1. *ſeaſonably*, Gal. iv. 4. and out of ſpecial and peculiar *love*, John xvii. 9. In a word, he hath redeemed us for ever, never more to come into bondage, 1 Pet. i. 5. John x. 28. O how lovely is Jeſus Chriſt in the relation of a Redeemer to God's elect!

Secondly, He is a lovely bridegroom to all that he eſpouſes to himſelf. How doth the church glory in him, in the words following in my text; "This is my Beloved, and this is my "Friend, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem!" *q. d.* Heaven and earth cannot ſhew ſuch another: which needs no fuller proof than the following particulars.

Firſt, That he eſpouſes to himſelf, in mercy and in loving-kindneſs, ſuch deformed, defiled, and altogether unworthy ſouls as we are; who have no beauty, no excellency to make us deſirable in his eyes: all the ſprings of his love to us are in his own breaſt, Deut. vii. 7. he chuſeth us, not becauſe we were, but that he might make us lovely, Eph. v. 27. he paſſed by us when we lay in our blood, and ſaid unto us, Live; and that was the time of love, Ezek. xvi. 5.

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Secondly, He expects nothing with us, and yet beſtows himſelf, and all that he hath, upon us. Our poverty cannot enrich him, but he made himſelf poor to enrich us, 2 Cor. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Thirdly, No huſband loves the wife of his boſom, as Chriſt loved his people, Eph. v. 25. He loved the church, and gave himſelf for it.

Fourthly, None bears with weakneſſes and provocations as Chriſt doth; the church is ſtiled "the Lamb's wife," Rev. xix. 9.

Fifthly, No huſband is ſo immortal and everlaſting a huſband as Chriſt is; death ſeparates all other relations, but the ſoul's union with Chriſt is not diſſolved in the grave: yea, the day of a believer's death, is his marriage day, the day of his fulleſt enjoyment of Chriſt. No huſband can ſay to his wife, what Chriſt ſaith to the believer, "I will never leave thee, nor "forſake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

Sixthly, No bridegroom advanceth his bride to ſuch honours by marriage, as Chriſt doth; he relates them to God as their father, and from that day the mighty and glorious angels think it no diſhonour to be their ſervants, Heb. i. 14. they are brought in admiring the beauty and glory of the ſpouſe of Chriſt, Rev. xxi. 9.

Seventhly, and laſtly, No marriage was ever conſummated with that triumphal ſolemnity, as the marriage of Chriſt and believers ſhall be in heaven, Pſal. xlv. 14, 15. "She ſhall be brought "to the king in raiment of needle-work, the virgins, her com-"panions that follow her, ſhall be brought unto thee; with "gladneſs and rejoicing ſhall they be brought; they ſhall enter "into the king's palace." Among the Jews the marriage-houſe was called *Bethillula*, the houſe of praiſe; there was joy upon all hands, but none like the joy that will be in heaven, when believers, the ſpouſe of Chriſt, ſhall be brought thither: *God the Father* will rejoice, to behold the bleſſed accompliſhment and conſummation of thoſe glorious deſigns of his love. *Jeſus Chriſt, the Bridegroom*, will rejoice, to ſee the travail of his ſoul, the bleſſed birth and iſſue of all his bitter pangs and agonies, Iſa. liii. 11. *The Holy Spirit* will rejoice, to ſee the completion and perfection of that ſanctifying deſign which was committed to his hand, 2 Cor. v. 5. to ſee thoſe ſouls whom he once found as rough ſtones, now to ſhine as the bright, poliſhed ſtones of the ſpiritual temple. *Angels* will rejoice: great was the joy when the foundation of this deſign was laid, in the incarnation of Chriſt, Luke ii. 13. great therefore muſt their joy be, when the

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top-stone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace. The *saints* themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the King's palace, and be for ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Indeed there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned; who shall gnash their teeth with envy, at the everlasting advancement, and glory of believers.

Thus Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of a Bridegroom.

Thirdly, Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of an Advocate. 1 John ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an advocate "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the pro-"pitiation;" it is he that pleads the cause of believers in heaven; appears for them in the presence of God, to prevent all new breaches, and continues the state of friendship and peace betwixt God and us. In this relation Christ is altogether lovely. For,

First, He makes our cause his own, and acts for us in heaven, as for himself, Heb. iv. 15. He is touched with the tender sense of our troubles and dangers, and is not only one with us, by way of representation, but also one with us in respect of sympathy and affection.

Secondly, Christ our Advocate, follows our suit and business in heaven, as his great and main design and business; therefore, in Heb. vii. 25. he is said to "live for ever to make in-"tercession for us;" as if our concernments were so minded by him there, as to give up himself wholly to that work, as if all the glory and honour which is paid him in heaven, would not satisfy him, or divert him one moment from our business.

Thirdly, He pleads the cause of believers by his blood; it satisfies him not, as other advocates, to be at the expence of words and oratory, which is a cheaper way of pleading; but he pleads for us by the voice of his own blood, Heb. xii. 24. where we are said to be come "to the blood of sprinkling, that "speaketh better things than that of Abel:" Every wound he received for us on earth, is a mouth opened to plead with God on our behalf in heaven; *Quot vulnera, tot ora.* And hence it is, that in Rev. v. 6. he is represented standing before God, *as a lamb that had been slain:* as it were, exhibiting, and opening, in heaven, those deadly wounds received on earth, from the justice of God, on our account. Other advocates spend their breath, Christ his blood.

Fourthly, He pleads the cause of believers freely. Other advocates plead for reward, and exhaust the purses, while they plead the causes of their clients.

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Fifthly, In a word, he obtaineth for us all the mercies for which he pleads; no cauſe miſcarries in his hand, which he undertakes, Rom. viii. 33, 34. O what a lovely Advocate is Chriſt for believers!

Fourthly, Chriſt is altogether lovely in the relation of a *friend*, for in this relation he is pleaſed to own his people, Luke xii. 4, 5. There are certain things in which one friend manifeſts his affection and friendſhip to another, but none like Chriſt. For,

Firſt, No friend is ſo *open-hearted* to his friend, as Chriſt is to his people: he reveals the very counſels and ſecrets of his heart to them. John xv. 15. "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."

Secondly, No friend in the world is ſo *generous and bountiful* to his friend, as Jeſus Chriſt is to believers; John xvi. 13. he parts with his very blood for them; "Greater love (ſaith he) "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his "friends." He hath exhauſted the precious treaſures of his invaluable blood, to pay our debts. O what a lovely friend is Jeſus Chriſt to believers!

Thirdly, No friend *ſympathizes* ſo tenderly with his friend in affliction, as Jeſus Chriſt doth with his friends: "In all our af-"flictions he is afflicted," Heb. iv. 15. He feels all our ſorrows, wants, and burthens, as his own. Whence it is, that the ſufferings of believers are called the ſufferings of Chriſt, Col. i. 24.

Fourthly, No friend in the world takes that *complacency* in his friend, as Jeſus Chriſt doth in believers. Cant. iv. 9. "Thou "haſt raviſhed my heart, (ſaith he to the ſpouſe) thou haſt ra-"viſhed my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of "thy neck." The Hebrew, here rendered *raviſhed*, ſignifies to puff up, or to make one proud: how is the Lord Jeſus pleaſed to glory in his people! how is he taken and delighted with thoſe gracious ornaments, which himſelf beſtows upon them! No friend ſo lovely as Chriſt.

Fifthly, No friend in the world loves his friend with ſo fervent and ſtrong *affection*, as Jeſus Chriſt loves believers. Jacob loved Rachel, and endured for her ſake, the parching heat of ſummer, and cold of winter: but Chriſt endured the ſtorms of the wrath of God, the heat of his indignation, for our ſakes. David manifeſted his love to Abſalom, in wiſhing, "O that I had "died for thee!" Chriſt manifeſted his love to us, not in wiſhes that he had died, but in death itſelf, in our ſtead, and for our ſakes.

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Sixthly, No friend in the world is so *constant* and *unchangeable* in friendship, as Christ is. John xiii. 1. "Having loved his "own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He bears with millions of provocations and injuries, and yet will not break friendship with his people. Peter denied him, yet he will not disown him; but after his resurrection he saith, "Go, tell the disciples, and tell Peter," *q. d.* Let him not think he hath forfeited, by that sin of his, his interest in me; though he have denied me, I will not disown him, Mark xvi. 7. O how lovely is Christ in the relation of a friend! I might farther shew you the loveliness of Christ in his ordinances, and in his providences, in his communion with us, and communications to us; but there is no end of the account of Christ's loveliness: I will rather chuse to press believers to their duties towards this altogether lovely Christ, which I shall briefly dispatch in a few words.

Use. First, Is Jesus Christ altogether lovely, then I beseech you *set your souls upon this lovely Jesus*. Methinks such an object as hath been here represented, should compel love from the coldest breast, and hardest heart. Away with those empty nothings, away with this vain, deceitful world, which deserves not the thousandth part of the love you give it; let all stand aside and give way to Christ. O did you but know his worth and excellency, what he is in himself, what he hath done for, and deserved from you; you would need no arguments of mine to persuade you to love him.

Secondly, *Esteem nothing lovely, but as it is enjoyed in Christ, or improved for Christ:* Affect nothing for itself, love nothing separate from Jesus Christ. In two things we all sin in love of creatures, *viz.* in the *excess* of our affections, loving them above the rate and value of creatures; and in the *inordinacy* of our affections, *(i. e.)* in loving them out of their proper places.

Thirdly, *Let us all be humbled for the baseness of our hearts, that are so free of their affections to vanities, and trifles; and so hard to be persuaded to the love of Christ, who is altogether lovely.* O how many pour out streams of love and delight upon the vain and empty creature; whilst no arguments can draw forth one drop of love from their obdurate and unbelieving hearts to Jesus Christ! I have read of one Joannes Mollius, who was observed to go often alone, and weep bitterly; and being pressed by a friend to know the cause of his troubles; O! said he, it grieves me that I cannot bring this heart of mine to love Jesus Christ more fervently.

Fourthly, *Represent Christ, as he is, to the world, by your carriage towards him.* Is he altogether lovely; let all the world

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foe, and know that he is so, by your delights in him, and communion with him; zeal for him, and readiness to part with any other lovely thing upon his account; proclaim his excellencies to the world, as the spouse here did; convince them how much your beloved is better than any other beloved; display his glorious excellencies in your heavenly conversations; hold him forth to others, as he is in himself, altogether lovely. See that you "walk worthy of him unto all well-pleasing," Col. i. 10. "Shew forth the praises of Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 19. Let not that "worthy name be blasphemed through you," James ii. 7. He is glorious in himself, and will put glory upon you; take heed ye put not shame and dishonour upon him: he hath committed his honour to you, do not betray that trust.

Fifthly, *Never be ashamed to own Christ:* he is altogether lovely; he can never be a shame to you; it will be your great sin, to be ashamed of him. Some men glory in their shame; be not you ashamed of your glory: if you be *ashamed of Christ now, he will be ashamed of you when he shall appear in his own glory, and the glory of all his holy angels.* Be ashamed of nothing but sin; and among other sins, be ashamed, especially for this sin, that you have no more love for him who is *altogether lovely.*

Sixthly, *Be willing to leave every thing that is lovely upon earth, that you may be with the altogether lovely Lord Jesus Christ, in heaven.* Lift up your voices with the spouse, Rev. xx. 20. "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." It is true, you must pass through the pangs of death into his bosom and enjoyment; but sure it is worth suffering much more than that, to be with this lovely Jesus. "The Lord direct your hearts into "the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jesus Christ," 2 Thes. iii. 5.

Seventhly, *Strive to be Christ-like, as ever you would be lovely in the eyes of God and man.* Certainly, my brethren, it is the Spirit of Christ within you, and the beauty of Christ upon you, which only can make you lovely persons; the more you resemble him in holiness, the more will you discover of true excellency and loveliness: and the more frequent and spiritual your converse and communion with Christ is, the more of the beauty and loveliness of Christ will still be stamped upon your spirits, changing you into the same image from glory to glory.

Eightly, *Let the loveliness of Christ draw all men to him.* Is loveliness in the creature so attractive? And can the transcendent loveliness of Christ draw none? O the blindness of man!

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If you see no beauty in Christ, why you should desire him, it is because the god of this world hath blinded your minds.

SERMON XIII.

Alluring the Hearts of Men to come to CHRIST, by a fourth Motive contained in another Title of CHRIST.

HAGGAI ii. 7. ——*And the desire of all nations shall come.*

THE former chapter is mainly spent, in reproving the negligence of the Jews, who, being discouraged, from time to time, had delayed the rebuilding the *temple*: and, in the mean time, employed their care and cost in building and adorning their own houses: but, at last, being persuaded to set about the work, they meet with this discouragement, that such was the poverty of the present time, that the second structure would no way answer the magnificence and splendor of the first. In Solomon's days the nation was wealthy, now drained; so that there would be no proportion betwixt the second and the first. To this grand discouragement, the prophet applies this relief; that whatsoever should be wanting in external pomp and glory, should be more than recompensed by the presence of Jesus Christ in this *second temple*. For Christ, "the desire of all nations," saith he, shall come into it. Which, by the way, may give us this useful note; That the presence of Jesus Christ gives a more real and excellent glory to the places of his worship, than any external beauty, or outward ornaments, whatsoever, can bestow upon them. Our eyes, like the disciples, are apt to be dazzled with the goodly stones of the temple, and, in the mean time, to neglect and overlook that which gives it the greatest honour and beauty.

But to return. In these words we have both the description of Christ, and an *index* pointing at the time of his incarnation: he is called, "the desire of all nations;" and the time of his coming, in the flesh, is plainly intimated to be whilst the second *temple* should be standing. Where, by the way, we find just cause to admire at, and bemoan the blindness that is happened to the Jews; who owning the truth of this prophecy, and not able to deny the destruction of the second temple, many hundred years past, will not yet be brought to acknowledge the incarnation of the true Messiah, notwithstanding.

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But to the point. The character, or description of Christ, stiled *the desire of all nations*, who was to come into the world in the time of the second *temple*, Mal. iii. 12. and that, after grievous concussions, and shakings of the world, which were to make way for his coming; for so our prophet here speaks, "I "will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall "come," to which the apostle alludes, in Heb. xii. 26. applying this prophecy to Jesus Christ, here called the "desire of all "nations:" putting the act for the object, desire for the thing desired; as in Ezek. xxiv. 16. "The desire of thine eyes," that is, the desirable wife of thy bosom; so here, the "desire of "all nations," that is, Christ, the object of the desires of God's elect, in all nations of the world: a Saviour infinitely desirable in himself, and actually desired by all the people of God, dispersed among all kindreds, tongues, and nations of the world. From whence this note is,

Doct. *That the desires of God's Elect, in all kingdoms, and among all people of the earth, are, and shall be drawn out after, and fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The merciful God beholding the universal ruins, of the world by sin, hath provided an universal remedy for his own elect, in every part of the earth. Christ is not impropriated to any one kingdom, or nation in the world; but intended to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth; and accordingly, speaks the apostle, Col. ii. 11. "There is neither Greek, nor "Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all "and in all." In the explication of this point, two things must be enquired into.

1. Why Christ is called the desire of all nations.

2. Upon what account the people of God, in all nations, desire him.

First, Why he is called the desire of all nations; and what that phrase may import: and there are divers things that are supposed, or included in it.

First, That God the Father hath appointed him as a common remedy, for the sins and miseries of his people, in all parts and quarters of the world. So in the covenant of redemption, betwixt the Father and the Son, the Lord expresseth himself, Isa. xlix. 6. and he said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be "my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the "preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the "Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of

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" the earth." Suitable whereunto, is that prophecy, Isa. lii. 15. " He shall sprinkle many nations." If God had not appointed him for, he could not be desired by all nations.

And, indeed, herein the grace of God doth admirably shine forth in the freeness of it, that even the most barbarous nations are not excluded from the benefit of redemption by Christ. This is what the apostle admires, that Christ should be *preached to the Gentiles*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. a people that seemed to be lost in the darkness of idolatry; yet even for them, Christ was given by the Father, " Ask of me (saith he) and I will give thee the " Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the " earth for thy possession."

Secondly, Christ, *the desire of all nations*, plainly notes the sufficiency that is in him, to supply the wants of the whole world: as the sun in the heavens suffices all nations, for light, and influence, so doth the Sun of righteousness suffice for the redemption, justification, sanctification, and salvation of the people of God, all over the world; Isa. xlv. 22. " Look unto me, and be " ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

Thirdly, It implies the *reality that is in godliness*. It shews you, that religion is no fancy, as the atheistical world would persuade us; and this evidently appears, in the uniform effects of it upon the hearts of all men, in all nations of the world, that are truly religious: all their desires, like so many needles touched by one and the same loadstone, move towards Jesus Christ, and all meet together in one and the same blessed object Christ. Were it possible for the people of God to come out of all nations, kindreds, and languages in the world, into one place, and there confer, and compare the desires and workings of their hearts; though they never saw each other's faces, nor heard of each other's names; yet, as face answers to face in a glass, so would their desires after Christ answer to each other. All hearts work after him in the same manner; what one saith, all say: These are my troubles and burdens, these my wants and miseries; the same things, my desires and fears: one and the same Spirit works in all believers throughout the world; which could never be, if religion were but a fancy, as some call it; or a combination, or confederacy, as others call it: fancies are as various as faces; and confederacies presuppose mutual acquaintance and conference.

Fourthly, Christ, the desire of all nations, implies the vast extent his kingdom hath, and shall have in the world, out of every nation, under heaven, some shall be brought to Christ, and to heaven by him: and though the number of God's elect, com-

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pared with the multitudes of the ungodly in all nations, is but a remnant, a little flock; and, in that comparative sense, there are few that shall be saved: yet considered absolutely, and in themselves, they are a vast number, which no man can number, Mat. viii. 11. "Many shall come from the East, and from the "West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, "in the kingdom of heaven." In order whereunto, the gospel, like the sun in the heavens, circuits the world. It arose in the East, and takes its course towards the *western world:* rising, by degrees, upon the remote, idolatrous nations of the earth: out of all which a number is to be saved, even "Ethiopia shall stretch "out her hands to God," Psal. lxviii. 31. And this consideration should move us to pray earnestly for the poor Heathens, who yet sit in darkness, and the shadow of death; there is yet hope for them.

Fifthly, It holds forth this, that when God opens the eyes of men to see their sin and danger by it; nothing but Christ can give them satisfaction; it is not the amenity, fertility, riches and pleasures, the inhabitants of any kingdom of the world do enjoy, that can satisfy the desires of their souls: when once God touches their hearts with the sense of sin and misery: then Christ, and none but Christ, is desirable, and necessary, in the eyes of such persons. Many kingdoms of the world abound with riches and pleasures; the providence of God hath carved liberal portions of the good things of this life to many of them, and scarce left any thing to their desires that the world can afford. Yet all this can give no satisfaction, without Jesus Christ, the desire of all nations, the one thing necessary, when once they come to see the necessity and excellency of him: then take the world, who will, so they may have Christ, the desire of their souls. Thus we see upon what grounds, and reasons, Christ is stiled the desire of all nations.

Object. But there lies one great objection against this truth, which must be solved; *viz.* If Christ be the desire of all nations, how comes it to pass, that Jesus Christ finds no entertainment in so many nations of the world, among whom Christianity is hissed at, and Christians not tolerated to live among them? Who see no beauty in him that they should desire him.

Sol. First, We must remember, the nations of the world have their times and seasons of conversion; those that once embraced Christ, have now lost him, and idols are now set up, in the places where he once was sweetly worshipped. The sun of the gospel is gone down upon them, and now shines in another *Hemisphere;* and so the nations of the world are to have their

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diſtinct days, and ſeaſons of illumination. The goſpel, like the ſea, gaineth in one place, what it loſeth in another; and in the times and ſeaſons appointed by the Father, they come ſucceſſively to be enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt; and then ſhall that promiſe be fulfilled, Iſa. xlix. 7. "Thus ſaith the "Lord, the Redeemer of Iſrael, and his holy One, to him "whom man deſpiſeth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, "to a ſervant of rulers; kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, princes alſo "ſhall worſhip, becauſe of the Lord that is faithful."

Secondly, Let it alſo be remembred, that altho' Chriſt be rejected by the rulers and body of many nations; yet he is the deſire of all the elect of God, diſperſed, and ſcattered among thoſe nations.

In the next place, *Secondly*, we are to enquire, upon what account Chriſt becomes the deſire of all nations, (*i. e.*) of all thoſe, in all the nations of the world, that belong to the election of grace. And the true ground, and reaſon thereof, is, becauſe Chriſt, only, hath that in himſelf, which relieves their wants, and anſwers to all their need. As,

Firſt, They are all, by nature under condemnation, Rom. v. 16, 18. under the curſe of the law; againſt which, nothing is found in heaven or earth, able to relieve their conſciences, but the blood of ſprinkling, the pure and perfect righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus: and hence it is, that Chriſt becomes ſo deſirable in the eyes of poor ſinners, all the world over. If any thing in nature could be found to pacify and purge the conſciences of men from guilt and fear, Chriſt would never be deſirable in their eyes; but finding no other remedy but the blood of Jeſus, to him, therefore, ſhall all the ends of the earth look for righteouſneſs, and for peace.

Secondly, All nations of the world are polluted with the filth of ſin, both in nature and practice, which they ſhall ſee, and bitterly bewail, when the light of the goſpel ſhall ſhine amongſt them; and the ſame light, by which this ſhall be diſcovered, will, alſo, diſcover the only remedy of this evil to lie in the ſpirit of Chriſt, the only fountain opened to all nations for ſanctification, and cleanſing: and this will make the Lord Jeſus incomparably deſirous in their eyes. O how welcome will he be that cometh unto them, not by blood only, but by water alſo! John i. 5, 6.

Thirdly, When the light of the goſpel ſhall ſhine upon the nations, they ſhall then ſee, that, by reaſon of the guilt and filth of ſin, they are all barred out of heaven; thoſe doors are chained up againſt them, and that none but Chriſt can open an

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entrance for them, into that kingdom of God: that "no man "cometh to the Father but by him," John xiv. 6. "Neither "is there any name under heaven given among men, whereby "they must be saved, but the name of Christ," Acts iv. 12. Hence the hearts of sinners shall pant after him, as a hart panteth for the water-brooks. And thus we see upon what grounds Christ becomes the *desire of all nations*. The improvement of all followeth, in five several uses of the point; *viz.*

1. For information.
2. For examination.
3. For consolation.
4. For exhortation.
5. For direction.

First use, for information.

First, Is Christ the desire of all nations; *how vile a sin is it, then, in any nation, upon whom the light of the gospel hath shined, to reject Jesus Christ?* And say, as those in Job xxi. 14. "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." To thrust away his worship, government, and servants, from amongst them; and, in effect, to say, as it is Luke xix. 14. "We will not have this man to reign over us." Thus did the Jews, Acts xiii. 46. they put away Christ from among them, and thereby judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. This is, at once, a fearful *sin*, and a dreadful *sign*. How soon did vengeance overtake them, like the overthrow of Sodom? O let it be for a warning unto all nations, to the end of the world. He would have gathered the children of Israel under his wings, as a *hen* doth her brood, even when the *Roman Eagle* was hovering over them, but they would not; therefore their houses were left unto them desolate, their city and temple made an heap.

Secondly, If Jesus Christ be the desire of all nations, *how incomparably happy, then, must that nation be, that enjoys Christ, in the power, and purity of his gospel-ordinances!* If Christ, under a veil, made Canaan a glorious land (as it is called) Dan. xi. 41. what a glorious place must that nation be, that beholds him with open face, in the bright sun-shine of the gospel! O England, know thy happiness, and the day of thy visitation; what others desire, thou enjoyest: provoke not the Lord Jesus to depart from thee, by corrupting his worship, longing after idolatry, abusing his messengers, and oppressing his people, lest his soul depart from thee.

Second use, for examination.

If Christ be the desire of all nations, examine whether he be

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the desire of your souls, in particular; else you shall have no benefit by him. Are your desires after Christ, true, spiritual desires? Reflect, I beseech you, upon the frames and tempers of your hearts. Can you say, of your desires after Christ, as Peter did of his love to Christ? Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I desire thee. Try your desires, as to their sincerity, by the following characters:

First, Are they vehement, and ardent? Hath Christ the supreme place, in your desires? Do you esteem all things to be but dross, and dung, in comparison of the excellencies of Jesus Christ your Lord? Phil. iii. 8. Is he to you, as the refuge-city to the man-slayer? Heb. vi. 18, 19. As a spring of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Isa. xxxii. 2. Such vehement desires are true desires.

Secondly, Are your desires after Christ universal; *(i. e.)* Is every thing in Christ desirable in your eyes? The *hypocrite*, like the *harlot*, is for a divided Christ; they would be called by his name, but live upon their own stock, Isa. iv. 1. If his holiness, and government, his cross, and sufferings, be desirable for his sake; such universal desires are right desires.

Thirdly, Are your desires after Christ, industrious desires, using all the means of accomplishing what you desire! You say you desire Christ, but what will you do to obtain your desires? If you seek him carefully, and incessantly, in all the ways of duty; if you will strive in prayer, labour to believe, cut off right hands, and pluck out right eyes, *(i. e.)* be content to part with the most profitable, and pleasant ways of sin, that you may enjoy Christ, the desire of your souls; then are your desires right desires.

Fourthly, Are your desires after Christ permanent desires, or only a sudden motion, or fit which goes off again, without effect! If your desires after Christ abide upon your hearts; if your longings be after him at all times, though not in the same height and degree; then are your desires, right desires. Christ always dwells in the desires of his people; they can feel him in their desires, when they cannot discern him in their love or delight.

Fifthly, Will your desires after Christ admit no satisfaction, nor find rest any where, but in the enjoyment of Christ? Then are your desires right desires. The soul that desires Christ, can never be at rest, till it come home to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 2, 6. Phil. i. 23. The devil can satisfy others with the riches and pleasures of this world, as children are quieted with rattles; but if nothing but Christ can rest, and terminate your desires; surely such restless desires are right desires.

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Sixthly, Do your desires after Christ spring from a deep sense of your need and want of Christ? Hath conviction opened your eyes to see your misery, to feel your burthens, and to make you sensible that your remedy lies only in the Lord Jesus? Then are your desires right desires. Bread and water are made necessary and desirable, by hunger and thirst: by these things try the truth of your desires after Christ.

Third use, for consolation.

Do you indeed, upon serious trial, find such desires after Christ, as were described above? O bless the Lord for that day wherein Christ, the desire of all nations, became the desire of your souls; and, for your comfort, know that you are happy and blessed souls at present.

First, Blessed in this, that your eyes have been opened to see both the want and worth of Christ. Had not Christ applied his precious eye-salve to the eyes of your mind, you could never have desired him; you would have said, with them in Isa. liii 2, 3. "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall "see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:" Or, as they to the spouse, Cant. v. 9. "What is thy beloved more "than another beloved?" O blessed souls, enlightened of the Lord; to see those things that are hid from them that perish!

Secondly, You are blessed in this, that your desires after Christ are a sure evidence that the desire of Christ is towards you: had he not first desired you, you could never have desired him. We may say of desires, as it is said of love, we desire him because he first desired us: your desires after Christ are inflamed from the desires of Christ after you.

Thirdly, Blessed in this, that your desires shall surely be satisfied; Mat. v. 6. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst af-"ter righteousness, for they shall be filled." Prov. x. 24. "The "desires of the righteous shall be granted." God never raised such desires as these in the souls of his people, to be a torment to them for ever.

Fourthly, Blessed in this, that God hath guided your desires to make the best choice that ever was made in the world: whilst the desires of others are hunting after riches, pleasure, and honours in the world; toiling themselves, like children, in pursuit of a painted butter-fly, which, when they have caught, doth but daub their fingers: God, mean while, hath directed your desires to Christ, the most excellent object in heaven or earth. Any good will satisfy some men; O happy soul, if none but Christ can satisfy thee! Psal. iv. 6.

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Fifthly, Bleſſed in this, that there is a work of grace certainly wrought upon thy ſoul; and theſe very deſires after Chriſt, are a part thereof.

Sixthly, Bleſſed in this, that theſe deſires after Chriſt, keep thy ſoul active, and working after him continually in the ways of duty; Pſal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I deſired, that will I "ſeek after." Deſire will be a continual ſpring to diligence and induſtry, in the ways of duty: the deſire of the end, quickens to the uſe of means, Prov. xviii. 1. Others may fall aſleep, and caſt off duty; but it will be hard for you to do ſo, whoſe ſouls burn with deſire after Chriſt.

Seventhly, Bleſſed in this, that your deſires after Chriſt will make death much the ſweeter and eaſier to you; Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far "better." When a Chriſtian was once aſked, Whether he was willing to die? He returned this anſwer *, "Let him be "unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Chriſt." And much like it, was that of another, *Vivere renuo, ut Chriſto vivam*; I refuſe this life, to live with Chriſt.

Fourth uſe, for exhortation.

In the fourth place, let me exhort and perſuade all to make Jeſus Chriſt the deſire and choice of their ſouls. And here I fall in with the main ſcope and deſign of the goſpel. And O that I could effectually preſs home this exhortation upon your hearts: let me offer ſome moving conſiderations to you, and may the Lord accompany them to your hearts.

Firſt, Every creature naturally deſires its own preſervation; do not you deſire the preſervation of your precious and immortal ſouls! If you do, then make Chriſt your deſire and choice, without whom, they can never be preſerved, Jude, ver. 1.

Secondly, Do not your ſouls earneſtly deſire the bodies they live in? How tender are they over them, how careful to provide for them? though they pay a dear rent for thoſe tenements they live in. And is not union with Chriſt infinitely more deſirable than the union of ſoul and body? O covet union with him! then ſhall your ſouls be happy, when your bodies drop off from them, at death, 2 Cor. v. 1, 3. yea, ſoul and body ſhall be happy in him, and with him, for evermore.

Thirdly, How do the men of this world deſire the enjoyments of it? They pant after the duſt of the earth; they riſe early, ſit up late, eat the bread of carefulneſs; and all this for very vanity: Shall a worldling do more for earth, than you for heaven?

* *Illius eſt nolle mori, qui nolle ire ad Chriſtum.*

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Shall the creature be so earnestly desired, and Christ neglected?

Fourthly, What do all your desires in this world benefit you, if you go christless? Suppose you had the desire of your hearts in these things, how long shall you have comfort in them, if you miss Christ?

Fifthly, Doth Christ desire you, who have nothing lovely or desirable in you? And have you no desires after Christ, the most lovely, and desirable one in both worlds? "His desires are to-"wards you," Prov. viii. 31. O make him the desire and choice of your souls.

Sixthly, How absolutely necessary is Jesus Christ to your souls? Bread and water, breath and life, are not so necessary as Christ is; "One thing is necessary," Luke x. 42. and that one thing is Christ. If you miss your desires in other things, you may yet be happy; but if you miss Christ you are undone for ever.

Seventhly, How suitable a good is Christ to your souls? comprising whatsoever they want, 1 Cor. i. 30. Set your hearts where you will, none will be found to match and suit them, as Christ doth.

Eigthly, How great are the benefits that will redound to you by Jesus Christ! In him you shall have a rich inheritance settled upon you; all things shall be yours, when you are Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 22. And is not such a Christ worth desiring?

Ninthly, All your well-grounded hopes of glory are built upon your union with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 21. If you miss Christ, you must die without hope. Will not this draw your desires to him?

Tenthly, Suppose you were at the judgment-seat of God, where you must shortly stand, and saw the terrors of the Lord in that day; the sheep divided from the goats; the sentences of absolution and condemnation passed, by the great and awful Judge, upon the righteous and wicked: would not Christ be then desireable in your eyes? As ever you expect to stand with comfort at that bar, let Christ be the desire and choice of your souls now.

Fifth use, for direction.

Do these, or any other considerations, put thee upon this enquiry; how shall I get my desires kindled and enflamed towards Christ? Alas! my heart is cold and dead, not a serious desire stirring in it after Christ. To such I shall offer the following directions.

Direct. 1. Redeem some time every day for meditation; get out of the noise and clamour of the world, Psal. iv. 4. and seri-

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ouſly bethink yourſelves how the preſent ſtate of your ſoul ſtands, and how it is like to go with you for ever: here all ſound converſion begins, Pſal. cxix. 59.

Direct. 2. Conſider ſeriouſly of that lamentable ſtate, in which you came into the world; children of wrath by nature, under the curſe and condemnation of the law: ſo that either your ſtate muſt be changed, or you inevitably damned, John iii. 3.

Direct. 3. Conſider the way and courſe you have taken ſince you came into the world, proceeding from iniquity to iniquity. What command of God have you not violated a thouſand times over? What ſin is committed in the world, that you are not, one way or other, guilty of before God? How many ſecret ſins upon your ſcore, unknown to the moſt intimate friend you have in the world? Either this guilt muſt be ſeparated from your ſouls, or your ſouls from God to all eternity.

Direct. 4. Think upon the ſevere wrath of God due to every ſin; "The wages of ſin is death," Rom. vi. 23. And how intolerable the fulneſs of that wrath muſt be, when a few drops ſprinkled upon the conſcience in this world, is ſo unſupportable, that hath made ſome to chuſe ſtrangling, rather than life; and yet this wrath muſt abide for ever upon you, if you get not intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, John iii. 36.

Direct. 5. Ponder well the happy ſtate and condition they are in who have obtained pardon, and peace by Jeſus Chriſt, Pſal. xxxii. 12. And ſeeing the grace of God is free, and you are ſet under the means thereof; why may not you be as capable thereof as others?

Direct. 6. Seriouſly conſider the great uncertainty of your time, and preciouſneſs of the opportunity of ſalvation, never to be recovered, when they are once paſt, John ix. 4. let this provoke you to lay hold upon thoſe golden ſeaſons whilſt thy are yet with you; that you may not bewail your folly and madneſs, when they are out of your reach.

Direct. 7. Aſſociate yourſelves with ſerious Chriſtians; get into their acquaintance, and beg their aſſiſtance; beſeech them to pray for you; and ſee that you reſt not here, but be frequently upon your knees, begging of the Lord a new heart, and a new ſtate.

In concluſion of the whole, let me beſeech and beg all the people of God, as upon my knees, to take heed, and beware, leſt by the careleſneſs and ſcandal of their lives, they quench the weak deſires beginning to kindle in the hearts of others. You know what the law of God awards for ſtriking a woman with child, ſo that her fruit go from her, Exod. xxi. 22, 23. Q

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ſhed not ſoul-blood, by ſtifling the hopeful deſires of any after Chriſt.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt, the deſire of all nations.

* *

SERMON XIV.

Containing the fifth Motive to apply CHRIST, drawn from another excellent Title of CHRIST.

1 COR. ii. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world have known, for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

IN this chapter, the apoſtle diſcourſes to the Corinthians, of the excellency of his miniſtry, both to obviate the contempt which ſome caſt upon it for want of human ornaments, and to give the greater authority unto it among all: and whereas the ſpiritual ſimplicity of his miniſtry laid it under the contempt of ſome, he removes that ſeveral ways, by ſhewing them,

Firſt, That it was not ſuitable to the deſign and end of his miniſtry, his aim being "to know nothing among them, ſave Je-"ſus Chriſt, and him crucified," ver. 1, 2.

Secondly, Neither was it for the advantage of their ſouls: it might indeed tickle their fancies, but could be no ſolid foundation to their faith and comfort, ver. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Though his diſcourſes ſeemed jejune and dry to carnal hearers, yet they had a depth and excellency in them, which ſpiritual and judicious Chriſtians ſaw and acknowledged, ver. 6, 7.

Fourthly, Therefore this excellent wiſdom which he preached far tranſcended all the natural wiſdom of this world; yea, the moſt raiſed and improved underſtandings of thoſe that were moſt renowned and admired in that age for wiſdom, ver. 8. "which "none of the princes of this world knew."

In which words we have,

1. A negative propoſition.

2. The proof of the propoſition.

Firſt, A negative propoſition: None of the princes of this world knew that ſpiritual wiſdom which he taught. By *princes of this world*, or rather, *principes ſeculi*, the princes of that age, he means, as Cameron well notes, the learned Rabbi's, Scribes, and Phariſees, renowned for wiſdom and learning a

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mong them; and honoured, upon that account, as ſo many princes: but he adds a diminutive term, which darkens all glory. They are but the *princes of this world*, utterly unacquainted with the wiſdom of the other world. To which he adds,

Secondly, A clear and full proof; "For had they known it, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." In which words we find one of Chriſt's glorious and royal titles, *The Lord of glory*: upon which title will be my preſent diſcourſe. The words being fitly rendered, and nothing of ambiguity in them, they give us this obſervation.

Doct. *That Chriſt crucified is the Lord of glory.*

Great and excellent is the glory of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſcriptures every where proclaim his glory; yea, we may obſerve a notable *climax*, or gradation, in thoſe ſcriptures that ſpeak of his glory. The prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking of him, calls him *glorious*; Iſa. iv. 2. "In that day ſhall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and "glorious." John, ſpeaking of his glory, riſes a ſtep higher, and aſcribeth to him a "glory, as of the only begotten Son of the "Father," John i. 14. *i. e.* a glory meet for, and becoming the Son of God: proper to him, and incommunicable to any other. The apoſtle James riſes yet higher, and doth not only call him glorious, or glorious as the only begotten of the Father; but *the glory*, James ii. 1. glory in the abſtract; "My brethren, (ſaith "he), have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the glory, "with reſpect of perſons;" For the word *Lord*, which is in our tranſlation, is a ſupplement; Chriſt is glory itſelf, yea, the glory emphatically ſo ſtiled; the glory of heaven; the glory of Sion; the glory of our ſouls for ever. The author to the Hebrews goes yet higher, and calls him not ſimply the glory, but "the "brightneſs of the Father's glory," * Heb. i. 3. as though he ſhould ſay, the radiancy, ſparkling, or beaming forth of his Father's glory; the very ſplendor, or refulgency of divine glory. O what a glorious Lord is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt! the bright, ſparkling diamond of heaven; who ſhines in glory there, above the glory of angels and ſaints, as the glory of the ſun excels the leſſer, twinkling ſtars. When he appeared to Paul, Acts xxvi. 13. "I ſaw, ſaith he, a light from heaven above the bright-"neſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me:" Needs muſt the glory of Chriſt be unſpeakable, who reflects glory upon all that are with him, John xvii. 24. and ſtamps glory upon all that belong to him. His works on earth were *glorious works*, Luke xiii. 17. the purchaſed liberty of his people, a glorious liberty,

* Απαυγασμα της δοξης.

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Rom. viii. 21. the church his myſtical body, a glorious church, Eph. v. 27. the goſpel which reveals him, is a glorious goſpel, 1 Tim. i. 11.

But, more particularly, let us conſider the glory of Chriſt, as it is diſtinguiſhed into his, either,

1. Eſſential, or,
2. Mediatorial glory.

Firſt, The eſſential glory of Chriſt, which he hath as God from everlaſting; which is unſpeakable and unconceivable glory: For (ſaith the apoſtle, Phil. ii. 6.) "He being in the form "of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," (*i. e.*) he had a peerage or equality with his Father in glory; John x. 30. "I and my Father are one." And again, John xvi. 15. "All things that the Father hath, are mine:" the ſame name, the ſame nature, the ſame eſſential properties, the ſame will, and the ſame glory.

Secondly, The mediatorial glory of Chriſt is exceeding great, This is proper to him, as the head of the church, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. Of this glory the apoſtle ſpeaks, Phil. ii. 9, 10. "Wherefore God alſo hath exalted him, and "given him a name, which is above every name," ὑπερύψωσε, exalted above all exaltation. Now the mediatorial glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt conſiſteth either,

1. In the fulneſs of grace inherent in him: or,
2. In the dignity and authority put upon him.

Firſt, In the fulneſs of grace inherent in him: The humanity of Chriſt is filled with grace, as the ſun with light: John i. 14. "Full of grace and truth." Never any creature was filled by the Spirit of grace, as the man Chriſt Jeſus is filled; for "God gives not the Spirit to him by meaſure," John iii. 34. By reaſon of this fulneſs of grace inherent in him, he is "faiſer "than the children of men," Pſal. xlv. 2. excelling all the ſaints in ſpiritual luſtre and gracious excellencies.

Secondly, In the dignity and authority put upon him. He is crowned King in Sion; all power in heaven and earth is given unto him, Mat. xxviii. 18. he is a law-giver to the church, James iv. 12. all acts of worſhip are to be performed in his name; prayer, preaching, cenſures, ſacraments, all to be adminiſtred in his name. Church-officers are commiſſioned by him, Eph. iv. 11. The judgment of the world in the great day will be adminiſtred by him; Mat. xxv. 31. "Then ſhall "he ſit upon the throne of his glory."

To conclude, Jeſus Chriſt ſhall have glory and honour a-

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ſcribed to him for evermore, by angels and ſaints, upon the account of his mediatorial work: this ſome divines call his paſſive glory, the glory which he is ſaid to receive from his redeemed ones. Rev. v. 8, 9, 10. "And when he had taken the book, "the four beaſts, and the four and twenty elders, fell down be- "fore the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden "vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the ſaints; and "they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the "book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and, "haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, "and tongue, and people, and nation," *&c.* And thus you ſee, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is, upon all accounts, the *Lord of glory*. The uſes follow.

Inference 1.

How wonderful was the love of Chriſt, the Lord of glory, to be ſo abaſed and humbled, as he was for us, vile and ſinful duſt? It is aſtoniſhing to conceive, that ever Jeſus Chriſt ſhould ſtrip himſelf of his robes of glory, to clothe himſelf with the mean garment of our fleſh: O what a ſtoop did he make, in his incarnation, for us! If the moſt magnificent monarch upon earth had been degraded into a toad; if the ſun in the heavens had been turned into a wandering atom; if the moſt glorious angel in heaven had been transformed even into a fly; it had been nothing to the abaſement of the Lord of glory. This act is every where celebrated in ſcripture, as the great myſtery, the aſtoniſhing wonder of the whole world, 2 Tim. iii. 16. Phil. ii. 8. Rom. viii. 3. The Lord of glory looked not like himſelf, when he came in the habit of a man; Iſa. liii. 3. "We hid, as it were, "our faces from him:" Nay, rather like a worm, than a man; Pſal. xxii. 6. "A reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people." The birds of the air, and beaſts of the earth were here provided of better accomodations than the Lord of glory, Mat. viii. 20. O ſtupendous abaſement! O love unſpeakable! "Though "he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, that we through "his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. He put off the crown of glory, to put on the crown of thorns: *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior*, ſaid Bernard; The lower he humbled himſelf for me, the dearer he ſhall be to me.

Infer. 2. *How tranſcendently glorious is the advancement of believers, by their union with the Lord of glory!* This, alſo, is an admirable and aſtoniſhing myſtery; it is the higheſt dignity of which our *nature* is capable, to be *hypoſtatically* united; and the greateſt glory of which our *perſons* are capable, to be *myſtically* united to this Lord of glory; to be bone of his

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bone, and flesh of his flesh. O what is this! Christian dost thou know and believe all this, and thy heart not burn, within thee, in love to Christ? O! then, what a heart hast thou? What art thou, by nature, but sinful dust, a loathsome sinner, viler than the vilest creature, cast out to the loathing of thy person in the day of thy nativity! O that ever the Lord of glory should unite himself to such a lump of vileness! take such a wretch into his very bosom! Be astonished, O heavens and earth, at this! this is the great mystery which the angels stooped down to look into: Such an honour as this, could never have entered into the heart of man. It would have seemed a rude blasphemy in us, to once have thought, or spoken of such a thing, had not Christ made first the motion thereof: Yet how long didst thou make this Lord of glory wait upon thy undetermined will, before he gained thy consent? Might he not justly have spurned thee into hell, upon thy first refusal, and never have made thee such another offer? Wilt thou not say, Lord, what am I, and what is my father's house, that so great a King should stoop so far beneath himself, to such a worm as I am! That strength should unite itself to weakness, infinite glory to such baseness! O grace, grace, for ever to be admired!

Infer. 3. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of glory? *Then let no man count himself dishonoured by suffering the vilest indignities for his sake:* The Lord of glory puts glory upon the very suffering you undergo in this world for him. "Moses esteemed the re-"proaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. he cast a kingdom at his heels, to be crowned with reproaches, for the name of Christ. The *diadem* of Egypt was not half so glorious, as self-denial for Christ. This Lord of glory freely degraded himself for thee, wilt thou stand hesitating with him upon terms? It is certainly your honour to be dishonoured for Christ, Acts v. 41. to you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. i. 29. The gift of suffering is there matched with the gift of faith; it is given as an *honorarium*, a badge of honour to suffer for the Lord of glory. As all have not the honour to wear the crown of glory in heaven, so few have the honour to wear the chain of Christ upon earth. * Thuanus reports of Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, that, being led to suffer with other martyrs, who were bound, and he unbound, because a

* *Cur me non quoque torque donas, et insignis hujus ordinis militem creas?* Thuanus.

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perſon of honour; he cried out, "Why don't you honour "me with a chain, too, and create me a knight of that no- "ble order?" My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, James i. 2. *(i. e.)* trials by ſufferings. David thought it an honour to be vile for God, and that is a true obſervation, that diſgrace itſelf is glorious when endured for the Lord of glory.

Infer. 4. Is Chriſt the Lord of glory? *How glorious, then, ſhall the ſaints one day be, when they ſhall be made like this glorious Lord, and partake of his glory in heaven?* John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them:" Yea, the vile bodies of believers ſhall be made like to the glorious body of Chriſt, Phil. iii. 21. What glory, then, will be communicated to their ſouls? True, his eſſential glory is incommunicable; but there is a glory which Chriſt will communicate to his people. "When he comes to judge the world, he will come "to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them "that believe," 2 Theſ. i. 10. Thus he ſeemeth to account his ſocial glory, which ſhall reſult from his ſaints, a great part of his own glory: As we have now fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings, ſo we ſhall have a fellowſhip, or communion with him, in his glory: When he ſhall appear, then ſhall we, alſo, appear with him in glory; then the pooreſt believer ſhall be more glorious than Solomon, in all his royalty. It was a pious ſaying of Luther, that he had rather be *Chriſtianus ruſticus, quam Ethnicus Alexander*; a Chriſtian *clown*, than a Pagan *emperor*. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, though he live next door to a graceleſs nobleman: But it doth not yet appear what they ſhall be. The day will come, it certainly will come, for the Lord hath ſpoken it, when they ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father.

Infer. 5. *How hath the devil blindfolded, and deluded them that are frighted off from Chriſt, by the fears of being diſhonoured by him?* Many perſons have half a mind to religion, but when they conſider the generality of its profeſſors to be perſons of the loweſt, and meaneſt rank in the world, and that reproaches and ſufferings attend that way; they ſhrink back as men aſhamed, and as Salvian ſaith, *Mali eſſe coguntur, neviles habeantur*; they chuſe rather to remain wicked, than to become vile: But to them that believe, Chriſt is an honour; as the word, which we tranſlate *precious*, might be rendered, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Till God opens mens eyes thus, they will put evil for good, and good for evil. But O dear bought honours, for which men ſtake their ſouls, and everlaſting happineſs! Paul was not of your mind,

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yet for birth he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews; for dignity, and esteem, a Pharisee; for moral accomplishments, touching the law, blameless: Yet all this he trampled under his feet, counting it all but dross, and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ. Moses had more honour, to lay down for Christ, than you; yet it was no temptation to him, to conceal or deny the faith of Christ. Noble Galeacius would not be with-held from Christ by the splendor and glory of Italy; but O how doth the glory of this world dazzle, and blind the eyes of many: "How "can ye believe (saith Christ) who receive honour one of ano-"ther?" John v. 44. Saints and sinners, upon this account, are wonders one to the other. It is the wonder of the world, to see Christians glorying in reproaches; they wonder that the saints run not with them into the same excess of riot; and it is a wonder to believers, how such poor toys, and empty titles (rather than titles of honour) should keep the world, as it doth, from Jesus Christ, and their everlasting happiness in him.

Infer. 6. If Christ be the Lord of glory, *how careful should all be who profess him, that they do not dishonour Jesus Christ, whose name is called upon by them?* Christ is a glory to you, be not you a shame and dishonour to him. How careful had Christians need be, to draw every line, and action of their lives exactly: The more glorious Christ is, the more circumspect and watchful ye had need to be. How lovely would Jesus Christ appear to the world, if the lives of Christians did adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, in all things! Remember you represent the Lord of glory to the world; it is not your honour only, but the honour of Christ which is engaged, and concerned in your actions. O let not the carelessness, or scandals of your life, make Jesus Christ ashamed to be called your Lord. When Israel had grievously revolted from God, he bids Moses rise and get down from thence; for (saith he) *thy people*, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves, Deut. ix. 12. as the Lord were ashamed to own them for his people any longer. It was a cutting question, James ii. 7. apt to startle the consciences of those loose professors; "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which "ye are called?" Your duty is, to adorn the gospel by your conversations, Titus ii. 10. The words signify to deck, trim, or adorn the gospel, i. e. make it trim, neat, and lovely, to the eyes of beholders. When there is such a beautiful harmony, and lovely proportion betwixt Christ's doctrine and your practices, as there is in the works of creation, wherein the comeliness and elegancy of the world much consists, (for to this the

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apoſtle's word here alludes) then do we walk ſuitably to the Lord of glory.

Infer. 7. *What delight ſhould Chriſtians take in their daily converſe with Jeſus Chriſt in the way of duty?* * Your converſes in prayer, hearing, and meditation, are with the Lord of glory: The greateſt peers in the kingdom, account it more honour to be in the preſence of a king, bare-headed, or upon the knee at *court*, than to have thouſands ſtanding bare to them in the country. When you are called to the duties of communion with Chriſt, you are called to the greateſt honour, dignified with the nobleſt privilege creatures are capable of in this world: Had you but a ſenſe of that honour God puts upon you by this means, you would not need ſo much preſſing and ſtriving, to bring a dead and backward heart into the ſpecial preſence of Jeſus Chriſt. When he ſaith, Seek ye my face, your hearts ſhould echo to his calls; Thy face, Lord, will we ſeek. But, alas! the glory of Chriſt is much hid, and veiled, by ignorance, and unbelief, from the eyes of his own people; it is but ſeldom the beſt of ſaints, by the eye of faith, do ſee the king in his glory.

Infer. 8. If Chriſt be ſo glorious, *how ſhould believers long to be with him, and behold him in his glory above?* Moſt men need patience to *die*, a believer ſhould need patience to *live*. Paul thought it well worth enduring the pangs of death, to get a ſight of Jeſus Chriſt in his glory, Phil. i. 23. "The Lord direct "your hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for "Chriſt," (ſaith the apoſtle) 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. intimating, that the ſaints have great need of patience, to enable them to endure the ſtate of diſtance and ſeparation from Chriſt, ſo long as they muſt endure it in this world. *The Spirit and the bride ſay, come, and let him that heareth, ſay, come, and let him that is a thirſt come: even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, and be thou as a ſwift roe upon the mountains of* ſeparation.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord of glory.

* Suppoſe (ſaith Mr. Rutherford) there were no letter of command, yet there is a ſuitableneſs betwixt the law engraven on the heart, and the ſpiritual matter commanded. There is an heaven in the boſom of prayer, though there were not a granting of the ſuit. *Rutherford's Treatiſe of the Covenant, p.* [illegible].

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SERMON XV.

Opening the sixth Motive to come to CHRIST, contained in the sixth and last Title of CHRIST.

LUKE ii. 25. ——*Waiting for the* [*Consolation*] *of Israel.*

SEveral glorious titles of Christ have been already spoken to, out of each of which, much comfort flows to believers: It is comfortable to a wounded soul, to eye him as a *physician;* comfortable to a condemned and unworthy soul, to look upon him under the notion of *mercy:* The lovelinesS, the desirablenesS, and the glory of Christ, are all so many springs of consolation. But now I am to shew you, from this scripture, that the saints have not only much consolation from Christ, but that Christ himself is the *very consolation* of believers: He is pure comfort wrapped up in flesh and blood.

In this context, you have an account of Simeon's prophecy concerning Christ; and in this text, a description of the person, and quality of Simeon himself, who is described two ways.

1. By his *practice.*
2. By his *principle.*

His practice was heavenly, and holy; he was a *just and devout man:* The principle from which his righteousnesS and holinesS did flow, was his faith in Christ; "he waited for the consolation "of Israel." In which words by way of *periphrasis,* we have,

1. A description of Christ, the consolation of Israel.
2. The description of a believer, one that waited for Christ.

First, That *the consolation of Israel* is a phrase descriptive of Jesus Christ, is beyond all doubt, if you consult ver. 26. where he, *(i. e.)* Simeon is satisfied by receiving Christ into his arms, *the consolation* for which he had so long waited.

Secondly, * And that waiting for Christ is a phrase describing the believers of those times that preceded the incarnation of Christ, is past doubt; they all waited for that blessed day: But it was Simeon's lot to fall just upon that happy point of time, wherein the prophecies and promises of his incarnation were fulfilled. Simeon, and others that waited with him, were sensible, that the time of the promise was come, which could not but

* It is a phrase, common and well known among the Jews at that time, by which the coming of Christ was signified. *Ludov. Capell.*

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raise (as indeed it did) a general expectation of him, John ix. 19. But Simeon's faith was confirmed, by a particular revelation, ver. 26. That he should see Christ before he saw death, which could not but greatly encourage and raise his expectation to look out for him, whose coming would be the greatest consolation to the whole *Israel* of God. *The consolation* παρακλησις. The Spirit is frequently called in scripture, παρακλητης; *the Comforter:* But Christ, in this place, is called παρακλησις, *comfort*, or *consolation itself:* The reason of both is given in John xvi. 14. "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you:" Where Christ is said to be the matter, and the Spirit, the applier of true comfort to the people of God. Now this consolation is here expressed both with a singular *emphasis* [*the consolation*] intimating that there is nothing of consolation in any thing besides him; all other comforts compared with this, are not worth naming. And as it is emphatically expressed, so it is also limited and bounded within the compass of God's *Israel*, *(i. e.)* true believers, stiled the *Israel of God*, whether Jews or Gentiles, Gal. vi. 16. From whence the point of doctrine is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ is the only consolation of believers, and of none besides them.*

So speaks the apostle, Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the circum-"cision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ "Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Those that *worship God in the Spirit* are sincere believers; to such sincere believers, Christ is consolation, *our rejoicing is in Christ Jesus:* And they have no consolation in any thing beside him; nothing in the world can give them comfort without Christ, *We have no confidence in the flesh.* The gospel is glad tidings of great joy; but that which makes it to be so, is Jesus Christ, whom it imparts and reveals to us, Luke ii. 10, 11. In the opening of this comfortable point, four things must be spoken to, for the right stating the method of our discourse, *viz.*

1. What is meant by consolation.
2. That Christ, and he only, is consolation to believers.
3. That believers only have consolation in Christ.
4. How it comes to pass, that any believer should be dejected, since Christ is consolation to all believers.

The first thing to be opened, is the nature of consolation, which is nothing else but *the chearineſs of a man's spirit, whereby he is upheld, and fortified against all evils felt, or feared.* Consolation is to the soul, what health is to the body after wasting sickness; or the reviving spring, to the earth, after a long and hard winter. And there are three sorts of consolation, or

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comfort, suitable to the disposition and temper of the mind: *viz.*

Natural,
Sinful, and
Spiritual.

Natural comfort is the refreshment of our natural spirits by the good creatures of God, Acts xiv. 17. "Filling their hearts "with food and gladness." *Sinful comfort* is the satisfaction and pleasure men take in the fulfilling of their lusts, by the abuse of the creatures of God, James v. 5. "Ye have lived in "pleasure upon earth," *(i. e.)* your life hath been a life of sensuality and sin.

Spiritual comfort is the refreshment, peace, and joy, gracious souls have in Christ, by the exercise of faith, hope, and other graces, Rom. v. 2. And this only deserves the name of true solid consolation: To which four things are required.

First, That the matter thereof be some *spiritual*, eminent, and durable good; else our consolation in it will be but as the crackling of thorns under a pot, a sudden blaze, quickly extinct with the failing matter of it. Christ only gives the matter of solid durable consolation; the righteousness of Christ, the pardon of sin, the favour of God, the hopes of glory, are the substantial materials of a believer's consolation, Rom. v. 2. Matth. ix. 2. Psal. iv. 6, 7. 2 Pet. i. 8. Things are as their foundations be.

Secondly, *Interest* and propriety in these comfortable things, are requisite to our consolation by them; Luke i. 47. "My spi- "rit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." It is no consolation to him that is hungry, to see a feast; to him that is poor to see a treasure; if the one may not taste, or the other partake thereof.

Thirdly, *Knowledge*, and evidence of interest, in some degree, is requisite, to actual consolation, though without it a man may be in the state of consolation; for that which appears not, is (in point of actual comfort) as if it were not.

Fourthly, In order hereunto, the work of the Spirit upon our hearts is requisite, both to give, and clear our interest in Christ, and the promises: And both these ways he is the Comforter, "The fruit of the Spirit is joy," Gal. v. 22. And thus briefly of the nature of consolation.

Secondly, Next I will shew you that Christ, and he only, is matter of consolation to believers: which will demonstratively appear by this argument.

Arg. He that brings to their souls all that is comfortable, and

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removes from their souls all that is uncomfortable, must needs be the only consolation of believers.

But Jesus Christ brings to their souls all that is comfortable, and removes from their souls all that is uncomfortable.

Therefore Christ only is the consolation of believers.

First, Jesus Christ brings whatsoever is comfortable to the souls of believers. Is pardon comfortable to a person condemned? Nothing can be matter of greater comfort in this world. Why, this Christ brings to all believers, Jer. xxiii. 6. "And this "is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righte-"ousness." This cannot but give strong consolation; righteousness is the foundation of peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and "the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever," Isa. xxxii. 17. Come to a dejected soul, labouring under the burden of guilt, and say, cheer up, I bring you good tidings, there is such an estate befallen you, or such a troublesome business comfortably ended for you; alas! this will not reach the heart: If you can bring me (saith he) good news from heaven, that my sins are forgiven, and God reconciled, how soon should I be comforted! And therefore (as one well observes) this was the usual receipt with which Christ cured the souls of men and women, when he was here on earth; Son or daughter, "be "of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." And, indeed, it is as easy to separate light and warmth from the beams of the sun, as cheerfulness and comfort from the voice of pardon.

Are the hopes and expectations of heaven and glory comfortable! Yes sure, nothing is comfortable if this be not; Rom. v. 2. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now, Christ brings to the souls of men all the solid grounds, and foundations upon which they build their expectations of glory, Col. i. 27. "Which is Christ, in you, the hope of glory." Name any thing else that is solid matter of comfort to the souls of men, and the grounds thereof will be found in Christ, and in none but Christ: as might easily be demonstrated by the enumeration of multitudes of particular instances, which I cannot now insist upon.

Secondly, Jesus Christ removes from believers whatever is uncomfortable; therein relieving them against all the matters of their affliction and sorrow. As namely,

First, Is sin a burden and matter of trouble, to believers? Christ, and none but Christ, removes that burden, Rom. vii. 24, 25. "O wretched man that I am! (saith sin-burdened Paul) "who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank

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" God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The satisfaction of his blood, Eph. v. 2. The sanctification of his Spirit, John i. 5, 6. His perfect deliverance of his people from the very being of sin at last, Eph. v. 26, 27. This relieves at present, and removes at last the matter and ground of all their troubles and sorrows for sin.

Secondly, Do the temptations of satan burden believers? O yes by reason of temptations; they go in trouble and heaviness of spirit. Temptation is an enemy under the walls; temptation greatly endangers, and therefore cannot but greatly afflict the souls of believers; but Christ brings the only matter of relief against temptations. The intercession of Christ is a singular relief at present, Luke xxii. 32. " But I have prayed for thee, that thy " faith fail not." And the promises of Christ are a full relief for the future; " The God of peace shall shortly tread satan " under your feet," Rom. xvi. 20.

Thirdly, Is spiritual *desertion*, and the hiding of God's face, matter of affliction and casting down to believers? Yes, yes, it distresses their hearts; nothing can comfort them; " Thou hidest " thy face, and I was troubled," Psal. xxx. 7. Outward afflictions do but break the *skin*, this touches the *quick*; they like rain fall only upon the tiles, this soaks into the house; but Christ brings to believers substantial matter of consolation against the troubles of desertion: He himself was deserted of God for a time, that they might not be deserted for ever. In him also the relieving promises are made to believers, that notwithstanding God may desert them for a time, yet the union betwixt him and them shall never be dissolved, Heb. xiii. 4. Jer. xxxii. 40. Though he forsake them for a moment, in respect of evidenced favour, yet he will return again and comfort them, Isa. liv. 7. Though satan pull hard, yet he will never be " able to pluck them out of " his Father's hand," John x. 20. Oh what relief is this! What consolation is Christ to a deserted believer.

Fourthly, Are outward afflictions matter of dejection and trouble? Alas, who finds them not to be so? How do our hearts fail and our spirits sink under the many smarting rods of God upon us? But our relief and consolation under them all is in Christ Jesus; for the rod that afflicts us is in the hand of Christ that loveth us, Rev. iii. 29. " Whom I love, I rebuke " and chasten." His design in affliction is our profit, Heb. xii. 10. That design of his for our good shall certainly be accomplished, Rom. viii. 28. And after that no more afflictions for ever, Rev. xxi. 3, 4. " God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." So that upon the whole, two things are most evident.

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First, Nothing can comfort the ſoul without Chriſt! he is the ſoul that animates all comforts, they would be dead things without him. Temporal enjoyments, riches, honours, health, relations, yield not a drop of true comfort without Chriſt. Spiritual enjoyments, miniſters, ordinances, promiſes, are fountains ſealed and ſprings ſhut up; till Chriſt open them, a man may go comfortleſs in the midſt of them all.

Secondly, No troubles, ſorrows, or afflictions can deject or ſink the ſoul that Chriſt comforteth, 2 Cor. vi. 20. "As ſorrow-"ful, yet always rejoicing." A believer may walk with a heart full of comfort amidſt all the troubles of this world: Chriſt makes the darkneſs of troubles to be light round about his people. So that the concluſion ſtands firm, and never to be ſhaken, that Chriſt, and Chriſt only, is the conſolation of believers; which was the thing to be proved.

In the third place, I am to ſhew you that believers, and none but believers, can have conſolation in Chriſt; which will convincingly appear from the conſideration of thoſe things which we laid down before as the requiſites to all true ſpiritual conſolation. For,

First, No unbeliever hath the *materials*, out of which ſpiritual comfort is made, which (as I there told you) muſt be ſome ſolid, ſpiritual and eternal good, as Chriſt and the covenant are: what do unregenerate men rejoice in, but trifles and mere vanities, in a thing of nought? Amos vi. 13. See how their mirth is deſcribed in Job xxi. 12. "They take their timbrel and harp, and re-"joice at the ſound of the organ." He doth not ſay, they take the Bible, turn to the promiſes, and rejoice in Chriſt and the Covenant; 'tis not the melody of a good conſcience, the joy of the holy Ghoſt; no, no, they have no acquaintance with ſuch muſic as that; but the rejoicing of believers is in thoſe things, 2 Cor. i. 12. and this is well-built conſolation, which reaches the heart.

Secondly, I told you, that propriety and intereſt in Chriſt and the promiſes, are required to all ſpiritual conſolation: but no unbeliever hath any title or intereſt in Chriſt and the promiſes, and ſo they can ſignify nothing to him in point of comfort. 'Tis not another man's money, but my own, that muſt feed, cloth and comfort me; nor is it another man's Chriſt, but my own Chriſt, that muſt juſtify, ſave and comfort my ſoul.

Thirdly, You were told, that evidence of a man's peace and reconciliation with God, is neceſſary to his actual conſolation, which no unbeliever can poſſibly have; he hath neither grace within him to make him a qualified ſubject of any ſpecial pro-

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miſe, nor any witneſs or ſeal of the Spirit, t
his propriety in Chriſt; for he never ſeals,
ſanctifies. So that it is beyond all contradicti
and none but believers, are partakers of the
are in Chriſt Jeſus.

Fourthly, and *laſtly*, There is one inquiry r
tisfied; namely, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt is conſolati ers,
how it comes to paſs, that ſo many believers in the world ſhould walk ſo dejectedly as they do, without any ſpiritual conſolation?

Firſt, This need not be wonder'd at, if we conſider, that the conſolations of Chriſt are of two ſorts; *ſeminal* and in preparation, or *actual* in preſent poſſeſſion. Every *believer* in the world hath the root and ſeed of comfort planted and ſown for him, Pſal. xcvii. 11. "Light is ſown for the righteous, and "gladneſs for the upright in heart." They have Chriſt and the promiſes, which are the ſeeds of conſolation, and will bring forth joy at laſt, though at preſent they have have no actual conſolation; the ſeed of all joy is ſown, and in due time they ſhall reap the full ripe fruit thereof.

Secondly, It muſt be remembered, that *intereſt* and *evidence* are diſtinct bleſſings, every *believer* hath intereſt in Chriſt; but every *believer* hath not the evidence thereof, Iſa. l. 10. "Who "is among you, that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice "of his ſervant; that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light?" Every child of God is not of ſufficient age to know his father, or take comfort in that bleſſed inheritance whereunto he is begotten again, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Every believer doth not walk with like ſtrictneſs, and exact holineſs: all do not exerciſe faith in a like degree. Among Chriſtians ſome are ſtrong in grace, rich in faith, ſtrict in obedience, tender of ſin to an eminent degree; theſe uſually are owners of much conſolation: but others are weak in grace, poor in faith, comparatively careleſs of their hearts and ways, frequently grieving the good ſpirit of God, and wounding their own conſciences (the veſſel into which ſpiritual conſolation is poured); and theſe are uſually denied the joy and comfort which others abound withal.

Fourthly, The conſolations of Chriſt are arbitrarily diſpenſed by the Spirit, who is the Comforter, and giveth to every man in ſuch proportions, and at ſuch ſeaſons, as pleaſeth him: whence it comes to paſs, that he that is rich in comfort to day, may be poor to morrow; and, contrarily, the heart that is quite full of ſorrow one hour, is filled with peace and joy in believing the

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First, things that are necessary to *the being* of a Christian, are, soul that is stable; but things belonging only to the well-being our Christian, come and go, according to the good pleasure and appointment of the Spirit. The use of all follows.

Infer. 1. Hence it follows, *That the state of unbelivers is the most sad and uncomfortable state in the world, having no interest in Christ, the consolation of Israel.* It is true, they abound in creature-comforts; they live in pleasure upon earth: joy displays its colours in their faces; but for all this, there is not the least drop of true consolation in any of their hearts; they have some comfort in the creature, but none in Christ: that little they gather from the creature now, is all their portion of joy, Luke vi. 24. "Ye have received your consolation:" as this is all they have, so they shall enjoy it but a little while, Job xxi. 13, 17. And while they do enjoy it, it is mixed with many gripes of conscience, Job xiv. 13. "Even in laughter the heart is sor-"rowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Whatever consolation any unbeliever speaks of besides this, is but by rote; for when the day of his distress cometh, and the terrors of conscience shall awake him out of his pleasant dreams, all his sensual joys will vanish from him, and the doors of true consolation will be shut against him. Let him go to Jesus Christ, knock at that door, and say, Lord Jesus, thy name is consolation: my heart is ready to burst within me; hast thou no consolation for me? O Lord, for one drop of spiritual comfort now; but alas there is none, no not in Christ himself, for any unbeliever. It is childrens bread, the saints privilege; comfort and grace are undivided. Let him return into himself, search his own conscience for comfort, and say, O conscience! thou art more than a thousand witnesses, and thousands have been comforted by thee; where thou speakest comfort, none can speak trouble; hast thou no consolation for me in my deepest distress? Alas, no; if God condemn thee, wherewithal shall I comfort thee? I can speak neither more nor less than the scriptures put into my mouth, and I find not one word in all the book of God, warranting me to be thy comforter. Believe it as an undoubted truth (though the sense of the bewitched world over-rules it) that the state of unbelievers, even at the best, is a sad and dismal state.

Infer. 2. *Let all believers fetch all their comfort out of Christ, who is the consolation of his people:* "We rejoice (saith the apo-"stle) in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." That is the true temper of a believing soul: take heed you live not partly upon Christ, and partly upon the creature for your

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comfort; much rather beware, that you forsake not Christ, the fountain of living waters, and hew out cisterns for yourselves which can hold no water, Jer. ii. 13. If you make any creature the spring and fountain of your comfort, assuredly God will dry up that spring. If your souls draw their comfort from any creature, you know they must out-live that creature, and what then will you do for comfort? Besides, as your comforts are, so are you. The food of every creature is suitable to its nature. You see divers creatures feeding upon several parts of the same herb, the bee upon the flower, the bird upon the seeds, the sheep upon the stalk, and the swine upon the root, according to their nature so is their food. Sensual men feed upon sensual things, spiritual men upon spiritual things; as your food is, so are you. If carnal comforts can content thy heart, sure thy heart must then be a very carnal heart. Yea, and let Christians themselves take heed, that they fetch not their consolations out of themselves instead of Christ. Your graces and duties are excellent means and instruments, but not the ground-work and foundation of your comfort, they are useful buckets to draw, but not the well itself in which the springs of consolation rise. If you put your duties in the room of Christ, Christ will put your comforts out of the reach of your duties.

Infer. 3. *If Christ be the consolation of believers, what a comfortable life should all believers live in the world?* Certainly, if the fault be not your own, you might live the happiest and comfortablest lives of all men in the world. If you would not be a discomfort to Christ, he would be a comfort to you every day, and in every condition, to the end of your lives. Your condition abounds with all the helps and advantages of consolation. You have the command of Christ to warrant your comforts, Phil. iv. 4. You have the Spirit of Christ for a spring of comfort; you have the scriptures of Christ for the rules of comfort; you have the duties of religion for the means of comfort: Why is it then that you go comfortless? If your afflictions be many in the world, yet your encouragements be more in Christ. Your troubles in the world may be turned into joy, but your comforts in Christ can never be turned into trouble. Why should troubles obstruct your comfort, when the blessing of Christ upon your troubles makes them subservient to promote your happiness? Rom. viii. 28. Shake off the despondency then, and live up to the principles of religion. Your dejected life is uncomfortable to yourselves, and of very ill use to others.

Infer. 4. *If Christ be the consolation of believers, then let all*

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that desire comfort in this world, or in that to come, embrace Jesus Christ, and get real union with him. The same hour you shall be in Christ, you shall also be at the fountain-head of all consolations: thy soul shall be then a pardoned soul, and a pardoned soul hath all reason in the world to be a joyful soul: in that day the conscience shall be sprinkled with the blood of Christ; and a sprinkled conscience hath all the reason in the world to be a comforting conscience: in that day you become the children of your Father in heaven, and he that hath a Father in heaven, hath all reason to be the joyfullest man upon earth; in that day you are delivered from the sting and hurt of death; and he that is delivered from the sting of death, hath the best reason to take in the comfort of life. O come to Christ! come to Christ! till you come to Christ, no true comfort can come to you.

* *

SERMON XVI.

Enforcing the general Exhortation, by a seventh Motive drawn from the first Benefit purchased by CHRIST.

EPH. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

SIX great motives have been presented already from the titles of Christ, to draw the hearts of sinners to him; more are now to be offered from the benefits redounding to believers by Christ; essaying, by all means, to win the hearts of men to Christ. To this end I shall, in the first place, open that glorious *privilege of gospel-remission*, freely and fully conferred upon all that come to Christ by faith, "in whom we have redemption by "faith," *&c.*

In which words we have, *first*, a singular benefit, or choice mercy bestowed, *viz. redemption*, interpreted by way of *apposition, the remission of sins*: this is a privilege of the first rank, a mercy by itself; none sweeter, none more desirable among all the benefits that come by Christ. And therefore,

Secondly, You have the price of this mercy, an account what it cost, even the *blood of Christ*, in whom we have redemption [through his blood:] precious things are of great price; the blood of Christ is the *meritorious cause* of remission.

Thirdly, You have here also the *impulsive cause*, moving God

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to grant pardons at this rate to sinners, and that is said to be the *riches of his grace:* where, by the way, you see, that the freeness of the grace of God, and the fulness of the satisfaction of Christ, meet together without the least jar in the remission of sin, contrary to the vain cavil of the Socinian adversaries: "In "whom we have redemption, even the remission of sins, ac-"cording to the riches of his grace."

Fourthly, You have the *qualified subjects* of this blessed privilege, *viz.* Believers, in whose name he here speaks, [*we*] *have remission, (i. e.)* We the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, ver. 1. We whom he hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated unto the adoption of children, ver. 4, 5. We that are made accepted in the beloved, ver. 6. It is *we*, and *we* only, who have redemption through his blood. Hence observe,

Doct. *That all believers, and none but believers, receive the remission of their sins, through the riches of grace, by the blood of Jesus Christ.*

In the explication of this point, three things must be spoken to.

1. That all that are in Christ, are in a pardoned state.
2. That their pardon is the purchase of the blood of Christ.
3. That the riches of grace are manifested in remission.

First, That all that are in Christ, are in a pardoned state: where I will first shew you what pardon or remission of sin is.

Secondly, That this is the privilege of none but believers.

First, Now remission of sin is the gracious act of God, in and through Christ, discharging a believing sinner from all the guilt and punishment of his sin, both temporal and eternal.

It is the act of God; he is the author of remission; none can forgive sins but God only, Mark ii. 7. Against him only, (*i. e.*) principally and especially, the offence is committed, Psal. li. 4. To his judgment guilt binds over the soul; and who can remit the debt, but the creditor? Mat. vi. 12.

It is an act of God, discharging the sinner; it is God's loosing of one that stood bound, the cancelling of his bond or obligation, called therefore remission, or releasing in the text; the blotting out of our iniquities, or the removing of our sins from us, as it is called in other scriptures; see Psal. ciii. 11. Micah vii. 18, 19.

It is a gracious act of God, the effect of pure grace, done for his own name's sake, Isa. xliii. 25. discharging us without any satisfaction at all by us: there is much grace in that; and pro-

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viding a surety for us every way able to pay our debt, there is more grace in that.

It is the gracious act of God in and through Christ: the satisfaction of Christ is the procuring cause of our remission, and so God declares himself just in the remission of our sin, Rom. iii. 25. "Gracious is the Lord and righteous," Psal. cxvi. 5. Justice and mercy meet here, and embrace each other; "in "whom (saith the text) we have remission:" no other price could purchase this privilege, Micah vi. 6, 7. not rivers of oil, or of human blood.

And this gracious act of God discharges the pardoned soul both from guilt and punishment. Guilt is nothing else but the force and power that is in sin, to oblige the sinner to undergo the penalty due to sin; therefore sinners are said to be *guilty of hell-fire*, Mat. v. 22. *Guilty of eternal judgment*, Mark iii. 29. To be under the judgment of God, Rom. iii. 19. Remission takes away both guilt and punishment together; it takes away all guilt, Acts xiii. 38, 39. and all punishment. And so much of the first thing to be opened, namely, what the remission of sin is.

Secondly, Now that this remission of sin is the privilege of believers, is most apparent; for all the causes of remission are in conjunction to procure it for them: the love of God, which is the impulsive cause of pardon; the blood of Christ, which is the meritorious cause of pardon; and saving faith, which is the instrumental cause of pardon, do all co-operate for their remission, as is plain in the text.

Besides, all the promises of pardon are made to them, Jer. xxxi. 34. Micah vii. 18. And, lastly, all the signs of pardon are found in them, and in them only, that love God, Luke vii. 47. Mercifulness to others, Mat. vi. 14. A blessed calmness and peace in the conscience, Rom. v. 1. So that it is a truth beyond controversy, that all that are in Christ are in a pardoned state.

Secondly, Next I will shew you, that the pardon of believers is the purchase of the blood of Christ: nothing but the blood of Christ is a price equivalent to the remission of sin, for this blood was innocent and untainted blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. the blood of a Lamb without spot: this blood was precious blood, blood of infinite worth and value, the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. It was prepared blood for this very purpose, Heb. x. 5. Prepared by God's eternal appointment; prepared by Christ's miraculous and extraordinary production by the operation of the Spirit,

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prepared by his voluntary sequestration, or sanctification of himself to this very use and purpose.

The blood of Jesus is not only innocent, precious, and prepared blood, but it is also blood actually shed, and sacrificed to the justice of God, for the expiation of guilt, and procurement of our discharge, Isa. liii. 5. To conclude: the severe justice of God could put in no exception against the blood of Christ; it is unexceptionable blood, being, (as before was noted), untainted by sin, and dignified above all estimation by the person whose blood it was: Justice required no less, and could demand no more; and this is the price at which our pardons are purchased, and without which no sin could be pardoned; for "without shedding of blood, (such blood as this) there is no "remission," Heb. ix. 22.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened is, That God hath manifested the riches of his grace, in the remission of our sins. So speaks the apostle, Rom. v. 20. "Where sin abounded, grace "did much more abound:" And, 1 Tim. i. 14. "The grace "of our Lord (*viz.* in the pardon of sin) was exceeding a-"bundant." Which will appear, if we bring our thoughts close to the matter, in several particulars.

First, From the nature of the mercy, which is the riches of all mercies, except Christ the purchaser of it: No mercy sweeter than a pardon to a condemned sinner: no pardon like God's pardon to a man condemned at his bar; all the goodness of God is made to pass before our eyes in his pardoning acts of grace, Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Secondly, The very riches of grace must needs be in the pardon of sin, if we consider the method in which pardons are dispensed, which is, as the text speaks, "through his blood." Herein "God commends his love to us," Rom. v. 8. He commends it more than if he had pardoned sin without such a sacrifice; for then he had only displayed his mercy, but not caused mercy and justice to meet and triumph together.

Thirdly, The riches of his grace shine forth in the peculiarity of the mercy. Remission is no common favour; it was never extended to the fallen angels, nor to the greater part of the children of men, but only to a little flock, a small remnant of mankind, Luke xii. 32. John xvii. 9.

Fourthly, The riches of grace are manifested in remission, if we consider the subjects of this privilege, who are not only equally plunged into sin and misery with others by nature, Eph. ii. 3. but many of the Lord's pardoned ones, have been actual-

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ly guilty of a deeper-dyed abomination, than many unpardoned ones, in the civilized world, are defiled with. "To me, "(saith Paul), the greatest of sinners, one that was before a "blasphemer, a persecutor, *&c.* yet to me is this grace given; "I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 15. "And such were some of "you, but ye are justified," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Yea, God singles out the most base, despised, poor, and contemptible ones among men, to be the subjects of this glorious privilege, 2 Cor. i. 26. "You see your calling brethren," *&c.*

Fifthly, More of the riches of grace still appear, if we view the latitude and extent of this act of grace. O how innumerable are our transgressions! "Who can understand his errors?" Psal. xix. 12. "Yet the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all "sin," 1 John i. 7. Small and great sins, open and secret sins, old and new sins, all pardoned without exception. O the riches of grace! O the unsearchable goodness of God! "With the "Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemp-"tion; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," Psal. cxxx. 7, 8.

Sixthly, and lastly, The riches of grace shine forth in the irrevocableness and perpetuity of remission. As grace pardons all sins without exception, so the pardons it bestows are without revocation: The pardoned soul shall "never come into "condemnation," John v. 24. "As far as the east is from "the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," Psal. ciii. 10. The *east* and *west* are the two opposite points of heaven, which can never come together; neither shall the pardoned soul, and its sins, ever meet any more. "Thou hast "cast, (saith Hezekiah), all my sins behind thy back." The penitent believer sets his sins before his face, but the merciful God casts them all behind his back, never to behold them more, so as to charge them upon his pardoned people. And thus you see what the pardon of sin is, what the price that purchaseth pardon is, and what riches of grace God manifesteth in the remission of a believer's sins; which were the things to be explained and opened in the doctrinal part. The improvement of the whole you will have in the following uses.

Infer. 1. If this be so, that all believers, and none but believers, receive the remission of their sins through the riches of grace, by the blood of Christ; *What a happy condition then are believers in!* Those that never felt the load of sin, may make light of a pardon; but so cannot you, that have been in the deeps of trouble and fear about it: those that have been upon the rack of an accusing and condemning conscience, as David,

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Heman, and many of the saints have been, can never sufficiently value a pardon. "Blessed is the man whose transgression "is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto "whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. or, O the blessedness and felicities of the pardoned man! as in the Hebrew *. Remission cannot but appear the wonder of mercies, if we consider through what difficulties the grace of God makes way for it to our souls; what strong bars the love of God breaks asunder, to open our way to this privilege; for there can be no pardon without a Mediator; no other Mediator but the Son of God: the Son of God cannot discharge our debts, but by taking them upon himself as our surety, and making full payment, by bearing the wrath of God for us; and when all this is done, there can be no actual pardon, except the Spirit of grace open our blind eyes, break our hard hearts, and draw them to Christ in the way of believing. And as the mercy of remission comes to us through wonderful difficulties, so it is in itself a complete and perfect mercy: God would not be at such vast expence of the riches of his grace: Christ would not lay out the invaluable treasures of his precious blood to procure a cheap and common blessing for us. Rejoice then, ye pardoned souls, God hath done great things for you, for which you have cause to be glad.

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *That interest in Christ by faith, brings the conscience of a believer into a state of rest and peace,* Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." I say not that every believer is presently brought into actual peace and tranquility of conscience; there may be many fears, and much trouble even in a pardoned soul: but this is an undoubted truth, that faith brings the pardoned soul into that condition and state, where he may find perfect rest in his conscience, with respect to the guilt and danger of sin. The blood of Christ sprinkles us from an evil (that is, an accusing, condemning) conscience. We are apt to fear, that this or that special sin, which hath most terrified and affrighted our consciences, is not forgiven: but if there be riches enough in the grace of God, and efficacy enough in the blood of Christ, then the sins of believers, all their sins, great as well as small, one as well as another, without limitation or exception, are pardoned.

For let us but consider, If God remits no sin to any man, but with respect to the blood of Christ, then all sins are pardoned,

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as well as any one sin; because the dignity and desert of that blood is infinite, and as much deserves an universal pardon for all sins, as the particular pardon of any, even the least sin: moreover, remission is an act of God's fatherly love in Christ; and if it be so, then certainly no sin of any believer can be retained or excluded from pardon; for then the same soul should be in the favour of God, so far as it is pardoned; and out of favour with God, so far as it is unpardoned, and all this at one and the same instant of time; which is a thing both repugnant to itself, and to the whole strain of the gospel.

To conclude: What is the design and end of remission, but the saving of the pardoned soul? But if any sin be retained or excluded from pardon, the retaining of that sin must needs make void the pardon of all other sins; and so the acts of God must cross and contradict each other, and the design and end of God miscarry and be lost; which can never be. So then we conclude, faith brings the believing soul into a state of rest and peace.

Infer. 3. Hence it also follows, *That no remission is to be expected by any soul, without interest by faith in Jesus Christ: no Christ, no pardon; no faith, no Christ.* Yet how apt are many poor deluded souls to expect pardon in that way, where never any soul yet did, or ever can meet it. Some look for pardon from the absolute mercy of God, without any regard to the blood of Christ, or their interest therein; we have sinned, but God is merciful. Some expect remission of sin by virtue of their own duties, not Christ's merits: I have sinned, but I will repent, restore, reform, and God will pardon. But little do such men know how they therein diminish the evil of sin, undervalue the justice of God, slight the blood of Christ, and put an undoing cheat upon their own souls for ever. To expect pardon from absolute mercy, or our own duties, is to knock at the wrong door, which God hath shut up to all the world, Rom. iii. 20. Whilst these two principles abide firm, that the price of pardon is only in the blood of Christ, and the benefit of pardon, only by the application of his blood to us; this must remain a sure conclusion, that no remission is to be expected by any soul, without interest by faith in Jesus Christ. Repentance, restitution, and reformation are excellent duties in their kind, and in their proper places, but they were never meant for saviours, or satisfactions to God for sin.

Infer. 4. If the riches of grace be thus manifested in the pardon of sin, *How vile an abuse is it of the grace of God, to take the more liberty to sin, because grace abounds in the pardon of it!*

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"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God for-"bid!" Rom. vi. 1, 2. Will nothing cheaper than the grace of God serve to make a cloak for sin? O vile abuse of the most excellent thing in the whole world? Did Christ shed his blood to expiate our guilt, and dare we make a plea to extenuate our guilt? God forbid!

If it be intolerable ingratitude, among men, to requite good with evil, sure that sin must want a name bad enough to express it, which puts the greatest dishonour upon God, for the greatest mercy that ever was given by God to the world. "There is "mercy with thee, (saith the Psalmist), that thou mayest be fear-"ed," not that thou mayest be the more abused, Psal. cxxx. 4. Nay, let me say, the devils never sinned at this rate; they cannot abuse the pardoning grace of God, because such grace was never offered unto them. And certainly, if the abuse of the common mercies of God, as meat and drink, by gluttony and drunkenness, be an henious sin, and highly provoking to God; then the abuse of the riches of his grace, and the precious blood of his Son, must be out of measure sinful, and the greatest affront we can put upon the God of mercy.

Infer. 5. To conclude: *If this be so, as ever you expect pardon and mercy from God, to come Christ in the way of faith; receive and embrace him now in the tenders of the gospel.*

To drive home this great exhortation, I beseech you, as in the bowels of Christ Jesus, and by all the regard and value you have for your own souls, let these following considerations sink down into your hearts.

First, That all christless persons are actually under the condemnation of God, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, is condem-"ned already:" and it must needs be so, for every soul is concluded under the curse of the law, till Christ make him free, John viii. 36. Till we are in Christ, we are dead by law; and when we believe unto justification, then we *pass from death to life.* A blind mistaken conscience may possibly acquit you, but assure yourselves, God condemns you.

Secondly, Consider what a terrible thing it is to lie under the condemnation of God; the most terrible things in nature cannot shadow forth the misery of such a state: put all sicknesses, all poverty, all reproaches, the torments invented by all tyrants into one scale, and the condemnation of God into the other, and they will be all found lighter than a feather. Condemnation is the sentence of God, the great and terrible God; it is a sentence shutting you up to everlasting wrath; it is a sentence never to

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be reverſed, but by the application of Chriſt in the ſeaſon thereof. O ſouls! you cannot bear the wrath of God; you do not underſtand it, if you think it tolerable: One drop of it upon your conſciences now, is enough to diſtract you in the midſt of all the pleaſures and comforts of this world: yet all that are out of Chriſt, are ſentenced to the fulneſs of God's wrath for ever.

Thirdly, There is yet a poſſibility of eſcaping the wrath to come; a door of hope opened to the worſt of ſinners; a day of grace is offered to the children of men, Heb. iii. 15. God declares himſelf unwilling that any ſhould periſh, 2 Pet. iii. 9. O what a mercy is this! Who, that is on this ſide heaven or hell, fully underſtands the worth of it?

Fourthly, The door of mercy will be ſhortly ſhut, Luke xii. 25. God hath many ways to ſhut it: he ſometimes ſhuts it by withdrawing the means of grace, and removing the *candleſticks*; a judgment at this time to be greatly feared. Sometimes he ſhuts it, by withdrawing his Spirit and bleſſing from the means, whereby all ordinances loſe their efficacy, 1 Cor. iii. 7. But if he ſhut it not by removing the means of grace from you, certain it is, it will be ſhortly ſhut by your removal from all the means and opportunities of ſalvation by death.

Fifthly, When once the door of mercy is ſhut, you are gone beyond all the poſſibilities of pardon and ſalvation for evermore. The night is then come, in which no man can work, John ix. 4. All the golden ſeaſons, you now enjoy, will be irrecoverably gone out of your reach.

Sixthly, Pardons are now daily granted to others: ſome (and they once as far from mercy as you now are), are at this day reading their pardons with tears of joy dropping from them. The world is full of the examples and inſtances of the riches of pardoning grace. And whatever is needful for you to do in the way of repentance and faith to obtain your pardon, how eaſily ſhall it be done, if once the day of God's power come upon you? Pſal. cx. 3. O therefore, lift up your cries to heaven, give the Lord no reſt, take no denial till he open the blind eye, break the ſtony heart, open and bow the ſtubborn will, effectually draw thy ſoul to Chriſt, and deliver thy pardon ſigned in his blood.

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SERMON XVII.

Opening the eighth Motive to come to CHRIST, drawn from the sixth Benefit purchased by CHRIST for Believers.

EPH. i. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*

IN our last discourse we opened to you the blessed privilege of remission of sin, from the following verse; in this verse lies another glorious privilege, *viz.* the *acceptation* that believers have with God through Jesus Christ: both which comprise (as the two main branches) our justification before God. In the words read, (to omit many things that might be profitably observed from the method and dependance of the apostle's discourse) three things are observable, *viz.*

1. The privilege itself.
2. The meritorious cause.
3. The ultimate end thereof.

First, The privilege itself, which is exceeding rich and sweet in its own nature; "he hath made us accepted;" the word is εχαριτωσεν ημας, he hath ingratiated us, or brought us into grace, favour, and acceptance of God the Father; endeared us to him, so that we find grace in his sight.

Secondly, The meritorious cause, purchasing and procuring this benefit for us, noted in the words, εν τω ηγαπημενω, *in the Beloved*; which words are a *periphrasis* of Christ, who is here emphatically stiled *the Beloved*, the great favourite of heaven, the delight of God's soul, the prime object of his love: it is he that obtaineth this benefit for believers: he is accepted for his own sake, and we for his.

Thirdly, The ultimate end and aim of conferring this benefit upon believers; "To the praise of the glory of his grace;" or, to the end that his grace might be made glorious in praises: there are riches of grace in this act of God; and the work and business of believers, both in this world and in that to come, is to search and admire, acknowledge and magnify God for his abundant grace herein. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ hath purchased and procured special favour and acceptation with God for all that are in him.*

This point lies plain in scripture, Eph. ii. 13. "But now in

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" Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh " by the blood of Christ," ἐγγὺς ἐγενήθητε, made nigh, a term of endearedness: nothing is taken into the very bosom and embraces but what is very dear, precious and acceptable: and in Rev. ii. 5, 6. believers are said to be made by Jesus Christ "kings " and priests unto God, and his Father," *(i. e.)* dignified favourites, upon whom the special marks of honour are set by God.

In opening of this point, three things must be doctrinally discussed and opened, *viz.*

1. What the acceptation of our persons with God is?
2. How it appears that believers are so accepted with God?
3. How Christ the Beloved procures this benefit for believers?

First, What the acceptation of our persons with God is? To open which, it may be proper to remember, that there is a twofold acceptance of persons mentioned in scripture.

1. One is the sinful act of corrupt man.
2. The other the gracious act of a merciful God.

First, Accepting of persons is noted in scripture as the sinful act of a corrupt man; a thing which God abhors, being the corruption and abuse of that power, and authority which men have in judgment; overlooking the merit of the cause through sinful respect to the quality of the person whose cause it is; so that the cause doth not commend the person, but the person the cause. This God every where brands in men, as a vile perverting of judgment, and utterly disclaims it himself, Gal. ii. 6. " God ac- " cepteth no man's person;" Rom. ii. 11. "There is no respect " of persons with God."

Secondly, There is also an accepting of persons, which is the gracious act of a merciful God; whereby he receives both the persons and duties of believers into special grace and favour for Christ's sake; and of this my text speaks. In which act of favour three things are supposed or included.

First, It supposes an estate of alienation and enmity: those only are accepted into favour, that were out of favour; and indeed so stood the case with us, Eph. ii. 12, 13. " Ye were aliens and " strangers, but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were a- " far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ:" So the apostle Peter, in 1 Pet. ii. 10. " Which in time past were not a people, " but now are the people of God; which had not obtained mer- " cy, but now have obtained mercy." The fall made a fearful breach betwixt God and man. Sin, like a thick cloud, intercepted all the beams of divine favour from us; the satisfaction of Christ dissolves that cloud, Isa. xliv. 22. " I have blotted out, as a thick

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" cloud, thy tranſgreſſions, and, as a cloud, thy ſins." This dark cloud thus diſſolved, the face of God ſhines forth again with cheerful beams of favour and love upon all, who, by faith, are intereſted in Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, It includes the removing of guilt from the perſons of believers, by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to them, Rom. v. 1, 2. " Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, " thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: by whom alſo we have acceſs by " faith into this grace wherein we ſtand:" for the face of God cannot ſhine upon the wicked; the perſon muſt be firſt made righteous, before it can be made accepted.

Thirdly, It includes the offering up, or tendring of our perſons and duties to God by Jeſus Chriſt. Accepting implies preſenting or tendring: believers indeed do preſent themſelves to God, Rom. xii. 1. But Chriſt's preſenting them makes their tender of themſelves acceptable to the Lord; Col. i. 22. " In the body " of his fleſh through death to preſent you holy, and unblame- " able, and unreprovable, in his ſight." Chriſt leads every believer, as it were by the hand, into the gracious preſence of God; after this manner beſpeaking acceptance for him: " Father, here " is a poor ſoul that was born in ſin, hath lived in rebellion a- " gainſt thee all his days; he hath broken all thy laws, and de- " ſerved all thy wrath; yet he is one of that number which thou " gaveſt me before the world was. I have made full payment " of my blood for all his ſins: I have opened his eyes to ſee the " ſinfulneſs and miſery of his condition; broken his heart for " his rebellions againſt thee; bowed his will in obedience unto " thy will; united him to my ſelf by faith, as a living member " of my body: and now, Lord, ſince, he is become mine by re- " generation, let him be thine alſo by ſpecial acceptation: let " the ſame love with which thou loveſt me embrace him alſo, " who is now become mine." And ſo much for the firſt particular, *viz.* What acceptation with God is.

Secondly, In the next place, I muſt ſhew you how it appears that believers are thus ingratiated, or brought into the ſpecial favour of God by Jeſus Chriſt. And this will be evidenced divers ways.

Firſt, By the *titles* of love and endearedneſs, with which the Lord graceth, and honoureth believers, who are ſometimes called *the houſhold of God*, Eph. ii. 19. the *friends of God*, James ii. 23. the *dear children of God*, Eph. v. 1. the *peculiar people of God*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. *a crown of glory*, and a *royal diadem* in the hand of their God, Iſa. lxii. 3. The object of his *delight* and *pleaſure*,

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Pſal. cxlvii. 10, 11. O what terms of endearedneſs doth God uſe towards his people! Doth not all this ſpeak them to be in ſpecial favour with him? Which of all theſe alone, doth not ſignify a perſon highly in favour with God?

Secondly, The gracious manner in which he treats them upon the throne of grace, to which he allows them to come with boldneſs, Heb. iv. 16. This alſo ſpeaks them in the ſpecial favour of God: he allows them to come to him in prayer, with the liberty, confidence, and filial boldneſs of children to a father; Gal. iv. 6. "Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth "the ſpirit of his ſon into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" the familiar voice of a dear child: yea, which is a wonderful condeſcenſion of the great God to poor worms of the earth, he ſaith, Iſa. xlv. 11. "Thus ſaith the Lord, the holy One of Iſ-"rael, and his maker, aſk me of things to come concerning "my ſons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye "me:" an expreſſion ſo full of grace, and ſpecial favour to believers, that it needs great caution in reading and underſtanding ſuch an high and aſtoniſhing expreſſion, the meaning is, that God hath, as it were, ſubjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his ſaints; and it is as if he had ſaid, if my glory, and your neceſſity ſhall require it, do but aſk me in prayer, and whatever my Almighty Power can do, I will do it for you. However, let no favourite of heaven forget the infinite diſtance betwixt himſelf and God. Abraham was a great favourite of heaven, and was called *the friend of God;* yet ſee with what humility of ſpirit, and reverential awe he addreſſeth to God, Gen. xviii. 27. "Behold now I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the "Lord, which am but duſt and aſhes." So that you ſee the titles of favour above-mentioned are no empty titles.

Thirdly, God's readineſs to grant, as well as their liberty to aſk, ſpeaks them the ſpecial favourites of God. The heart of God is ſo propenſe, and ready, to grant the deſires of believers, that it is but ask and have, Mat. vii. 7. The door of grace is opened by the key of prayer. That is a favourite indeed, to whom the king gives a blank to inſert what requeſt he will: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall ask "what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you," John xv. 7. O bleſſed liberty of the ſons of God! David did but ſay, "Lord, "turn the counſel of Ahitophel into fooliſhneſs," and it was done as ſoon as asked. 2 Sam. xv. 31. Joſhua did but ſay, "thou ſun ſtand ſtill in Gibeon," and a miraculous ſtop was preſently put to its ſwift motion in the heavens; nay, which is wonderful to conſider, a prayer, yet unborn, I mean conceived

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in the heart, and not yet uttered by the lips of believers, is often anticipated by the propenſiveneſs of free grace, Iſa. lxv. 24. "And it ſhall come to paſs, that before they call I will anſwer, "and whilſt they are yet ſpeaking I will hear." The prayers of others are rejected as an abomination, Prov. xv. 8. God caſts them back into their faces, Mal. ii. 3. But free grace ſigns the petitions of the ſaints more readily than they are preſented: we have not that freedom to ask, that God hath to give: it is true, the anſwer of a believer's prayers may be a long time ſuſpended from his ſenſe and knowledge; but every prayer, according to the will of God, is preſently granted in heaven, though, for wiſe and holy ends, they may be held in a doubtful ſuſpenſe about them upon earth.

Fourthly, The free diſcoveries of the ſecrets of God's heart to believers, ſpeak them to be his ſpecial favourites: men open not the counſels and ſecrets of their own hearts to enemies, or ſtrangers; but to their moſt inward and intimate friends: "The "ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will "ſhew them his covenant," Pſal. xxv. 14. When God was about to deſtroy Sodom, he would do nothing in that work of Judgment 'till he had acquainted Abraham his friend, with his purpoſe therein, Gen. xviii. 17. "And the Lord ſaid, Shall I "hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know "him," *&c.* So when a *king* was to be elected for Iſrael, and the perſon whom God had choſen, was yet unknown to the people, God, as it were, whiſpered that ſecret unto Samuel the day before, 1 Sam. ix. 15. "Now the Lord had told Samuel "in his ear a day before Saul came:" according to the manner of princes with ſome ſpecial favourite.

Fifthly, The Lord's receiving every ſmall thing that comes from them with grace and favour, when he rejects the greateſt things offered by others, doth certainly beſpeak believers the ſpecial favourites of God. There was but one good word in a whole ſentence from Sarah, and that very word is noted and commended by God, 1 Pet. iii. 6. "She called him Lord." There were but ſome ſmall beginnings, or buddings of grace in young Abijah, and the Lord took ſpecial notice thereof, 1 Kings xiv. 13. "Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing toward "the Lord God of Iſrael, in the houſe of Jeroboam." Let this be an encouragement to young ones, in whom there are found any breathing deſires after Chriſt: God will not reject them if any ſincerity be found in them; a ſecret groan, uttered to God in ſincerity, ſhall not be deſpiſed, Rom. viii. 26. The very bent of a believer's will, when he had no more to offer un-

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to God, is an acceptable present, 2. Cor. viii. 11. The very intent, and purpose that lie secretly in the heart of a believer, not yet executed, are accepted with him, 1 Kings viii. 18. "Where-"as it was in thine heart to build an house to my name, thou "didst well that it was in thine heart." Thus small things offered to God by believers find acceptance with him, whilst the greatest presents, even solemn assemblies, sabbaths, and prayers from others are rejected: "They are a trouble unto me (saith "God); I am weary to bear them," Isa. i. 14, 15. "Incense "from Sheba, the sweet cane from a far country" are not acceptable, nor sacrifices sweet unto God from other hands, Jer. vi. 20. From all which it appears, beyond doubt, that the persons and duties of believers are accepted in the special favour of God by Jesus Christ: which was the second thing to be spoken to, and brings us to the third general, *viz.*

Thirdly, How Christ, the beloved, procures this benefit for believers? And this he doth four ways.

First, By *the satisfaction of his blood*, Rom. v. 10. "When "we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death "of his Son." No friendship without reconciliation, no reconciliation, but by the blood of Christ: therefore the new and living way, by which believers come unto God with acceptance, is said to be consecrated for us through the veil of Christ's flesh; and hence believers have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19, 20.

Secondly, The favour of God is procured for believers, *by their mystical union with Christ*, whereby they are made "members "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. So that as Adam's posterity stood upon the same terms that he, their natural head, did; so believers, Christ's mystical members, stand in the favour of God, by the favour which Christ their spiritual head hath, John xvii. 33. "I in them, and thou in me, that they "may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that "thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

Thirdly, Believers are brought into favour with God *by Christ becoming their altar*, upon which their persons and duties are all offered up to God: *The altar* sanctifies the gift, Heb. xiii. 10. And this was typified by the legal rite mentioned Luke i. 9, 10. Christ is that golden altar from whence all the prayers of the saints ascend to the throne of God, perfumed with the odours, and incense of his merits, Rev. viii. 34. "And another angel came "and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was "given unto him much incense that he should offer it, with the "prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before

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" the throne; and the ſmoke of the incenſe which came with " the prayers of the ſaints aſcended up before God out of the " angel's hand." And thus you ſee how the perſons, and duties of believers are brought into favour and acceptance with God by Jeſus Chriſt. The uſes follow.

Infer. 1. *If all believers be in favour with God, how great a mercy is it to have the prayers of ſuch engaged on our behalf?* Would we have our buſineſs ſpeed in heaven, let us get into favour with God ourſelves, and engage the prayers of his people, the favourites of heaven, for us: *Vis unita fortior*, one believer can do much, many can do more: when Daniel deſigned to get the knowledge of that ſecret, hinted in the obſcure dream of the king, which none but the God of heaven could make known, it is ſaid, Dan. ii. 17. "Then Daniel went to his houſe, and " made the thing known to Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah, " his companions; that they would deſire mercies of the God " of heaven concerning this ſecret." The benefits of ſuch aſſiſtance in prayer by the help of other favourites with God, is plainly intimated by Jeſus Chriſt to us, Mat. xviii. 19. "If two " of you ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they " ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in " heaven." God ſometimes ſtands upon a number of voices, for the carrying of ſome public mercy, becauſe he delighteth in the harmony of many praying ſouls; and alſo loves to oblige and gratify many in the anſwer, and return of the ſame prayer. I know this uſage is grown too formal, and complemental among profeſſors: but certainly it is a great advantage to be ſincere with them, who are ſo with God. St. Bernard preſcribing rules for effectual prayer, cloſes them up with this wiſh, *et cum talis fueris, memento mei*, when thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

Infer. 2. *If believers be ſuch favourites in heaven, in what a deſperate condition is that cauſe, and thoſe perſons, againſt whom the generality of believers are daily engaged in prayers and cries to heaven?*

Certainly Rome ſhall feel the dint, and force of the many millions of prayers that are gone up to heaven, from the ſaints, for many generations: the cries of the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus, joined with the cries of thouſands of believers, will bring down vengeance at laſt upon the man of ſin. It is ſaid, Rev. viii. 4, 5, 6. "That the ſmoke of the incenſe which came with " the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God out of the " angel's hand:" And immediately it is added, ver. 5. "And " the angel took the cenſer, and filled it with fire of the altar,

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" and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunder-
" ings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and the seven angels,
" which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound."
The prayer of a single saint is sometimes followed with wonder-
ful effects, Psal. xviii. 6, 7. " In my distress I called upon the
" Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his
" temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears: then
" the earth shook and trembled; the foundation also of the hills
" moved and were shaken, because he was wroth:" what then
can a thundering legion of such praying souls do? It was said
of Luther, *Iste vir potuit cum Deo quicquid voluit*, that man could
have of God what he would; his enemies felt the weight of his
prayers, and the church of God reaped the benefits thereof.
The *queeen of Scots* professed, she was more afraid of the prayers
of Mr. Knox *, than of an army of ten thousand men: these were
mighty wrestlers with God, however contemned and vilified a-
mong their enemies. There will a time come, when God will
hear the prayers of his people, who are continually crying in his
ears, *How long? Lord, how long?*

Infer. 3. *Let no believer be dejected at the contempts and slightings of men, so long as they stand in the grace and favour of God.* It is the lot of the best men to have the worst usage in the world: those of whom the world was not worthy, were not thought worthy to live in the world, Heb. xi. 38. Paul and his companions were men of choice and excellent spirits; yet saith he, 1 Cor. iv. 12. " Being defamed, we intreat;
" we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring
" of all things unto this day." They are words signifying the basest, most contemptible, and abhorred things among men. How are heaven and earth divided in their judgments and estimations of the saints? Those whom men call filth and dirt, God calls a peculiar treasure, a crown of glory, a royal diadem. But trouble not thyself, believer, for the unjust censures of the blind world; they speak evil of the things they know not: " He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself
" is judged of no man," 1 Cor. ii. 14. You can discern the earthliness and baseness of their spirits, they want a faculty to discern the excellency and choiceness of your spirits: he that carries a dark lantern in the night, can discern him that comes against him, and yet is not discerned by him. A courtier regards not a

* Jacobus Sangius, the Sorbonne doctor, who wrote the lives of Luther, Knox and Calvin, speaks as if the devil had hired his pen to abuse those precious servants of Christ.

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ſlight in the country, ſo long as he hath the ear and favour of his prince.

Infer. 4. *Never let believers fear the want of any good thing neceſſary for them in this world.* The favour of God is the fountain of all bleſſings, proviſions, protections, even of all that you need. He hath promiſed that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. He that is bountiful to his enemies will not withhold what is good from his friends. The favour of God will not only ſupply your needs, but protect your perſons, Pſal. v. 12. "Thou wilt bleſs "the righteous, with favour wilt thou compaſs him as with a "ſhield."

Infer. 5. Hence alſo it follows, *that the ſins of believers are very piercing things to the heart of God.* The unkindneſs of thoſe whom he hath received into his very boſom, upon whom he hath ſet his ſpecial favour and delight, who are more obliged to him than all the people of the earth beſide, O this wounds the very heart of God. What a melting expoſtulation was that which the Lord uſed with David, 2 Sam. xii. 7, 8. "I anointed thee "king over Iſrael, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, "and I gave thee thy maſter's houſe, and thy maſter's wives "into thy boſom, and gave thee the houſe of Iſrael and Judah, "and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given "unto thee ſuch and ſuch things: wherefore haſt thou deſ-"piſed the commandment of the Lord?" But reader, if thou be a reconciled perſon, a favourite with God, and haſt grieved him by any eminent tranſgreſſion, how ſhould it melt thy heart to hear the Lord thus expoſtulating with thee: I delivered thee out of the hand of Satan; I gave thee into the boſom of Chriſt; I have pardoned unto thee millions of ſins; I have beſtowed upon thee the riches of mercy; my favour hath made thee great; and, as if all this were too little, I have prepared heaven for thee: for which of all theſe favours doſt thou thus requite me?

Infer. 6. *How precious ſhould Jeſus Chriſt be to believers, by whoſe blood they are ingratiated with God, and by whoſe interceſſion they are, and ſhall for ever be continued in his favour?* When the apoſtle mentions the believers tranſlation, from the ſad ſtate of nature to the bleſſed privileged ſtate of grace, ſee what a title he beſtows upon Jeſus Chriſt, the purchaſer of that privilege, calling him the *dear Son*, Col. i. 13. Not only dear to God, but exceeding dear to believers alſo. Chriſt is the favourite in heaven, to him you owe all the preferment there: Take away Chriſt, and you have no ground on which to ſtand one

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minute in the favour of God. O then let Jesus Christ, the fountain of your honour, be also the object of your love and praise.

Infer. 7. *Estimate by this, the state and condition of a deserted saint, upon whom the favour of God is eclipsed.* If the favour of God be better than life, the hiding of it from a gracious soul must be more bitter than death: Deserted saints have reason to take the first place among all the mourners in the world: The darkness before conversion had, indeed, more danger, but this hath more of trouble. Darkness after light is dismal darkness. Since therefore the case is so sad, let your preventing care be the more; grieve not the good Spirit of God, you prepare but for your own grief in so doing.

Infer. 8. Lastly, *Let this persuade all men to accept Jesus Christ, as ever they expect to be accepted with the Lord themselves.* It is a fearful case, for a man's person, and duties to be rejected of God; to cry and not be heard: And much more terrible to be denied audience in the great and terrible day. Yet, as sure as the scriptures are the sealed and faithful sayings of God, this is no more than what every Christless person must expect in that day, Mat. vii. 22. Luke xiii. 26. trace the history of all times, even as high as Abel, and you shall find that none but ‡ believers did ever find acceptance with God; all experience confirms this great truth, that *they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Reader, if this be thy condition, let me beg thee to ponder the misery of it in a few sad thoughts.

Consider how sad it is to be rejected of God, and forsaken by all creatures at once; what a day of straits thy dying day is like to be, when heaven and earth shall cast thee out together. Be assured whatever thy vain hopes for the present quiet thee withal, this must be thy case, the door of mercy will be shut against thee, no man cometh to the Father but by Christ. Sad was the case of Saul, when he told Samuel, "the Philistines "make war against me, and God is departed from me," 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. The saints will have boldness in the day of judgment, 1 John iv. 17. But thou wilt be a confounded Man; there is yet, blessed be the God of mercy, a capacity and opportunity of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 19. Isa. xxvii. 5. But this can be of no long continuance. O therefore, by all the regard and love you have for the everlasting welfare of your own souls, come to Christ; embrace Christ in the offers of the gospel, that you may be made accepted in the beloved.

‡ If any one desires to know the will of God, let him be a friend of God. *Aug.*

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SERMON XVIII.

The Liberty of Believers, opened and ſtated.

JOHN viii. 36. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

FROM the 30th verſe of this chapter unto my text, you have an account of the different effects which the words of Chriſt had upon the hearts of his hearers: Some believed, ver. 30. theſe he encourageth to continue in his word, ver. 31. giving them this encouragement, ver. 32. "Ye ſhall know the truth, "and the truth ſhall make you free." Hereat the unbelieving Jews take offence, and commence a quarrel with him, ver. 33. "We be Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man." We are of no ſlaviſh extraction; the blood of Abraham runs in our veins. This ſcornful boaſt of the proud Jews, Chriſt confutes, ver. 34. where he diſtinguiſheth on a twofold bondage; one to men, another to ſin; one civil, another ſpiritual: Whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin, then tells them, ver. 36. "The ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever, but the Son "abideth for ever." Wherein he intimateth two great truths, *viz.* That the ſervants, and ſlaves of ſin may, for a time, enjoy the external privileges of the houſe, or church of God; but it would not be long before the maſter of the houſe will turn them out of door: But if they were once the adopted children of God, then they ſhould abide in the houſe for ever. And this privilege is only to be had by their believing in, and union with the natural Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt: Which brings us fairly to the text; "If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, "ye ſhall be free indeed." In which words we have two parts;

viz. { 1. A ſuppoſition. 2. A conceſſion.

Firſt, A *ſuppoſition*, "If the Son therefore ſhall make you "free," *q. d.* The womb of nature caſt you forth into the world in a ſtate of bondage; in that ſtate you have lived all your days; ſervants to ſin; ſlaves to your luſts; yet freedom is to be obtained: And this freedom is the prerogative belonging to the Son of God to beſtow: "If the Son ſhall make you free."

Secondly, Chriſt's conceſſion upon this ſuppoſition, "Then "ſhall ye be free indeed," *(i. e.)* you ſhall have a real freedom, an excellent, and everlaſting freedom: No conceit only, as that

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which you now boaſt of is: If ever therefore you will be free men indeed, believe in me. Hence note,

Doct. *That intereſt in Chriſt ſets the ſoul at liberty from all that bondage whereinto it was ſubjected in its natural ſtate.*

Believers are the children of the new covenant, the Denizons of Jeruſalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of them all, Gal. iv. 26. The glorious liberty, *viz.* that which is ſpiritual and eternal, is the liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21. Chriſt and none but Chriſt delivers his people out of the hand of their enemies, Luke i. 74.

In the doctrinal part of this point, I muſt ſhew you,

Firſt, What believers are not freed from by Jeſus Chriſt in this world.

Secondly, What that bondage is from which every believer is freed by Chriſt.

Thirdly, What kind of freedom that is which commences upon believing.

Fourthly, Open the excellency of this ſtate of ſpiritual freedom.

Firſt, What thoſe things are from which believers are not made free in this world: We muſt not think that our ſpiritual liberty by Chriſt, preſently brings us into an abſolute liberty, in all reſpects, For,

Firſt, *Chriſt, doth not free blievers from obedience to the moral law:* It is true we are no more under it as a *covenant* for our *juſtification*; but we are, and muſt ſtill be under it, as a *rule* for our *direction*. The matter of the moral law is unchangeable, as the nature of good and evil is, and cannot be aboliſhed except that diſtinction could be deſtroyed, Mat. v. 17, 18. The precepts of the law are ſtill urged under the goſpel to enforce duties upon us, Eph. vi. 12. It is therefore a vain diſtinction, invented by Libertines, to ſay it binds us as *creatures*, not as Chriſtians; or that it binds the unregenerate part, but not the regenerate: but this is a ſure truth, that they who are freed from its *penalties*, are ſtill under its *precepts*. Though believers are no more under its *curſe*, yet they are ſtill under its *conduct*: The law ſends us to Chriſt to be *juſtified*, and Chriſt ſends us to the law to be *regulated*. Let the heart of every Chriſtian join therefore with David's in that holy wiſh, Pſal. cxix. 4, 5. "Thou haſt commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently; "O that my heart were directed to keep thy ſtatutes." It is excellent when Chriſtians begin to obey the law *from* life, which others obey *for* life; becauſe they *are* juſtified, not that they *may be* juſtified. It is alſo excellent when duties are done in

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the ſtrength, and for the honour of Chriſt, which is evangelical; and not in our own ſtrength, and for our own ends, which is ſervile, and legal obedience: Had Chriſt freed us from obedience, ſuch a liberty had been to our loſs.

Secondly, Chriſt hath not freed believers, in this world, from the temptations and aſſaults of Satan: even thoſe that are freed from his *dominion*, are not free from his *moleſtation*. It is ſaid indeed, Rom. xvi. 20. "God ſhall ſhortly bruiſe Satan under "your feet:" But mean time he hath power to bruiſe, and buffet us by his injections, 2 Cor. xii. 7. He now bruiſeth Chriſt's heel, Gen. iii. 15 *(i. e.)* bruiſeth him in his tempted, and afflicted members: Though he cannot kill them, yet he can, and doth afflict and fright them, by ſhooting his fiery darts of temptation among them, Eph. vi. 16. It is true, when the ſaints are got ſafe into heaven, they are out of gunſhot; there is perfect freedom from all temptation. A believer may then ſay, O thou enemy, temptations are come to a perpetual end. I am now arrived there, where none of thy fiery darts can reach me: But this freedom is not yet.

Thirdly, Chriſt hath not yet freed believers, in this world, from the motions of indwelling Sin: Theſe are continually acting, and infeſting the holieſt of men, Rom. vii. 21, 23, 24. Corruptions, like Canaanites, are ſtill left in the land to be thorns in your eyes, and goads in your ſides. Thoſe that boaſt moſt of freedom from the motions of ſin, have moſt cauſe to ſuſpect themſelves ſtill under the dominion of ſin. All Chriſt's freemen are troubled with the ſame complaint: who among them complains not as the apoſtle did, Rom. vii. 24. "Oh wretched "man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this "death?"

Fourthly, Jeſus Chriſt doth not free believers in this world from inward troubles, and exerciſes of ſoul, upon the account of ſin. God may let looſe Satan, and conſcience too, in the way of terrible accuſations, which may greatly diſtreſs the ſoul of a believer, and woefully eclipſe the light of God's countenance, and break the peace of their ſouls. Job, Heman, and David were all made free by Chriſt, yet each of them hath left upon record his bitter complaint upon this account, Job. vii. 19, 20. Pſal. lxxxviii. 14, 15, 16. Pſal. xxxviii. unto ver. 11.

Fifthly, Chriſt hath not freed believers, in this world, from the rods of affliction. God in giving us our liberty, doth not abridge his own liberty, Pſal. lxxxix. 32. All the children of God are made free, yet what ſon is there whom the father chaſteneth not? Heb. xii. 8. Exemption from affliction is ſo far from

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being the mark of a freeman, that the apoſtle there makes it the mark of a ſlave. Baſtards not ſons, want the diſcipline and bleſſing of the rod: To be free from affliction would be no benefit to believers, who receive ſo many benefits by it.

Sixthly, No believer is freed by Chriſt from the *ſtroke* of death, though they are all freed from the *ſting* of death, Rom. viii. 10. The bodies of believers are under the ſame law of mortality with other men, Heb. ix. 27. We muſt come to the grave as well as others; yea, we muſt come to it through the ſame agonies, pangs, and dolours that other men do: The foot of death treads as heavy upon the bodies of the redeemed, as of other men. Believers, indeed, are diſtinguiſhed by mercy from others, but the diſtinguiſhing mercy lies not here. Thus you ſee what believers are not freed from in this world: If you ſhall now ſay, what advantage then hath a believer, or what profit is there in regeneration? I anſwer,

Secondly, That believers are freed from many great, and ſad miſeries, and evils, by Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding all that hath been ſaid. For,

Firſt, All believers are freed from the *vigour*, and *curſe* of the law: The rigorous yoke of the law is broken off from their necks, and the ſweet and eaſy yoke of Jeſus Chriſt put on, Matth. xi. 28. The law required perfect working, under the pain of a curſe, Gal. iii. 10. accepted of no ſhort endeavours; admitted no repentance; gave no ſtrength: It is not ſo now, proportionable ſtrength is given, Phil. iv. 13. Sincerity is reckoned perfection, Job i. 1. Tranſgreſſion brings not under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. O bleſſed freedom! when duty becomes delight, and failings hinder not acceptance! This is one part of the bleſſed freedom of believers.

Secondly, All believers are freed from the guilt of ſin; it may *trouble*, but it cannot *condemn* them, Rom. viii. 33. The hand-writing which was againſt us is cancelled by Chriſt, nailed to his croſs, Coloſ. ii. 14. When the ſeal and hand-writing are torn off from the bond, the debtor is made free thereby: Believers are totally freed, Acts xiii. 39. "Juſtified from all "things:" And finally freed, John v. 24. "They ſhall never "come into condemnation." O bleſſed freedom! How ſweet is it to lie down in our beds, yea, in our graves, when guilt ſhall neither be our bed-fellow, nor grave-fellow!

Thirdly, Jeſus Chriſt frees all believers from the *dominion*, as well as the guilt of ſin. "Sin ſhall not have dominion over "you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. "The law of the Spirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus

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" hath made me free from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2. Now who can estimate such a liberty as this? What slavery, what an intolerable drudgery is the service of divers lusts; from all which believers are freed by Christ; not from the *residence*, but from the *reign* of sin. It is with sin in believers as it was with those beasts mentioned Dan. vii. 12. " They had their " dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a " season and time."

Fourthly, Jesus Christ sets all believers free from the power of Satan; in whose right they were by nature, Col. i. 13. they are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. Satan had the possession of them, as a man of his own goods; but Christ dispossesseth that strong man armed, alters the property, and recovers them out of his hand, Luke xi. 21, 22. There are two ways by which Christ frees believers out of Satan's power and possession; namely,

1. By price. | 2. By power.

First, By *price*. The blood of Christ purchaseth believers out of the hands of justice, by satisfying the law for them, which being done, Satan's authority over them falls of course, as the power of a jailor over the prisoner doth, when he hath a legal discharge, Heb. ii. 14. " Forasmuch then as children are parta- " kers of flesh and blood; he also himself took part of the same, " that through death he might destroy him that had the power " of death, that is, the devil." The cruel tyrant beats, and burdens the poor captive no more after the ransom is once paid, and he thereby actually freed; and therefore Christ delivers his.

Secondly, By *power*. Satan is exceeding unwilling to let go his prey: He is a strong and a malicious enemy: every rescue, and deliverance out of his hand, is a glorious effect of the Almighty power of Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. x. 5. How did our Lord Jesus Christ grapple with Satan at his death, and triumphed over him, Col. ii. 15. O glorious salvation! blessed liberty of the children of God!

Fifthly, Christ frees believers from the poisonous sting and hurt of death: Kill us it can, but hurt us it cannot, 1 Cor xv. 55, 56. " O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy " victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is " the law: But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory " through our Lord Jesus Christ." If there be not hurt, there should be no horror in death: It is guilt that arms death, both with its hurting and terrifying power. To die in our sins, John viii. 24. To have our bones full of the sins of our youth, which shall lie down with us in the dust, Job xx. 11. To have death,

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like a dragon, pulling a poor guilty creature as a prey into its dreadful den, Pſal. xlix. 14. In this lies the danger and horror of death: But from death, as a curſe, and from the grave, as a priſon, Chriſt hath ſet believers at liberty, by ſubmitting to death in their room, by his victorious reſurrection from the grave, as the firſt-born of the dead: death is diſarmed of its hurting power: The death of believers is but a ſleep in Jeſus.

Thirdly, The next thing to be briefly ſpoken to, is the kind and nature of that freedom and liberty purchaſed, and procured by Chriſt for believers.

Now liberty may be conſidered two ways; *viz.*

1. As civil. | 2. As ſacred.

As to civil freedom, or liberty, it belongs not to our preſent buſineſs: Believers, as to their civil capacity, are not freed from the duties they owe to their ſuperiors. Servants, though believers, are ſtill to be ſubject to their maſters, according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, Eph. vi. 5. nor from obedience to lawful magiſtrates, whom we are to obey in the Lord, Rom. xii. 1, 4. Religion diſſolves not the bonds of civil relations: nor is it to be uſed as an occaſion to the fleſh, 1 Pet. ii. 16. It is not a carnal, but a ſpiritual freedom Chriſt hath purchaſed for us: And this ſpiritual freedom is again to be conſidered, either as,

1. Inchoate. | 2. Conſummate.

The liberty believers have at preſent is but a beginning liberty; they are freed but in part from their ſpiritual enemies: but it is a growing liberty every day, and will be conſummate, and complete at laſt.

To conclude, Chriſtian liberty is either,

1. Privative, or, | 2. Poſitive.

The liberty believers are inveſted with, is of both kinds: They are not only freed from many miſeries, burdens and dangers, but alſo inveſted by Jeſus Chriſt with many royal privileges and invaluable immunities.

Fourthly, And this brings us to the fourth and laſt thing: namely, the properties of this bleſſed freedom which the ſaints enjoy by Jeſus Chriſt; and, if we conſider it duly, it will be found to be,

Firſt, A wonderful liberty, never enough to be admired. How could it be imagined that ever thoſe who owed unto God more than ever they could pay by their own eternal ſufferings; thoſe that were under the dreadful curſe, and condemnation of the law, in the power and poſſeſſion of Satan the ſtrong man armed; thoſe that were bound with ſo many chains in their ſpiritual priſon; their underſtanding bound with ignorance, their wills with

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obstinacy, their hearts with impenetrable hardness, their affections with a thousand bewitching vanities, that slight their state of slavery so much, as industriously to oppose all instruments and means of deliverance; for such persons to be set at liberty, notwithstanding all this, is the wonder of wonders, and will be deservedly marvellous in the eyes of believers for ever.

Secondly, The freedom of believers is a peculiar freedom; a liberty which few obtain; the generality abiding still in bondage to Satan, who, from the multitude of his subjects, is stiled *the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Believers in scripture are often called a remnant, which is but a small part of the whole piece: The more cause have the people of God to admire distinguishing mercy. How many nobles and great ones of the world are but royal slaves to Satan, and their own lusts!

Thirdly, The liberty of believers is a liberty dearly purchased by the blood of Christ. What that captain said, Acts xxii. 28. "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," may be much more said of the believers freedom: It was not silver or gold; but the precious blood of Christ that purchased it, 1 Pet. i. 18.

Fourthly, The freedom and liberty of believers is a growing and encreasing liberty; they get more and more out of the power of sin, and nearer still to their complete salvation every day, Rom. xiii. 11. The body of sin dieth daily in them: they are said to be crucified with Christ: the strength of sin abates continually in them, after the manner of crucified persons, who die a slow, but sure death: And look in what degree the power of sin abates, proportionably their spiritual liberty encreases upon them.

Fifthly, The freedom of believers is a comfortable freedom: the apostle comforts Christians of the lowest rank, poor servants, with this consideration, 1 Cor. vii. 22. "He that is called in the "Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman," *q. d.* Let not the meanest of your outward condition, which is a state of subjection and dependance, a state of poverty and contempt, at all trouble you: you are the Lord's freemen, of precious account in his eyes. O it is a comfortable liberty!

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, It is a perpetual and final freedom; they that are once freed by Christ, have their manumission, and final discharge from that state of bondage they were in before: sin shall never have dominion over them any more: it may tempt them, and trouble them, but shall never more rule and govern them, Acts xxvi. 18. And thus you see what a glorious liberty the liberty of believers is.

The improvement whereof will be in the following inferences.

Infer. 1. *How rational is the Joy of Christians, above the joy*

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of all others in the world? Shall not the captive rejoice in his recovered liberty? the very birds of the air (as one obſerves) had rather be at liberty in the woods, though lean and hungry, than in a golden cage with the richeſt fare: every creature naturally prizes it; none more than believers, who have felt the burden and bondage of corruption: who in the days of their firſt illumination and conviction have poured out many groans and tears for this mercy. What was ſaid of the captive people of God in Babylon, excellently ſhadows forth the ſtate of God's people under ſpiritual bondage, with the way and manner of their deliverance from it, Zech. ix. 11. "By the blood of the covenant I "have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit, wherein is no wa-"ter." Believers are delivered by the blood of Chriſt, out of a worſe pit than that of Babylon; and look, as the tribes in their return from thence were overwhelmed with joy and aſtoniſhment, Pſal. cxxvi. 1, 2. "When the Lord turned again the "captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream: Then was "our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging." They were overwhelmed with the ſenſe of the mercy: So ſhould it be with the people of God. It is ſaid, Luke xv. 24. when the prodigal ſon (there made the emblem of a returning, converting ſinner) was returned again to his father's houſe, that there was heard muſic and dancing, mirth and feaſting in that houſe. The angels in heaven rejoice when a ſoul is recovered out of the power of Satan: And ſhall not the recovered ſoul, immediately concerned in the mercy, greatly rejoice? Yea, let them rejoice in the Lord, and let no earthly trouble or affliction ever have power to interrupt their joy, for a moment, after ſuch a deliverance as this.

Infer. 2. *How unreaſonable, and wholly inexcuſable is the ſin of apoſtacy from Jeſus Chriſt?* What is it but for a delivered captive to put his feet again into the ſhackles; his hands into the manacles; his neck into the iron yoke, from which he hath been delivered? 'Tis ſaid, Mat. xii. 44, 45. "When the un-"clean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry "places, ſeeking reſt and findeth none: Then he ſaith, I will "return into mine houſe from whence I came out; and when "he is come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſhed; then "goeth he, and taketh with him ſeven other ſpirits more wicked "than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there, and the laſt "ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt." Even as a priſoner that hath eſcaped, and is again recovered, is loaded with double irons. Let the people of God be content to run any hazard, endure any difficulties in the way of religion, rather than return

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again into their former bondage, to sin and Satan. O Christian! if ever God gave thee a sight, and a sense of the misery and danger of thy natural state, if ever thou hast felt the pangs of a labouring, and distressed conscience, and, after all this, tasted the unspeakable sweetness of the peace and rest that are in Christ, thou wilt rather choose to die ten thousand deaths, than to forsake Christ, and go back again into that sad condition.

Infer. 3. *How suitable, and well becoming is a free spirit in believers, to their state of liberty and freedom?* Christ hath made your condition free, O let the temper and frame of your hearts be free also; do all that you do for God with a spirit of freedom; not by constraint, but willingly. Methinks, Christians, the new nature that is in you should stand for a command, and be instead of all arguments that use to work upon the hopes, and fears of other men. See how all creatures work according to the principle of their natures. You need not command a mother to draw forth her breasts to a sucking child; nature itself teaches and prompts to that. You need not bid the sea ebb and flow at the stated hours. O Christian! why should thy heart need any other argument, than its own spiritual inclination, to keep its stated times and seasons of communion with God? Let none of God's commandments be grievous to you: let not thine heart need dragging and forcing to its own benefit and advantage. Whatever you do for God, do it chearfully; and whatever you suffer for God, suffer it chearfully. It was a brave spirit which actuated holy Paul, "I am ready, (saith he), "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the "name of the Lord Jesus," Acts xxi. 13.

Infer. 4. *Let no man wonder at the enmity and opposition of Satan to the preaching of the gospel:* for by the gospel it is that souls are recovered out of his power, Acts xxvi. 18. 'Tis the express work of ministers "to turn men from darkness to light, "and from the power of Satan unto God." Satan (as one saith) is a great and jealous prince: he will never endure to have liberty proclaimed by the ministers of Christ within his dominions. And, indeed, what is it less, when the gospel is preached in power, but as it were by beat of drum, and sound of trumpet, to proclaim liberty, spiritual, sweet, and everlasting liberty, to every soul that is made sensible of the bondage of corruption and cruel servitude of Satan, and will now come over to Jesus Christ? And oh what numbers and multitudes of prisoners have broken loose from Satan at one proclamation of Christ, Acts ii. 41. But Satan owes the servants of Christ a spite for this, and will be sure to pay them, if ever they come within his

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reach; perſecution is the genius of the goſpel, and follows it as the ſhadow doth the body.

Infer. 5. How careful ſhould Chriſtians be to maintain their ſpiritual liberty in all and every point therefore! "ſtand faſt (ſaith "Paul) in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and "be not again intangled in the yoke of bondage," Gal. v. 1. And again, "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the ſervants of "men." 'Tis Chriſt's prerogative to preſcribe the rules of his own houſe; he hath given no man dominion over your faith, 2 Cor. i. 24. One man is no rule to another, but the word of Chriſt is a rule to all: follow not the holieſt of men one ſtep farther than they follow Chriſt, 1 Cor. 11. 4. Man is an ambitious creature, naturally affecting dominion; and dominion over the mind rather than over the body. To give law to others, feeds pride in himſelf: ſo far as any man brings the word of Chriſt to warrant his injunctions, ſo far we are to obey, and no farther: Chriſt is your Lord and Lawgiver.

Inference 6. *Laſtly*, Let this encourage and perſuade ſinners to come to Chriſt; for with him is ſweet liberty for poor captives. Oh that you did but know what a bleſſed ſtate Jeſus Chriſt would bring you into! "Come unto me (ſaith he) ye that "labour and are heavy laden;" and what encouragement doth he give to comers? Why this, "My yoke is eaſy, and my burden "is light." The devil perſuades you, that the ways of obedience and ſtrict godlineſs are a perfect bondage; but, if ever God regenerate you, you will find his ways, "ways of pleaſantneſs, and "all his paths peace: you will rejoice in the way of his com-"mandments as much as in all riches:" you will find the worſt work Chriſt puts you about, even ſuffering work, ſweeter than all the pleaſures that ever you found in ſin. O therefore open your hearts at the call of the goſpel: Come unto Chriſt, *then ſhall you be free indeed.*

SERMON XIX.

The Saints coming home to GOD, by Reconciliation, and Glorification, opened and applied.

1 PET. iii. 18. *For Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God.*

THE ſcope of the apoſtle in this place is to prepare, and fortify Chriſtians for a day of ſuffering. In order to

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their chearful sustaining whereof, he prescribeth two excellent rules of mighty use for all suffering Christians.

First, To get a good conscience within them, ver. 16, 17. *hic murus aheneus esto.*

Secondly, To set the example of Christ's sufferings before them, ver. 18. "For Christ hath once suffered for sinners:" the sufferings of Christ for us, is the great motive engaging Christians to suffer chearfully for him.

In the words before us we have,

First, The sufficiency and fulness of Christ's sufferings intimated in that particle [once]; Christ needs to suffer no more, having finished and compleated that whole work at once.

Secondly, The meritorious cause of the sufferings of Christ, and that is sin, *Christ once suffered for sins*; not his own sins, but ours: as it follows in the next clause, which is the third thing here observable, *viz.*

Thirdly, The admirable grace, and unexampled love of Christ to us sinners, *the just for the unjust*; in which words the substitution of Christ in the room and place of sinners, the vicegerence of his death is plainly expressed. Christ died not only *nostro bono*, for our good, but also *nostro loco*, in our stead.

Fourthly, Here is also the final cause, or design and scope of the sufferings of Christ, which was *to bring us to God.*

Fifthly, Here is also the issue of the sufferings of Christ, which was the death of Christ in the flesh, and the quickning of Christ after death by the Spirit. Many excellent observations are lodged in the bosom of this scripture; all which I must pass over in silence at this time, and confine my discourse to the final cause of the sufferings of Christ, namely, *that he might bring us to God:* where the observation will be plainly and briefly this.

Doct. *That the end of Christ's cursed death, and bitter sufferings, was to bring all those for whom he died unto God.*

In the explication and preparation of this point for use, two things must be spoken unto, *viz.*

1. What Christ's bringing us to God imports?

2. What influence the death of Christ hath upon this design of bringing us to God?

First, What Christ's bringing us to God imports? And certainly there be many great and excellent things contained in this expression: more generally it notes our state of reconciliation, and our state of glorification. By reconciliation we are brought nigh to God, Eph. ii. 13. "Ye are made nigh," (*i. e.*) reconciled, "by the blood of Christ," Heb. xii. 22, 23. we are said

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" to come to God the Judge of all." By reconciliation we are brought nigh unto God now; by glorification we shall be brought home to God hereafter, 1 Thes. iv. 17. " We shall be ever " with the Lord." But more particularly this phrase, " that " he might bring us to God," imports,

First, That the chief happiness of man consisteth in the enjoyment of God: that the creature hath as necessary dependance upon God for happiness, as the stream hath upon the fountain, or the image in the glass upon the face of him that looks into it. For as the sum of the creatures misery lies in this, *depart from me*; separation from God is the principal part of damnation: so, on the contrary, the chief happiness of the creature consisteth in the enjoyment, and blessed vision of God, 1 John iii. 2. Psal. xvii. 15. " I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy like- " ness."

Secondly, It implies man's revolt and apostacy from God, Eph. ii. 12. " But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometime afar off, " are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Those whom Christ bringeth unto God, were before afar off from him, both in state and condition, and in temper and disposition: we were lost creatures, and had no desire to return to God *: The prodigal was said to go into a far country, Luke xv. 30.

Thirdly, Christ's bringing us to God, implies our inability to return to God of ourselves: we must be brought back by Christ, or perish for ever in a state of separation from God: the lost sheep is made the emblem of the lost sinner, Luke xv. 5. The sheep returns not to the fold of itself, but the shepherd seeks it, finds it, and carries it back upon his shoulders. And the apostle plainly tells us, Rom. v. 6. That when *we were without strength (i. e.)* any ability to recover, help, or save ourselves, *in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Fourthly, Christ's bringing us to God, evidently implies this, that God's unsatisfied justice was once the great bar betwixt him and man. Man can have no access to God but by Christ: Christ brings us to God by no other way but the way of satisfaction by his blood: " He hath suffered for sins, the just for " the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Better ten thousand worlds should perish for ever, than God should lose the honour of his justice. This great *obex*, or bar to our enjoyment of God, is effectually removed by the death of Christ;

* Although the faculties of the soul were not extinguished by the fall, yet their inclination to spiritual objects was wholly lost. *Zeeman. on the image of God.*

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whereby God's juſtice is not only fully ſatisfied, but highly honoured and glorified, Rom. iii. 24. And ſo the way by which we are brought to God is again opened (to the wonder and joy of all believers) by the blood and ſufferings of Chriſt.

Fifthly, and *laſtly*, It ſhews us the peculiar happineſs and privilege of believers above all people in the world: theſe only are they which ſhall be brought to God by Jeſus Chriſt in a reconciled ſtate: others, indeed, ſhall be brought to God as a Judge, to be condemned by him: believers only are brought to God in the Mediator's hand, as a reconciled Father, to be made bleſſed for ever in the enjoyment of him: every believer is brought ſingly to God at his death, Luke xvi. 22. And all believers ſhall be jointly and ſolemnly preſented to God in the great day, Col. i. 22. Jude 24. They ſhall be all preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. Now the privilege of believers in that day will lie in divers things.

Firſt, That they ſhall be all brought to God together. This will be the general aſſembly mentioned, Heb. xii. 22. There ſhall be a collection of all believers, in all ages of the world, into one bleſſed aſſembly: they ſhall come from the *eaſt*, and *weſt*, and *north*, and *ſouth*, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God, Luke xiii. 29. O what a glorious train will be ſeen following the Redeemer in that day!

Secondly, As all the ſaints ſhall be collected into one body; ſo they ſhall be all brought, or preſented unto God, faultleſs and without blemiſh, Jude 24. "A glorious church, without ſpot "or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing," Eph. v. 27. For this is the general aſſembly of the ſpirits of juſt men that are made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. All ſin was perfectly ſeparated from them, when death had ſeparated their ſouls and bodies.

Thirdly, In this lies the privilege of believers, that as they ſhall be all brought together, and that in a ſtate of abſolute purity, and perfection, ſo they ſhall be all brought to God: they ſhall ſee his face, in the viſion whereof is "fulneſs of joy, and "at whoſe right-hand are pleaſures for evermore," Pſal. xvi. 11. The objective bleſſedneſs of the ſaints conſiſteth in their fruition of God, Pſal. lxxii. 25. To ſee God in his word and works, is the happineſs of the ſaints on earth; but to ſee him face to face, will be the fulneſs of their bleſſedneſs in heaven, 1 John iii. 2. This is that intuitive, transforming, and ſanctifying viſion, of which the ſcripture frequently ſpeaks, Pſal. xvii. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Rev. vii. 17.

Fourthly, To be brought unto God, muſt needs imply a ſtate of perfect joy, and higheſt delight. So ſpeaks the apoſtle, Jude

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14. Christ shall present, or bring them to God with exceeding joy. And more fully the joy of this day is expressed, Psal. xlv. 15. "With joy and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall "enter into the king's palace." It will be a day of universal joy, when all the saints are brought home to God in a perfected state. For,

1. God the Father will rejoice when Christ brings home that precious number of his elect, whom he redeemed by his blood: he rejoiceth in them now, though imperfect, and under many distasteful corruptions and weaknesses, Zeph. iii. 17. How much more will he rejoice in them when Christ presents them without spot or wrinkle to him, Eph. v. 27.

2. Jesus Christ will exceedingly rejoice; it will be the day of the gladness, and satisfaction of his heart: for now, and not till now, he receives his mystical fulness, Col. i. 24. beholds all the blessed issues of his death, which cannot but give him unspeakable contentment, Isa. liii. 11. "He shall see of the travail of "his soul, and shall be satisfied."

3. The day in which believers are brought home to God, will be a day of unspeakable joy to the Holy Spirit of God himself. For unto this, all his sanctifying designs, in this world, had respect: to this day he sealed them: towards this day he stirred up desires, and groanings that cannot be uttered, in their hearts, Eph. iv. 30. Rom. viii. 26. Thus the great and blessed persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, will rejoice in the bringing home of the elect to God. For as it is the greatest joy to a man to see the designs which his heart hath been long projecting, and intently set upon, by an orderly conduct, at last brought to the happy issue he first aimed at; much more will it be so here: the counsel, and hand of each person being deeply concerned in this blessed design.

4. The angels of God will rejoice at the bringing home of believers to him: the spirits of just men made perfect, will be united in one general assembly, with an innumerable company of angels, Heb. ii. 22. Great is the affection and love of angels to redeemed ones: they greatly rejoiced at the incarnation of Christ for them, Luke ii. 13. They greatly delighted to pry into the mystery of their redemption, 1 Pet. i. 12. They were marvellously delighted at their conversion, which was the day of their espousals to Christ, Luke xv. 10. They have been tender and careful over them, and very serviceable to them in this world, Heb. i. 14. and therefore cannot but rejoice exceedingly, to see them all brought home in safety to their father's house.

5. To conclude, Christ's bringing home all believers unto God,

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will be matter of unspeakable joy to themselves: for, whatever knowledge and acquaintance they had with God here, whatever sights of faith they had of heaven, and the glory to come, in this world; yet the sight of God and Christ the redeemer, will be an unspeakable surprize to them in that day. This will be the day of relieving all their wants, the day of satisfaction to all their desires; for now they are come where they would be, arrived at the very desires of their souls.

Secondly, In the *last* place, let it be considered, what influence the death of Christ hath upon this design, and you shall find it much every way. In two things especially, the death of Christ hath a blessed causality and influence in this matter, *viz.*

1. It effectually removes all obstacles to it.
2. It purchaseth (as a price) their title to it.

First, The death of Christ removes all obstacles out of the way of his mercy: such were the bars hindering our access to God as nothing but the death of Christ could remove, and thereby open a way for believers to come to God. The guilt of sin barred us from his gracious presence, Rom. i. 2, 3. Hos. xiv. 2. The filth of sin excluded us from God, Hab. i. 23. Heb. xii. 14. The enmity of our nature perfectly stopped up our way to God, Col. i. 21. Rom. viii. 7. by reason hereof fallen man hath no desire to come unto God, Job xxi. 14. The justice of God, like a flaming sword, turning every way, kept all men from access to God. And *Lastly*, Satan, that malicious and armed adversary, lay as a lion in the way to God, 2 Pet. v. 8. Oh with what strong bars were the gates of heaven shut against our souls! The way of God was chained up with such difficulties, as none but Christ was able to remove; and he by death hath effectually removed them all: The way is now open, even the new and the living way, consecrated for us by his blood. The death of Christ effectually removes the guilt of sin, 1 Pet. ii. 24. washes off the filth of sin, 1 John v. 6. takes away the enmity of nature, Col. i. 20. 21. satisfies all the demands of justice, Rom. iii. 25, 26. hath broken all the power of Satan, Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14. and consequently the way to God is effectually and fully opened to believers by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 20.

Secondly, The blood of Christ purchased for believers their right and title to this privilege, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," *i. e.* both the relation and inheritance of sons. There was value and

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worth enough in the precious blood of Chriſt, not only to pay all our debts to juſtice, but, over and above the payment of our debts, to purchaſe for us this invaluable privilege. We muſt put this unſpeakable mercy of being brought to God, as my text puts it, upon the account, and to the ſcore of the death of Chriſt: no believer had ever taſted the ſweetneſs of ſuch a mercy, if Chriſt had not taſted the bitterneſs of death for him. The uſe of all you will have in the following deductions of truth.

Deduction 1. *Great is the preciouſneſs and worth of ſouls, that the life of Chriſt ſhould be given to redeem and recover them to God*: As God laid out his thoughts and counſel, from eternity, upon them, to project the way and method of their ſalvation; ſo the Lord Jeſus in purſuance of that bleſſed deſign, came from the boſom of the Father, and ſpilt his invaluable blood, to bring them to God. No wiſe man expends vaſt ſums to bring home trifling commodities: how cheap ſoever our ſouls are in our eſtimation, it is evident by this they are of precious eſteem in the eyes of Chriſt.

Deduction 2. *Redeemed ſouls muſt expect no reſt, or ſatisfaction on this ſide heaven, and the full enjoyment of God.* The life of a believer in this world, is a life of motion and expectation: they are now coming to God, 1 Pet. ii. 4. God, you ſee, is the centre and reſt of their ſouls, Heb. iv. 9. As the rivers cannot reſt till they pour themſelves into the boſom of the ſea, ſo neither can renewed ſouls find reſt till they come into the boſom of God *. There are four things which do, and will break the reſt, and diſturb the ſouls of believers in this world; afflictions, temptations, corruptions, and abſence from God. If the three former cauſes of diſquietneſs were totally removed, ſo that a believer were placed in ſuch a condition upon earth, where no affliction ſhould diſturb him, no temptation trouble him, no corruption defile or grieve him, yet his very abſence from God muſt ſtill keep him reſtleſs and unſatisfied; 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilſt we are at home in the body, yet abſent from the Lord."

Deduction 3. *What ſweet and pleaſant thoughts ſhould all believers have of death!* When they die, and never till they die, ſhall they be fully brought home to God. Death to the ſaints, is the door by which they enter into the enjoyment of God: the dying Chriſtian is almoſt at home, yet a few pangs and agonies more, and then he is come to God, in whoſe preſence

* Thou haſt made us for thyſelf, and our hearts are unſatisfied till they reſt in thee. *Aug. Confeſ. lib.* 1. *c.* 1.

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is the fulneſs of joy. "I deſire, ſaith Paul, to depart, and to "be with Chriſt, which is far better," Phil. i. 23. It ſhould not affright us to be brought to death, the king of terrors, ſo long as it is the office of death to bring us to God. That dreaming opinion of the ſoul ſleeping after death, is as ungrounded as it is uncomfortable: the ſame day we looſe from this ſhore, we ſhall be landed upon the bleſſed ſhore, were we ſhall ſee and enjoy God for ever. O, if the friends of dead believers did but underſtand where, and with whom their ſouls are, whilſt they are mourning over their bodies, certainly a few believing thoughts of this would quickly dry up their tears, and fill the houſe of mourning with voices of praiſe and thankſgiving!

Deduction 4. *How comfortable and ſweet ſhould the converſes and communication of Chriſtians be with one another, in this world!* Chriſt is bringing them all to God, through this vale of tears; they are now in the way to him; all bound for heaven; going home to God, to their everlaſting reſt in glory: every day, every hour, every duty brings them nearer and nearer to their journey's end; Rom. xiii. 11. "Now, (ſaith the "apoſtle), is our ſalvation nearer than when we believed." O what manner of heavenly communications, and raviſhing diſcourſes ſhould believers have with each other, as they walk by the way! O what pleaſant and delightful converſe ſhould they have with one another about the place and ſtate whither Chriſt is bringing them, and where they ſhall ſhortly be! What raviſhing tranſporting, tranſforming viſions they ſhall have that day they are brought home to God! How ſurprizingly glorious to them the ſight of Jeſus Chriſt will be, who died for them to bring them unto God! how ſhould ſuch diſcourſes as theſe, ſhorten and ſweeten their paſſage through this world; ſtrengthen and encourage the dejected and feeble-minded, and exceedingly honour and adorn their profeſſion! Thus lived the believers of old; Heb. xi. 9, 10. "By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a "ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, "the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe; for he looked for "a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is "God." But, alas! moſt Chriſtians are either entangled in the cares and troubles, or ſo enſnared by the delights and pleaſures which almoſt continually divert and take up their thoughts by the way, that there is but little room for any diſcourſes of Chriſt and heaven, among many of them: but certainly this would be as much your intereſt as your duty. When the apoſtle had entertained the Theſſalonians with a lovely diſcourſe of their meet-

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ing the Lord in the air, and being ever with the Lord, he charges it upon them as their great duty, to comfort one another with those words, 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.

Deduction 5. *How unreasonable are the dejections of believers, upon the account of those troubles which they meet with in this world!* It is true, afflictions of all kinds do attend believers in their way to God; through many tribulations we must enter into that kingdom. But what then; must we despond and droop under them as other men? Surely no: If afflictions be the way through which you must come to God, then never be discouraged at affliction; troubles and afflictions are of excellent use, under the blessings of the Spirit, to further Christ's great design of bringing you to God. How often would you turn out of that way which leads to God, if he did not hedge up your way with thorns, Hosea ii. 6. Doubtless when you come home to God, you shall find you have been much beholden, (it may be a great deal more), to your troubles than to your comforts, for bringing you thither: however, the sweetness of the end will infinitely more than recompense the sorrows and troubles of the way: nor are they worth to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you, Rom. viii. 18.

Deduction 6. *How much are all believers obliged, in point of interest, to follow Jesus Christ whithersoever he goes!* Thus are the saints described, Rev. xiv. 4. "These are they which follow "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from "among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb." If it be the design of Christ to bring us to God, then certainly it is our duty to follow Christ in all the paths of active and passive obedience through which he now leads us, as ever we expect to be brought home to God at last: "We are made par-"takers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence "stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14. If we have followed him, through many sufferings and troubles, and shall turn away from him at last, we lose all that we have wrought, and suffered in religion, and shall never reach home to God at last. The crown of life belongs only to them who are faithful to the death.

Deduction 7. *Let all that desire, or expect to come unto God hereafter, come to Christ by faith now.* There is no other way to the Father, but by Christ; no other way to Christ but faith. How vain therefore are the hopes and expectations of all unbelievers? Be assured of this great truth, Death shall bring you to God as an avenging Judge, if Christ do not bring you now to God as a reconciled Father: without holiness no man shall see God: the door of hope is shut against all christless persons, John

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xiv. 6. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." O what a sweet voice cometh down from heaven to your souls this day, saying, As ever you expect or hope to come to God, and enjoy the blessing that is here, come unto Christ, obey his calls, give up yourselves to his conduct and government, and you shall certainly be brought to God! As sure as you shall now be brought to Jesus Christ by spiritual union, so sure shall you be brought to God in full fruition.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the new and living way to the Father.

And thus I have finished the motives drawn from the titles and benefits of Christ, serving to enforce and quicken the great gospel exhortation of coming to, and effectually applying the Lord Jesus Christ in the way of faith. O that the blessings of the Spirit might follow these calls, and fix these considerations as nails in sure places! But seeing the great hindrance and obstruction to faith is the false opinion and persuasion of most unregenerate men, that they are already in Christ; my next work therefore shall be, in a second use of conviction, to undeceive men in that matter; and that, by shewing them the undoubted certainty of these two things:

First, That there is no coming, ordinarily, to Christ without the application of the law to our consciences, in a way of effectual conviction.

Secondly, Nor by that neither, without the teachings of God, in the way of spiritual illumination. The first of these will be fully confirmed and opened in

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SERMON XX.

The great usefulness of the Law or Word of GOD, in order to the Application of CHRIST.

ROM. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

THE scope of the apostle in this epistle, and more particularly in this chapter, is to state the due use and excellency of the law, which he doth accordingly.

First, By denying to it a power to justify us, which is the peculiar honour of Christ.

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Secondly, By aſcribing to it a power to convince us, and ſo prepare us for Chriſt.

Neither attributing to it more honour than belongeth to it, nor yet detracting from it that honour and uſefulneſs which God hath given it. It cannot make us righteous, but it can convince us that we are unrighteous; it cannot heal, but it can open and diſcover the wounds that ſin hath given us; which he proves in this place by an argument drawn from his own experience, confirmed alſo by the general experience of believers, in whoſe perſons and names we muſt here underſtand him to ſpeak; "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died." Wherein three particulars are very obſervable.

Firſt, The opinion Paul had, and all unregenerate men have of themſelves before converſion: *I was alive once.* By *life*, underſtand here livelineſs, chearfulneſs, and confidence of his good eſtate and condition: he was full of vain hope, falſe joy, and preſumptuous confidence, a very briſk and jovial man.

Secondly, The ſenſe and opinion he had, and all others will have of themſelves, if ever they come under the regenerating work of the Spirit in his ordinary method of working: *I died.* The death he here ſpeaks of, ſtands oppoſed to that life before mentioned; and ſignifies the ſorrows, fears, and tremblings that ſeized upon his ſoul, when his ſtate and temper were upon the change: the apprehenſions he then had of his condition ſtruck him home to the heart, and damped all his carnal mirth: *I died.*

Thirdly, The ground and reaſon of this wonderful alteration and change of his judgment, and apprehenſion of his own condition; *the commandment came, and ſin revived:* The commandment came, *i. e.* it came home to my conſcience, it was fixed with a divine and mighty efficacy upon my heart: the commandment was come before by way of promulgation, and the literal knowledge of it: but it never came, till now, in the ſpiritual ſenſe, and convincing power to his ſoul: though he had often read, and heard the law before, yet he never clearly underſtood the meaning and extent, he never felt the mighty efficacy thereof upon his heart before; it ſo came at this time, as it never came before. From hence the obſervations are,

Doct. 1. *That unregenerate perſons are generally full of groundleſs confidence, and chearfulneſs, though their condition be ſad and miſerable.*

Doct. 2. *That there is a mighty efficacy in the word or law of God, to kill vain confidence, and quench carnal mirth in the hearts of men, when God ſets it home upon their conſciences.*

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We shall take both these points under consideration, and improve them to the design in hand.

Doct. 1. *That unregenerate persons are generally full of groundless confidence, and chearfulness, though their condition be sad and miserable;* Rev. iii. 17. Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: *This is the very life that unregenerate men do live.*

In opening whereof, I shall shew you,

1. What is the life of the unregenerate.
2. What maintains that life.
3. How it appears that this is the life the generality of the world do live.
4. the danger of living such a life as this: and then apply it.

First, What is the life of the unregenerate, and wherein it consists? Now there being, among others, three things in which the life of the unregenerate doth principally consist, *viz.*

Carnal security,
Presumptuous hope, and
False joy,

Of these briefly in their order.

First, There is in unregenerate men a great deal of carnal security; they dread no danger; Luke xi. 21. "When a strong "man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are at peace:" There is generally a great stillness and silence in the consciences of such men: when others, in a better condition, are watching and trembling, they sleep securely; so they live, and so oftimes they die, Psal. lxxiii. 4. "They have no bonds in their death," [Hebrew, no knots], no difficulties that puzzle them. It is true, the consciences of few men are so perfectly stupified, but that, some time or other, they twing and gird them; but it seldom works to that height, or continues with them so long, as to give any considerable interruption to their carnal peace and quietness.

Secondly, The life of the unregenerate consisteth in presumptuous hope: this is the very foundation of their carnal security. So Christ tells the Jews, John viii. 54, 45. "Of whom ye say "that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him." The world is full of hope without a promise, which is but as a spider's web, when a stress comes to be laid upon it, Job xxvii. 8. Unregenerate men are said indeed to be without hope, Ephes. ii. 12. but the meaning is, they are without any solid, well-grounded hope; for in scripture-account, vain hope is no hope, except it be a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. A hope flowing from u-

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nion with Christ, Col. i. 27. A hope nourished by experience, Rom. v. 4. A hope for which a man can give a reason, 1 Pet. iii. 15. A hope that puts men upon heart-purifying endeavours, 1 John iii. 3. It is in the account of God a cypher, a vanity, not deserving the name of hope; and yet such a groundless, dead, Christless, irrational, idle hope is that which the unregenerate live upon.

Thirdly, The life of the unregenerate consisteth in false joy, the immediate offspring of ungrounded hope, Mat. xiii. 20. The stony ground receive the word with joy.

There are two sorts of joy upon which the unregenerate live, *viz.*

1. A sensitive joy in things carnal.
2. A delusive joy in things spiritual.

They rejoice in corn, wine, and oil, in their estates and children, in the pleasant fruitions of the creature; yea, and they rejoice also in Christ and the promises, in heaven and in glory: with all which they have just such a kind of communion, as a man hath in a dream with a full feast, and curious music; and just so their joy will vanish when they awake. Now these three, *security*, *hope*, and *joy*, make up the livelihood of the carnal world.

Secondly, Next it concerns us to enquire what are the things that maintain and support this security, hope and joy in the hearts of unregenerate men; and if we consider duly, we shall find church-privileges, natural ignorance, false evidences of the love of God, slight workings of the gospel, self-love, comparing themselves with the more profane, and Satan's policy managing all these in order to their eternal ruin, are so many springs to feed and maintain this life of delusion in the unregenerate.

1. *First*, Church privileges lay the foundation to this strong delusion. Thus the Jews deceived themselves, saying in their hearts, "We have Abraham for our father," Mat. iii. 9. This propt up the vain hopes that Abraham's blood ran in their veins, though Abraham's faith and obedience never wrought in their hearts.

2. *Secondly*, Natural ignorance; this keeps all in peace: they that see not, fear not. There are but two ways to quiet the hearts of men about their spiritual and eternal concernments, *viz. the way of assurance* and faith, or, *the way of ignorance* and self-deceit: by the one we are put beyond danger, by the other beyond fear, though the danger be greater. Satan could never quiet men, if he did not first blind them.

3. *Thirdly*, False evidences of the love of God is another spring feeding this security, vain hope and false joy in the hearts of men: see the power of it to hush and still the conscience,

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Mat. vii. 22. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, "have we not prophesied in thy name?" *&c.* The things upon which they built their evidence and confidence, were external things in religion; yet they had a quieting power upon them, as if they had been the best evidences in the world.

4. *Fourthly*, Slight workings of the gospel; such are transient motions of the affections under the word, Heb. vi. 8. the working of their desires about spiritual objects, John vi. 34. Mat. xxv. 8. the external change, and reformation of their ways, Mat. xii. 43. all which serve to nourish the vain hopes of the unregenerate.

Fifthly, Self-love is an apparent reason and ground of security, and false hope, Mat. vii. 3. It makes a man to overlook great evils in himself, whilst he is sharp-sighted to discover and censure lesser evils in others: self-love takes away the sight of sin, by bringing it too near the eye.

6. *Sixthly*, Mens comparing themselves with those that are more profane and grosly wicked than themselves, serves notably to quiet and hush the conscience asleep; "God, I thank thee, "(said the Pharisee), I am not as other men, or as this publi-"can." O what a saint did he seem to himself, when he stood by those that were more externally wicked.

7. *Seventhly*, and *lastly*, The policy of Satan to manage all these things to the blinding and ruining of the souls of men, is another great reason they live so securely and pleasantly as they do, in a state of so much danger and misery, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that "believe not."

Thirdly, You have seen what the life of the unregenerate is, and what maintains that life. In the next place, I shall give you evidence that this is the life the generality of the world do live; a life of carnal security, vain hope, and false joy: this will evidently appear, if we consider,

First, The activity and livelines of mens spirits in pursuit of the world. O how lively and vigorous are their hearts in the the management of earthly designs! Psal. vi. 4. "Who will "shew us any good?" The world eats up their hearts, time, and strength. Now this could never be, if their eyes were but opened to see the danger, and misery their souls are in. How few designs for the world run in the thoughts of a condemned man? O if God had ever made the light of conviction to shine into their consciences, certainly the temptations would lie the quite contrary way, even in too great a neglect of things of this

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life! But this briskneſs and livelineſs plainly ſhew the great ſecurity which is upon moſt men.

Secondly, The marvellous quietneſs and ſtilneſs that is in the thoughts and conſciences of men, about their everlaſting concernments, plainly ſhews this to be the life of the unregenerate: How few ſcruples, doubts, or fears ſhall you hear from them? How many years may a man live in carnal families, before he ſhall hear ſuch a queſtion as this ſeriouſly propounded, "What "ſhall I do to be ſaved?" There are no queſtions in their lips, becauſe no fear or ſenſe of danger in their hearts.

Thirdly, The general contentedneſs, and profeſt willingneſs of carnal men to die, give clear evidence that ſuch a life of ſecurity, and vain hope is the life they live; "Like ſheep they are laid in the grave, Pſal. xlix. 14. O how quiet and ſtill are their conſciences, when there are but a few breaths more between them and everlaſting burnings! Had God opened their eyes to apprehend the conſequences of death, and what follows the *pale horſe*, Rev. vi. 8. it were impoſſible but that every unregenerate man ſhould make that bed on which he dies, ſhake and tremble under him.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, The low eſteem men have for Chriſt, and the total neglect of, at leaſt the mere trifling with, thoſe duties in which he is to be found, plainly diſcover this ſtupid, ſecure life to be the life that the generality of the world do live: for were men ſenſible of the diſeaſe of ſin, there could be no quieting them without "Chriſt the phyſician," Phil. iii. 8. All the buſineſs they have to do in this world could never keep them from their knees, or make them ſtrangers to their cloſets: all which, and much more that might be ſaid of like nature, gives too full and clear proof to this ſad aſſertion, that this is the life the unregenerate world generally lives.

Fourthly, In the laſt place, I would ſpeak a few words to diſcover the danger of ſuch a life, as hath been deſcribed; to which purpoſe, let the following brief hints be ſeriouſly minded.

Firſt, By theſe things ſouls are inevitably betrayed into hell, and eternal ruin; this blinding is in order to damning, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "If our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; "whoſe eyes the god of this world hath blinded." Thoſe that are turned over into eternal death, are thus generally hoodwinked and blinded in order thereunto, Iſa. vi. 9, 10. "And he ſaid "go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but underſtand not: "and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this "people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; "leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and

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"understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed."

Secondly, As damning is the event of blinding, so nothing makes hell a more terrible surprize to the soul than this doth: By this means the wrath of God is felt before its danger be apprehended; a man is past all hope, before he begins to have any fear: his eternal ruin, like a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, cometh suddenly at an instant, Isa. xxx. 13. and as it damns surely, and surprizingly, so,

Thirdly, Nothing more aggravates a man's damnation than to sink suddenly into it, from amidst so many hopes, and high confidence of safety: For a man to find himself in hell, when he thought and concluded himself within a step of heaven, O what a hell will it be to such men! The higher vain hopes lifted them up, the more dreadful must their fall be, Mat. vii. 22. And as it damns surely, surprizingly, and with highest aggravations, so,

Fourthly, This life of security, and vain hope, frustrates all the means of recovery, and salvation in the only season wherein they can be useful and beneficial to us: By reason of these things the word hath no power to convince mens consciences, nothing can bring them to a sight and sense of their condition: Therefore Christ told the self-confident, and blind Jews, Mat. xxi. 21. "That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God "before them:" And the reason is, because their hearts lie more open, and fair to the strokes of conviction, and compunction for sin than those do, who are blinded by vain hopes, and confidences.

Infer. 1. *Is this the life that the unregenerate world lives? Then it is not to be wondered at, that the preaching of the gospel hath so little success:* "Who hath believed our report? (saith the "prophet) and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii. 1. Ministers study for truths apt to awaken, and convince the consciences of them that hear them, but their words return again to them: They turn to God, and mourn over the matter; we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought: And this security is the cause of all; vain hopes bar fast the doors of mens hearts against all the convictions and persuasions of the word. The greater cause have they to admire the grace of God, who have found, or shall find the convictions of the word sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit; to whose hearts God brings home the commandment, by an effectual application.

Infer. 2. *If this be the life of the unregenerate world; what*

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deadly enemies are they that nouriſh, and ſtrengthen the groundleſs confidences, and vain hopes of ſalvation in men? This the ſcripture calls the healing of the hurt of ſouls ſlightly, by crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. vi. 14. The ſewing of pillows under their arm-holes, Ezek. xiii. 18. That they may lie ſoft and eaſy under the miniſtry: And this is the doctrine which the people love; but oh, what will the end of theſe things be! And what an account have thoſe men to give to God for the blood of thoſe ſouls by them betrayed to the everlaſting burnings! Such flattery is the greateſt cruelty: Thoſe whom you bleſs upon earth, will curſe you in hell, and the day in which they truſted their ſouls to your conduct.

Infer. 3. *How great a mercy is it to be awakened out of that general ſleep, and ſecurity which is fallen upon the world!*

You cannot eſtimate the value of that mercy, for it is a peculiar mercy. O that ever the Spirit of the Lord ſhould touch thy ſoul under the miniſtry of the word, ſtartle, and rouſe thy conſcience, whilſt others are left in the dead ſleep of ſecurity round about thee! When the Lord dealt with thy ſoul much after the ſame manner he did with Paul in the way to Damaſcus, who not only ſaw a light ſhining from heaven, which thoſe that travelled with him ſaw as well as he, but heard that voice from heaven which did the work upon his heart, though his companions heard it not. Beſides, it is not only a peculiar mercy, but it is a leading, introductive mercy, to all other ſpiritual mercies that follow it to all eternity. If God had not done this for thee, thou hadſt never been brought to faith, to Chriſt, or heaven: from this act of the ſpirit all other ſaving acts take their riſe. So that you have cauſe for ever to admire the goodneſs of God, in in ſuch a favour as this is.

Infer. 4. Laſtly, *Hence it follows, that the generality of the world are in the direct way to eternal ruin; and whatever their vain confidences are, they cannot be ſaved:* "Narrow is the "way, and ſtrait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few "there be that find it." Hear me all you that live this dangerous life of carnal ſecurity, and vain hope, whatever your perſuaſions and confidences are, except you give them up, and get better grounds for your hope, you cannot be ſaved. For,

Firſt, Such hopes and confidences, as yours, are directly contradictory to the eſtabliſhed order of the goſpel, which requires repentance, Acts v. 31. Faith, Acts xiii. 39. and regeneration, John iii. 3. in all that ſhall be ſaved: And this order ſhall never be altered for any man's ſake.

Secondly, If ſuch as you be ſaved, all the threatnings in ſcrip-

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ture must be reversed, which lie in full opposition to your vain hopes, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. Rom. iii. 8, 9. Either the truth of God, in these threatnings, must fail, or your vain hopes must fail.

Thirdly, If ever such as you be saved, new conditions must be set to all the promises: For there is no condition of any special promise found in any unregenerate person. Compare your hearts with these scriptures, Mat. v. 3, 4, 5, 6. Psal. xxiv. 4. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Gen. xvii. 1, 2.

Fourthly, If ever such a hope as yours bring you to heaven, then the saving hope of God's elect is not rightly described to us in the scriptures. Scripture hope is the effect of regeneration, 1 Pet. i. 3. And purity of heart is the effect of that hope, 1 John iii. 3. Nay,

Fifthly, The very nature of heaven is mistaken in scripture, if such as you be subjects qualified for its enjoyment: For assimilation, or the conformity of the soul to God in holiness, is, in the scripture account, a principal ingredient of that blessedness: By all which, it manifestly appears that the hopes of most men are in vain, and will never bring them to heaven.

SERMON XXI.

ROM. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once: But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

Doct. 2. THAT there is a mighty efficacy in the word or law of God, to kill vain confidence, and quench carnal mirth in the hearts of men, when God sets it home upon their consciences. "The weapons of the word are not carnal, "but mighty through God; to the pulling down of strong "holds, casting down imaginations, and every thing that ex- "alteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into "captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

In the opening of this point I shall,

1. Demonstrate the efficacy of the word or law of God.
2. Shew wherein the efficacy thereof lies.
3. From whence it hath all this mighty power and efficacy.

First, I shall give you some demonstrations of the mighty power, and efficacy that there are in the word or law of God: which will appear with the fullest evidence.

First, From the various *subjects* upon whom it works: The

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hearts and consciences of men of all orders and qualities, have been reached, and wounded to the quick, by the two-edged sword of God's law. Some, among the *great* and *honourable* of the earth, (though indeed the fewest of that rank) have been made to stoop, and tremble under the word, Acts xxiv. 16. Mark vi. 20. Sam. xv. 24. The wise and learned of the world have felt its power, and been brought over to embrace the humbling, and self-denying ways of Christ, Acts xvii. 34. Thus Origen, Hierom, Tertullian, Bradwardine, and many more, came into Canaan laden with the Egyptian gold, as one speaks, (*i. e.*) they came into the church of God abundantly enriched, and furnished with the learned arts and sciences, devoting them all to the service of Christ: Yea, and which is as strange, *the most simple, weak, and illiterate*, have been wonderfully changed, and wrought upon by the power of the word: "The testimonies "of the Lord make wise the simple:" Men of weak understandings, in all other matters, have been made wise to salvation by the power of the word, Mat. xi. 25. 1 Cor. i. 27. Nay, the most malicious and obstinate enemies of Christ have been wounded, and converted by the word, 1 Tim. i. 13. Acts xvi. 25. Those that have been under the prejudice of the worst and most *idolatrous education*, have been the subjects of its mighty power, Acts xix. 26. To conclude, men of the most profligate, and debauched lives have been wonderfully changed, and altered by the power of the word, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

Secondly, The mighty efficacy of the law of God appears in the *manner of its operation*; it works suddenly; strikes like a dart through the hearts and consciences of men, Acts ii. 37. A wonderful change is made in a short time: And as it works quickly, and suddenly, so it works irresistibly, with an uncontrouled power upon the spirits of men, 1 Thes. i. 5. Rom. i. 16. Let the soul be armed against conviction with the thickest ignorance, strongest prejudice, or most obstinate resolution, the word of God will wound the breast even of such a man, when God sends it forth in his authority and power.

Thirdly, The wonderful power of the law, or word of God is evidently seen, in the strange effects which are produced by it in the hearts and lives of men. For,

First, It changes and alters the frame and temper of the mind: It moulds a man into a quite contrary temper, Gal. i. 23. "He "which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith, "which once he destroyed:" Thus a tyger is transformed into a lamb, by the power of the word of God.

Secondly, It makes the soul, upon which it works, to forego,

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and quit the dearest interest it hath in this world for Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. Riches, honours, self-righteousness, dearest relations, are denied and forsaken: Reproach, poverty, and death itself, are willingly embraced for Christ's sake, when once the efficacy of the word hath been upon the hearts of men, 1 Thes. i. 6. Those that were their companions in sin, are declined, renounced, and cast off with abhorrence, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. In such things as these the mighty power of the word discovers itself.

Secondly, Next, let us see wherein the efficacy of the word, upon the souls of men, principally consisteth: and we find in scripture it exerteth its power, in five distinct acts upon the soul; by all which it strikes at the life, and kills the very heart of vain hopes. For,

First, It hath an awakening efficacy upon secure and sleepy sinners: It rouzes the conscience, and brings a man to a sense, and feeling apprehension, Eph. v. 13, 14. The first effectual touch of the word startles the drowsy conscience. A poor sinner lies in his sins, as Peter did in his chains, fast asleep, though a warrant was signed for his execution the next day: but the Spirit in the word awakens him, as the angel did Peter: And this awakening power of the word is in order, both of time, and nature, antecedent to all its operations, and effects.

Secondly, The law of God hath an enlightening efficacy upon the minds of men: It is eye-salve to the blinded eye, Rev. iii. 18. A light shining in a dark place, 2 Pet. i. 19. A light shining into the very heart of man, 2 Cor iv. 6. When the word comes in power, all things appear with another face: The sins that were hid from our eyes, and the danger which was concealed by the policy of Satan from our souls, now lie clear and open before us, Eph. v. 8.

Thirdly, The word of God hath a convincing efficacy: It sets sin in order before the soul, Psal. l. 21. As an army is drawn up in an exact order, so are the sins of nature and practice, the sins of youth and age, even a great and terrible army is drawn up before the eye of the conscience; the convictions of the word are clear and full, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The very secrets of a sinner's heart are made manifest: his mouth is stopped; his pleas are silenced; his conscience yields to the charge of guilt, and to the equity of the sentence of the law. So that the soul stands mute, and self-condemned, at the bar of conscience: It hath got nothing to say why the wrath of God should not come upon it to the uttermost, Rom. iii. 19.

Fourthly, The law of God hath a soul-wounding, an heart-cutting efficacy: It pierces into the very soul and spirit of man,

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Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked at their "hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles; "men and brethren, what shall we do?" A dreadful sound is in the sinner's ears; his soul is in deep distress; he knows not which way to turn for ease; no plaister but the blood of Christ can heal these wounds which the word makes: No outward trouble, affliction, disgrace, or loss, ever touched the quick as the word of God doth.

Fifthly, The word hath a heart-turning, a soul-converting efficacy in it: It is a regenerating, as well as convincing word, 1 Pet. i. 32. 1 Thes. i. 9. The law wounds, the gospel cures; the law discovers the evil that is in sin, and the misery that follows it; and the Spirit of God, working in fellowship with the word, effectually turns the heart from sin. And thus we see in what glorious acts the efficacy of the word discovers itself upon the hearts of men; and all these acts lie in order to each other: nor until the soul be awakened, it cannot be enlightned, Eph. v. 14. Till it be enlightned, it cannot be convinced, Eph. v. 13. Conviction being nothing else, but the application of the light that shines in the mind to the conscience of a sinner; till it be convinced, it cannot be wounded for sin, Acts ii. 37. And until it be wounded for sin, it will never be converted from sin, and brought effectually to Jesus Christ. And thus you see what the power of the word is.

Thirdly, In the last place, it will concern us to enquire, whence the word of God hath all this power: And it is most certain, that it is not a power inherent in itself, nor derived from the instrument by which it is managed; but from the Spirit of the Lord, who communicates to it all that power, and efficacy which it hath upon our souls.

1. Its power is not in, or from itself: It works not in a *physical way*, as natural agents do; for then the effect would always follow, except it were miraculously hindered: But this spiritual efficacy is in the word, as the healing virtue was in the waters of Bethesda, John v. 4. "An angel went down at a cer- "tain season into the pool, and troubled the water: Whoso- "ever then first after the troubling of the water stept in, was "made whole of whatsoever disease he had." It is not a power naturally inherent in it at all times, but communicated to it at some special seasons. How often is the word preached, and no man awaked or convinced by it!

2. The power of the word is not communicated to it by the instrument that manageth it, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "Neither is he that "planteth any thing, neither he that watereth." Ministers are

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nothing to such an effect and purpose as this is; he doth not mean that they are useless and altogether unnecessary, but insufficient of themselves to produce such mighty effects: It works not as it is the word of man, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Ministers may say of the ordinary, as Peter said of the extraordinary effects of the Spirit, Acts iii. 12. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? "or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own pow- "er or holiness we had made this man to walk?" If the effects of the word were in the power, and at the command of him that preacheth it, then the blood of all the souls that perish under our ministry must lie at our door, as was formerly noted.

3. If you say, whence then hath the word all this power? Our answer is, It derives it all from the Spirit of God, * 1 Thes. ii. 13. "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because "when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye "received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the "word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that be- "lieve." It is a successful instrument, only, when it is in the hand of the Spirit, without whose influence it never did, nor can convince, convert, or save any soul. Now, the Spirit of God hath a sovereignty over three things in order to the conversion of sinners.

1. Over the word which works.
2. Over the soul wrought upon.
3. Over the time and season of working.

First, The Spirit hath a glorious sovereignty over the word itself, whose instrument it is, to make it successful or not; as it pleaseth him, Isa. lv. 10, 11. "For as the rain cometh down, "and the snow from heaven, *&c.* so shall my word be that go- "eth out of my mouth:" as the clouds, so the word is carried and directed by divine pleasure. It is the Lord that makes them both give down their blessings, or to pass away fruitless and empty: yea, it is from the Spirit that this part of the word works, and not another. Those things upon which ministers bestow greatest labour in their preparation, and from which accordingly they have the greatest expectation; these do nothing, when, mean time, something that dropped occasionally from them, like a chosen shaft, strikes the mark, and doth the work.

Secondly, The Spirit of the Lord hath a glorious sovereignty over the souls wrought upon: it is his peculiar work "to take

* What is commanded by the word, is given by the Spirit. *Aug. Ep.* 157.

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" away the ſtony heart out of our fleſh, and to give us an heart " of fleſh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. We may reaſon, exhort, and reprove, but nothing will abide till the Lord ſet it home. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia under Paul's miniſtry: he opens every heart that is effectually opened to receive Chriſt in the word: if the word can get no entrance, if your hearts remain dead under it ſtill, we may ſay concerning ſuch ſouls, as Martha did concerning her brother Lazarus; " Lord, if thou " hadſt been here, my brother had not died." So, Lord, if thou hadſt been in this ſermon, in this prayer, or in that counſel, theſe ſouls had not remained dead under them.

Thirdly, The Spirit hath dominion over the times and ſeaſons of conviction and converſion. Therefore the day in which ſouls are wrought upon is called " the day of his power," Pſal. cx. 3. That ſhall work at one time, which had no efficacy at all at another time; becauſe this, and not that, was the time appointed. And thus you ſee whence the word derives that mighty power it hath.

Now this word of God, when it is ſet home by the Spirit, is mighty to convince, humble, and break the hearts of ſinners, John xvi. 9. " The Spirit when it cometh ſhall convince the " world of ſin." The word ſignifies conviction by ſuch clear demonſtration as compelleth aſſent: it not only convinces men in general that they are ſinners, but it convinceth men particularly of their own ſins, and the aggravations of them. So in the text, *Sin revived*, that is, the Lord revived his ſins, the very circumſtances and aggravations with which they were committed: and ſo it will be with us when the commandment comes; ſins that we had forgotten, committed ſo far back as our youth or childhood; ſins that lay ſlighted in our conſciences, ſhall now be rouzed up as ſo many ſleepy lions to affright and terrify us: for now the ſoul hears the voice of God in the word, as Adam heard it in the cool of the day, and was afraid, and hides itſelf: but all will not do; for the Lord is come in the word: ſin is held up before the eyes of the conſcience in its dreadful aggravations, and fearful conſequences, as committed againſt the holy law, clear light, warnings of conſcience, manifold mercies, God's long-ſuffering, Chriſt's precious blood, many warnings of judgments, the wages and demerit whereof, by the verdict of a man's own conſcience, is death, eternal death, Rom. vi. 23. Rom. i. 32. Rom. ii. 9. Thus the commandment comes, ſin revives, and vain hopes gives up the ghoſt.

Infer. 1. *Is there ſuch a mighty power in the word? then certainly the word is of divine authority.* There cannot be a more

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clear, and satisfying proof that it is no human invention, than the common sense that all believers have of the Almighty Power in which it works upon their hearts. So speaks the apostle, 1 Thes. ii. 13. "When ye received the word of God which ye heard "of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in "truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in "you that believe." Can the power of any creature, the word of a mere man, so convince the conscience, so terrify the heart, so discover the very secret thoughts of the soul, as to put a man into such tremblings? No, no, a greater than man must needs be here: none but a God can so open the eyes of the blind, so open the graves of the dead, so quicken and enliven the conscience that was seared, so bind over the soul of a sinner to the judgment to come, so change and alter the frame and temper of a man's Spirit, or so powerfully raise, refresh and comfort a drooping dying soul: certainly the power of God is in all this; and, if there were no more, yet this alone were sufficient to make full proof of the divine authority of the scriptures.

Infer. 2. *Judge from hence what an invaluable mercy the preaching of the word is to the world:* It is a blessing far above our estimation of it: little do we know what a treasure God committeth to us in the ordinances, Acts xiii. 25. "To you is "the word of this salvation sent." It is the very power of God to salvation, Rom. i. 16. And salvation is ordinarily denied to whom the preaching of the word is denied, Rom. x. 14. It is called *the word of life*, Phil. ii. 16. and deserves to be valued by every one of us as our life: the eternal decree of God's election is executed by it upon our souls: as many as he ordained to eternal life shall believe by the preaching of it. Great is the ingratitude of this generation, which so slights, and undervalues this invaluable treasure: which is a sad presage of the most terrible judgment, even in the removing our candlestick out of its place, except we repent.

Infer. 3. *How sore and terrible a judgment lies upon the souls of those men to whom no word of God is made powerful enough to convince and awaken them!* Yet so stands the case with thousands, who constantly sit under the preaching of the word; many arrows are shot at their consciences, but none goes home to the mark, all fall short of the end: the commandment hath come unto them many thousand times, by way of *promulgation*, and ministerial *inculcation*, but yet never came home to their souls by the Spirit's effectual *application*. O friends! you have often heard the voice of man, but you never yet heard the voice of God:

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your understandings have been *instructed*, but your consciences to this day were never thoroughly *convinced*. "We have "mourned unto you, but ye have not lamented," Mat. xi. 17. "Who hath believed our report? And unto whom is the arm "of the Lord revealed?" Alas! we have laboured in vain, we have spent our strength for nought, our word return unto us empty: but O what a stupendous judgment is here! Heb. vi. 7, 8. "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon "it, and bringth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dres-"sed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth "thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose "end is to be burned." What sore judgment, and sign of God's displeasure would you account it, if your fields were cursed; if you should manure, dress, plough, and sow them; but never reap the fruit of your labour; the increase being still blasted? And yet this were nothing, compared with the blasting of the word to your souls: that which is a savour of life unto life, unto some, becomes the savour of death unto death, to others, 2 Cor. ii. 16. The Lord affect our hearts with the terrible strokes of God upon the souls of men!

Second use of exhortation.

I shall conclude this point with a few words of exhortation to three sorts of men, *viz.*

1. To those that never felt the power of the word,
2. To those that have only felt some slight and common effects thereof,
3. To those unto whose very hearts the commandment is come, in its effectual and saving power.

First, You that never felt any power in the word at all, I beg you in the name of him that made you, and by all the regard and value you have for those precious souls within you, that now at last such considerations as these may find place in your souls, and that you will bethink yourselves.

Consideration 1,

Whose word is that which cannot gain entrance into your hearts? Is it not the word of God which you despise and slight? "Thou castest my word behind thy back," Psal. l. 17. O what an affront and provocation to God is this! You despise not man, but God; the great and terrible God, in whose hand your breath and soul is; this contempt runs higher than you imagine.

Consideration 2.

Consider, that however the word hath no power upon you, the commandment cannot come home to your hearts; yet it doth work, and comes home with power to the hearts of others;

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whilst you are hardned, others are melted under it; whilst you sleep, others tremble; whilst your hearts are fast locked up, others are opened. How can you choose but reflect with fear and trembling upon these contrary effects of the word; especially when you consider that the eternal decrees, both of election and reprobation are now executed upon the souls men, by the preaching of the word? Some believe, and others are hardned.

Consideration 3.

That no judgment of God, on this side hell, is greater than a hard heart, and stupid conscience under the word: it were much better that the providence of God should blast thy estate, take away thy children, or destroy thy health, than harden thy heart, and sear thy conscience under the word: so much as thy soul is better than thy body, so much as eternity is more valuable than time, so much is this spiritual judgment more dreadful than all temporal ones. God doth not inflict a more terrible stroke than this upon any man in this world.

O therefore as you love your own souls, and are loth to ruin them to all eternity, attend upon every opportunity that God affords you; for you know not in which of them the Lord may work upon your hearts. Lay aside your prejudices against the word or the weaknesses and infirmities of them that preach it; for the word works not as it is the word of man, as it is thus neat and elegant, but as it is the word of God. Pray for the blessing of God upon the word; for except his word of blessing go forth with it, it can never come home to thy soul. Meditate upon what you hear; for, without meditation, it is not like to have any effectual operation upon you. Search your souls by it, and consider whether that be not your very case and state which it describes: your very danger whereof it gives warning. Take heed lest after you have heard it, the cares of the world choke what you have heard, and cause those budding convictions which begin to put forth, to blast and wither. Carefully attend to all those *items*, and *memorandums* your consciences give you under the word, and conclude that the Lord is then come nigh unto you.

Secondly, Let this be matter of serious consideration, and caution to all such as have only felt some slight, transient, and ineffectual operations of the gospel upon their souls: The Lord hath come nigh to some of our souls; we have felt a strange power in the ordinances, sometimes terrifying, and sometimes transporting our hearts; but, alas! it proves but a morning-dew, or an early cloud, Hos. vi. 4. We rejoice in the word, but it is but for a season, John iii. 25. Gal. iv. 14, 15. They

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are vaniſhing motions, and come to nothing. Look, as in nature there are many *abortives*, as well as perfect children, ſo it is in religion; yea, where the new creature is perfectly formed in one ſoul, there be many abortives and miſcarriages in others: and there may be three reaſons aſſigned for it, *viz.*

Firſt, The ſubtilty and deep policy of Satan, who never more effectually deceives and deſtroys the ſouls of men, than in ſuch a method, and by ſuch an artifice as this: for when men have once felt their conſciences terrified under the word, and their hearts at other times raviſhed with the joys and comforts of it, they now ſeem to have attained all that is neceſſary to converſion, and conſtitutive of the new creature: theſe things look ſo well like the regenerating effects of the Spirit, that many are eaſily deceived by them. The devil beguiles the hearts of the unwary by ſuch falſe appearances; for it is not every man that can diſtinguiſh betwixt the natural, and ſpiritual motions of the affections under the word: it is very frequently ſeen that even carnal, and unrenewed hearts have their meltings and tranſports, as well as ſpiritual hearts. The ſubject-matter upon which the word treats, are the weighty things of the world to come: heaven and hell are very awful and affecting things, and an unrenewed heart is apt to thaw and melt at them: now here is the cheat of Satan, to perſuade a man that theſe muſt needs be ſpiritual affections, becauſe the objects about which they are converſant are ſpiritual: whereas it is certain, the object of the affections may be very ſpiritual and heavenly, and yet the workings of a man's affections about them, may be in a mere natural way.

Secondly, The dampening efficacy of the world is a true and proper cauſe of theſe abortions and miſcarriages under the word, Luke viii. 12, 13, 14. There are hopeful and promiſing beginnings and buddings of affections in ſome perſons, eſpecially in their youth; but when once they come to be engaged in the world, how ſoon are they damp'd and quenched! As the cares of a family grow on, ſo does the care of ſalvation wear off. 'Tis not as it was wont to be, what ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I get intereſt in Chriſt? But what ſhall I eat, and drink, and wherewithal ſhall I, and mine, be maintained? Thus earth juſtles out heaven, and the preſent world drowns all thoughts of that to come. Good had it been for many men, they had never been engaged ſo deep in the world as they are; their life is but a conſtant hurry of buſineſs, and a perpetual diverſion from Chriſt, and things that are eternal,

Thirdly, and *laſtly*, The deceitfulneſs, and treachery of the heart, which too eaſily gives way to the deſigns of Satan, ſuffers

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itself to be imposed upon by him, is not the least cause why so many hopeful beginnings come to nothing, and the effects of the word vanish. Pride, and self-love are very apt to over-rule every little good, and slight, or under-value every evil that is in us; and so quickly choke those convictions that begin to work in our souls.

But oh! that such men would consider that the dying away of their convictions, is that which threatens the life of their souls for ever; now is the bud withered, the blossom blasted: and what expectation is there of fruit after this, except the Lord revive them again? The Lord open men's eyes, to discern the danger of such things as these are! Jude 12. Heb. x. 58. Yet I deny not, but there are many stands, and pauses in the work of conversion; it seems to die away, and then revives again; and revive it must, or we are lost. But how many are there who never recover it more! This is a sore judgment of a most terrible consequence to the souls of men.

Thirdly, In the *last* place, let it be a word of counsel, and advice to them, upon whom the word works effectually, and powerfully; to whose hearts the commandment is come home, to revive sin, and kill their vain hopes; and these are of two sorts.

1. Embryo's, under the first workings of the spirit.
2. Compleat births of the spirit, regenerated souls.

First, Embryo's that are under the first workings of the spirit in the word. O let it not seem a misery, or unhappiness to you, that the commandment is come, and sin revived, and your former hopes overthrown. It must be thus, if ever God intend mercy for you. Had you gone on in that dangerous security you were in before, you had certainly been lost for ever: God hath stopt you in that path that leads down to hell, and none that go in there do ever return again, or take hold of the paths of life. O it is better to weep, tremble, and be distressed now, than to mourn without hope for ever. Let it not trouble you that sin hath found you out; you could never have found out the remedy in Christ, if you had not found out the disease and danger, by the coming of the commandment. And I beseech you carefully to observe, whether the effects, and operations of the word upon your hearts be deeper, and more powerful, than they are found to be in such souls as miscarry under it: the commandment comes to them, and shews them this or that more gross and startling sin. Doth it come to you, and shew you not only this, or that particular sin, but all the evils of your heart and life; the corruption of your natures, as well as the transgressions of your lives? If so, it promises

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well, and looks hopefully, and comfortably to you. The commandment comes to others, and ſtartles them with the fears of damnation for their ſin: it puts them into a grievous fright at hell, and the everlaſting burnings: but doth it come to thee and diſcover the infinite evil that is in thy ſin, as it is committed againſt the great, holy, righteous, and good God, and ſo melts thy heart into tears for the wrong that thou haſt done him, as well as the danger into which thou haſt brought thyſelf? This is a hopeful work, and may encourage thee. It comes to others, and greatly ſhakes, but never deſtroys and razes the foundation of their vain hopes: if it ſo revive ſin, as to kill all vain hopes in thee, and ſend thee to Chriſt alone, as thy only door of hope, fear not; theſe troubles will prove the greateſt mercies that ever befel thee in this world, if thus they work, and continue to work upon thy ſoul.

Secondly, Others there are upon whom the word hath had its full effect as to converſion. O bleſs God for ever for this mercy; you cannot ſufficiently value it! God hath not only made it a convincing, and wounding, but a converting, and healing word to your ſouls; he hath not only revived your ſins, and killed your vain hopes, but begotten you again to a lively hope; ſee that you be thankful for this mercy. How many have ſate under the ſame word, but never felt ſuch effects of it? As Chriſt ſaid in another caſe, there were many widows in Iſrael in the time of Elijah, but unto none of them was the prophet ſent, ſave unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a certain widow there, Luke iv. 46. So I may ſay, in this caſe, there were many ſouls in the ſame congregation, at the ſame time; but unto none of them was the word ſent with a commiſſion to convince and ſave, but ſuch a one as thyſelf; one as improbable to be wrought upon as any ſoul there. O let this beget thankfulneſs in your ſouls; and let it make you love the word as long as you live: "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them "thou haſt quickened me," Pſal. cxix. 93.

But above all I beſeech you make it appear that the commandment hath come home to your hearts, with power to convince you of the evil of ſin, by your tenderneſs and care to ſhun it as long as you live. If ever you have ſeen the face of ſin, in the glaſs of the law of God; if your hearts have been humbled and broken for it in the days of your trouble and diſtreſs, certainly you will chooſe the worſt affliction rather than ſin: It would be the greateſt folly in the world to return again to iniquity, Pſal. lxxxv. 8. You that have ſeen ſo much of the evil that is in it, and the danger that follows it; you that have had

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such inward terrors and fears of spirit about it, when that terrible representation was made you, will be loth to feel those gripes, and distresses of conscience again, for the best enjoyment in this world.

Blessed be God if any word has been brought home to our hearts, which hath been instrumental to bring us to Christ!

* *

SERMON XXII.

The Teachings of GOD opened, in their Nature and Necessity.

JOHN vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

HOW necessary to our union with Jesus Christ, the application of the law, or coming home of the commandment to the heart of a sinner is, we have heard in the last discourse; and how impossible it is, either for the commandment to come to us, or for us to come to Christ, without illumination, and instruction from above, you shall hear in this.

This scripture hath much of the mind of God in it; and he that is to open it, had need himself to be taught of God. In the foregoing verses, Christ offers himself as the bread of life unto the souls of men: against this doctrine they oppose their carnal reason, ver. 41, 42. Christ strikes at the root of all their cavils and objections in his reply, ver. 43, 44. "Murmur not "among yourselves: no man can come to me, except the Fa- "ther which hath sent me draw him;" *q. d.* you slight me because you do not know me; you do not know me, because you are not taught of God; of these divine teachings, the prophets of old have spoken, and what they foretold is at this day fulfilled in our sight; so many as are taught of God, and no more, come unto me in the way of faith: it is impossible to come without the teachings of God, ver. 44. It is as impossible not to come, or to miscarry in their coming unto me, under the influence of these divine teachings, ver. 45.

The words read, consist of two parts, *viz.*

1. An allegation out of the prophets.
2. The application thereof made by Christ.

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First, An allegation out of the prophets: "It is written in "the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." The places in the prophets to which Christ seems here to refer, are, Isa. liv. 13. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" and, Jer. xxxi. 34. "And they shall teach no more every man "his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the "Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them "unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." These promises contain the great blessings of the new covenant, *viz.* Divine instruction, and heavenly illumination, without which, no man can be brought up to the terms of the new covenant.

Secondly, We have here the application of these testimonies, out of the prophets, made by Christ himself; "Every man therefore "that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

In which words, we have, both the necessity, and the efficacy of these divine teachings; without them no man can come, and under them no man can miscarry. The words being fitly rendred, and the sense obvious,

The notes are,

Doct. 1. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every man that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

Doct. 2. *No man can miss of Christ, or miscarry in the way of faith, that is under the special instructions, and teachings of the Father.*

Doct. 1. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every man that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

Of the necessity of divine teaching, in order to believing, the apostle speaks, in Eph. iv. 20, 21. "But ye have not so learned "Christ, if so be that you have heard him, and been taught by "him, as the truth is in Jesus;" (*i. e.*) Your faith must needs be effectual, both to the reformation of your lives, and your perseverance in the ways of holiness, if it be such a faith as is begotten, and introduced into your hearts by divine teachings *. Now, in the explication of this point, I shall speak distinctly to the following enquiries.

1. How doth God teach men, or what is imported in our being taught of God?

2. What those special lessons are, which all believers do hear, and are taught of God?

* They who believe, by means of the preacher speaking to them outwardly, hear and learn inwardly of the Father; they who believe not, hear outwardly, but not inwardly. *Aug. on Predest. chap.* 8.

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3. In what manner doth God teach these things to men, in the day of their conversion to Christ?

4. What influence God's teaching hath upon our believing?

5. Why it is impossible for any man to believe, or come to Christ, without the Father's teachings.

First, How doth God teach men, or what is imported in our being taught of God? To this I will speak, both negatively and positively, for your clearer apprehension of the sense and meaning of the Spirit of God in this phrase.

First, The teaching of God, and our hearing and learning of him, is not to be understood of any extraordinary, visional appearances, or oraculous and immediate voice of God to men: God indeed hath so appeared unto some, Numb. xii. 8. Such voices have been heard from heaven; but now these extraordinary ways are ceased, Heb. i. 1, 2. and we are no more to expect them; we may sooner meet with satanical deludions, than divine illumination, in this way. I remember, the learned Gerson tells us that the devil once appeared to an holy man in prayer, personating Christ, and saying, I am come in person to visit thee, for thou art worthy. But he with both hands shut his eyes, saying, *Nolo hic Christum videre, satis est ipsum in gloria videre; (i. e.)* I will not see Christ here; it is enough for me to see him in glory. We are now to attend only to the voice of the Spirit in the scriptures: this is a more sure word than any voice from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 19.

Secondly, The teachings of God are not to be understood as opposite unto, or exclusive of the teachings of men. Divine teachings do not render ministerial teachings in vain, or useless. Paul was taught of God, Gal. i. 12. and his conversion had something extraordinary in it, yet the ministry of Ananias was used, and honoured in that work, Acts ix. 4, 17. compared. Divine teachings do indeed excel, but not exclude human teachings. I know that scripture, Jer. xxxi. 24. to which Christ here refers, is objected against the necessity of a standing ministry in the church, "They shall teach no more every man his "neighbour, and every man his brother," *&c.* But if those words should be understood absolutely, they would not only overthrow all public ordinances of God's own istitution, 1 Cor. xii. 28. and deprive us of a principal fruit of Christ's ascension, Eph. iv. 11, 12. but, for the same reason, would destroy all private instructions, and fraternal admonitions also. Such a sense would make the prophet to contradict the apostle, and spoil the consent, and harmony of the scriptures: the sense thereof cannot

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be negative, but comparative; it shews the excellency of divine, but doth not destroy the usefulness of human teachings, *Subordinata non pugnant.* The teachings of men are made effectual by the teachings of the Spirit; and the Spirit in his teachings will use and honour the ministry of man.

Thirdly, But to speak positively, the teachings of God are nothing else, but that spiritual, and heavenly light, by which the Spirit of God shineth into the hearts of men, to give them "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of "Jesus Christ," as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And though this be the proper work of the Spirit, yet it is called the teachings of the Father, because the Spirit who enlightens us is commissioned, and sent by the Father so to do, John xiv. 26. Now these teachings of the Spirit of God, consist in two things, *viz.* in his,

1. Sanctifying impressions.
2. Gracious assistances.

First, In his sanctifying impressions, or regenerating works upon the soul, by virtue whereof it receives marvellous light and insight into spiritual things; and that not only as illumination is the first act of the Spirit in our conversion, Col. iii. 10. but as his whole work of sanctification is illuminative, and instructive to the converted soul, 1 John ii. 27. "The anointing "which you have received of him abideth in you, and ye need "not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teach-"eth you." The meaning is, that sanctification gives the soul experience of those mysterious things, which are contained in the scriptures, and that experience is the most excellent key to unlock, and open those deep scripture-mysteries; no knowledge is so distinct, so clear, so sweet, as that which the heart communicates to the head, John vii. 17. "If any man do his will, "he shall know the doctrine." A man that never read the nature of love in books of philosophy, nor the transports and ecstasies thereof in history, may yet truly describe and express it by the sensible motions of that passion in his own soul; yea, he that hath felt, much better understands, than he that hath only read or heard. O what a light doth spiritual sense, and experience, cast upon a great part of the scriptures! for indeed sanctification is the very copy or transcript of the word of God upon the heart of man; Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will write my law in "their hearts:" so that the scriptures, and the experiences of believers, by this means, answer to each other, as the lines and letters in the press, answer to the impressions made upon the paper; or the figures in the wax, to the engravings in the seal.

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When a sanctified man reads David's Psalms, or Paul's epistles, how is he surprized with wonder to find the very workings of his own heart, so exactly decyphered, and fully expressed there! O, saith he, this is my very case; these holy men speak what my heart hath felt.

Secondly, The Spirit of God teacheth us, as by his sanctifying impressions, so by his gracious assistances, which he gives us *pro re nata*, as our need requires, Mat. x. 19. "It shall be "given you in that same hour what ye shall speak," John xiv. 26. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance:" he assisteth, both the understanding in due apprehensions of truth, and the heart in the spiritual improvements of truth. And so much briefly of the first particular.

Secondly, In the next place, we are to enquire what those special truths are which believers hear, and learn of the Father, when they come to Christ.

And there are divers great, and necessary truths, wherein the Spirit enlightens men in that day. I cannot say they are all taught every believer in the same degree and order; but it is certain they are taught of God such lessons as these are, which they never so understood before.

Lesson 1. *First*, They are taught of God *that there is abundantly more evil in their sinful natures, and actions, than ever they discerned, or understood before:* "the Spirit when he "cometh shall convince the world of sin," John xvi. 8, 9. Men have a general notion of sin before; so had Paul, when a Pharisee: but how vastly different were his apprehensions of sin, from all that ever he had in his natural state, when God brought home the commandment to his very heart! There is a threefold knowledge of sin, *viz. traditional, discussive*, and *intuitive*. The first is in the more rude, and illiterate multitude. The second in more rational and knowing men. The third is only found in those that are enlightened, and taught of God. And there is as great a difference betwixt this intuitive knowledge of sin, whereby God makes a soul to discern the nature, and evil of it, in a spiritual light, and the two former, as there is betwixt the sight of a *painted lion* upon the wall, and the sight of a *living lion* that meets us roaring in the way. The intuitive sight of sin is another thing than men imagine it to be: 'tis such a sight as wounds a man to the very heart, Acts ii. 37. for God doth not only shew a man this, or that particular sin, but, in the day of convictions, he sets all his sins in order before him. Psal. l. 21. yea, the Lord shews him the sinfulness of his nature, as well as practice. Conviction digs to the root, shews, and lays open

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that original corruption, from whence the innumerable evils of the life do ſpring, James i. 14, 15. and, which is yet more, the Lord ſhews the man, whom he is bringing to Chriſt, the ſinful and miſerable eſtate which he is in by reaſon of both, John xvi. 9. And now all excuſes, pleas, and defences of ſin are gone, he ſhews them "how their iniquities have exceeded," Job xxxvi. 8, 9. exceeded in number, and in aggravation of ſinfulneſs; exceeding many, and exceeding vile; no ſuch ſinner in the world as I: can ſuch ſins as mine be pardon'd? The greatneſs of God greatens my ſin; the holineſs of God makes it beyond meaſure vile; the goodneſs of God puts unconceivable weight into my guilt. O can there be mercy for ſuch a wretch as I! If there be, then there will not be a greater example of the riches of free grace in all the world than I am. Thus God teacheth the evil of ſin.

Leſſon 2. Secondly, *God teacheth the ſoul, whom he is bringing to Chriſt, what that wrath, and miſery are which hang over it in the threatnings, becauſe of ſin.* Scripture-threatnings were formerly ſlighted; now the ſoul trembles at them: They once apprehended themſelves ſafe enough, Iſa. xxviii. 15. Pſal. l. 21. They thought, becauſe they heard no more of their ſins, after the commiſſion of them, that therefore they ſhould never hear more; that the effect had been as tranſient a thing as the act of ſin was; or if trouble muſt follow ſin, they ſhould ſpeed no worſe than others, the generality of the world being in the ſame caſe; and beſides, they hoped to find God more merciful, than ſowre and preciſe preachers repreſented him. But when a light from God enters into the ſoul, to diſcover the nature of God, and of ſin, then it ſees, that whatever wrath is treaſured up for ſinners, in the dreadful threatnings of the law, is but the juſt demerit of ſin, the recompence that is meet: "The wages "of ſin is death," Rom. vi. 23. The *penal* evil of damnation is but equal to the *moral* evil of ſin: So that in the whole ocean of God's eternal wrath, there is not one drop of injuſtice; yea, the ſoul doth not only ſee the juſtice of God in its eternal damnation, but the wonderful mercy of God in the ſuſpenſion thereof ſo long. O what is it that hath with-held God from damning me all this while! How is it that I am not in hell! Now do the fears and awful apprehenſions of eternity ſeize the ſoul, and the worſt of ſenſitive creatures is ſuppoſed to be in a better condition than ſuch a ſoul. Never do men tremble at the threatnings of God, nor rightly apprehend the danger of their condition, until ſin, and wrath, and the wages of ſin be diſcovered to them by a light from heaven.

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Leſſon 3. Thirdly, *God teaches the ſoul whom he brings to Chriſt, that deliverance from ſin, and wrath to come, is the greateſt and moſt important buſineſs it hath to do in this world.* Acts xvi. 30. "What muſt I do to be ſaved?" *q. d.* O direct me to ſome effectual way (if there be any) to ſecure my poor wretched ſoul from the wrath of God. Sin, and the wrath that follows it, are things that ſwallow up the ſouls, and drink up the very ſpirits of men: Their thoughts never converſed with things of more confeſſed truth and awful ſolemnity: theſe things float not upon their fancies as matters of mere ſpeculation, but ſettle upon their hearts day and night, as the deepeſt concernment in all the world: They now know much better than any mere ſcholar, the deep ſenſe of that text, Mat. xvi. 26. "What is a man "profited, if he ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own "ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

Five things ſhew how weighty the thoughts and cares of ſalvation are upon their hearts.

Firſt, Their continual thoughtfulneſs, and ſollicitude about theſe things; if earthly affairs divert them for a while, yet they are ſtill returning again to this ſolemn buſineſs.

Secondly, Their careful redeeming of time, and ſaving the very moments thereof to employ about this work: Thoſe that were prodigal of hours, and days before, look upon every moment of time as a precious and valuable thing now.

Thirdly, Their fears, and tremblings, leſt they ſhould miſcarry, and come ſhort at laſt, ſhew how much their hearts are ſet upon this work.

Fourthly, Their inquiſitiveneſs, and readineſs to embrace all the help and aſſiſtance that they can get from others, evidently diſcovers this to be their great deſign.

Fifthly, and *laſtly*, The little notice they take of all other troubles, and afflictions, tells you, their hearts are taken up about greater things. This is the third leſſon they are taught of God.

Leſſon 4. Fourthly, *The Lord teaches the ſoul that is coming to Chriſt, that though it be their duty to ſtrive to the uttermoſt for ſalvation; yet all ſtrivings, in their own ſtrength, are inſufficient to obtain it.* This work is quite above the power of nature: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of "God that ſheweth mercy." The ſoul is brought to a full conviction of this, by the diſcovery of the heinous nature of ſin, and of the rigour and ſeverity of the law of God. No repentance, nor reformation, can poſſibly amount unto a juſt ſatisfaction, nor are they within the compaſs and power of our will. It was a ſaying that Dr. Hill often uſed to his friends, ſpeaking

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about the power of man's will; he would lay his hand upon his breaſt, and ſay, "Every man hath ſomething here to confute "the Arminian doctrine:" This fully takes off the ſoul from all expectations of deliverance that way; it cannot but ſtrive, that is its duty; but to expect deliverance, as the purchaſe of its own ſtrivings, that would be its ſin.

Leſſon 5. Fifthly, *The ſoul that is coming to Chriſt by faith, is taught of God, that though the caſe it is in be ſad, yet it is not deſperate and remedileſs:* There is a door of hope, a way of eſcape for poor ſinners, how black and fearful ſoever their own thoughts and apprehenſions are: there is uſually at this time, a dawning light of hope in the ſoul that is under the Father's teachings: and this commonly ariſes from the general, and indefinite encouragements, and promiſes of the goſpel, which though they do not preſently ſecure the ſoul from danger, yet they prop, and mightily ſupport it againſt deſpair: For though they be not certain that deliverance ſhall be the event of their trouble; yet the poſſibilities, and much more the probabilities of deliverance are a great ſtay to the ſinking ſoul: The troubled ſoul cannot but acknowledge itſelf to be in a far better caſe than the damned are, whoſe hopes are periſhed from the Lord, and a death-pang of deſpair hath ſeized their conſciences. And herein the merciful and compaſſionate nature of God is eminently diſcovered, in haſting to open the door of hope, almoſt as ſoon as the evil of ſin is opened. It was not long, after Adam's eyes were opened to ſee his miſery, that God opened Chriſt, his remedy, in that firſt promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. And the ſame method of grace is ſtill continued to his elect offſpring, Gal. iii. 21, 22. Rom. iii. 21, 22. Theſe ſupporting hopes, the Lord ſees neceſſary to encourage induſtry in the uſe of means: it is hope that ſets all the world a-work: if all hope were cut off, every ſoul would ſit down in a ſullen deſpair, yielding itſelf for hell.

Leſſon 6. Sixthly, *The Lord teaches thoſe that come to Chriſt, that there is a fulneſs of ſaving power in him, whereby any ſoul, that duly receives him, may be perfectly delivered from all its ſin and miſery*, Heb. vii. 25. Col. i. 19. Mat. xxviii. 18. This is a great and neceſſary point, for every believer to learn and hear from the Father; for unleſs the ſoul be ſatisfied of the fulneſs of Chriſt's ſaving power, it will never move forwards towards him: and herein alſo the goodneſs of God is moſt ſweetly, and ſeaſonably manifeſted; for, at this time, it is the great deſign of Satan, to fill the ſoul with deſpairing thoughts of a pardon; but all thoſe black, and heart-ſinking thoughts, vaniſh

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before the discovery of Christ's all-sufficiency. Now the sin-sick soul saith with that woman, Mat. ix. 21. "If I may but touch "the hem of his garment, I shall be healed:" How deep soever the guilt and stain of sin be, yet the soul which acknowledges the infinite dignity of the blood of Christ, the offering it up to God in our room, and God's declared satisfaction in it, must needs be satisfied that Christ is "able to save, to the uttermost, "all that come unto God by him;" which is the sixth lesson believers are taught of God.

Lesson 7. Seventhly, *Every man that cometh to Christ is taught of God, that it can never reap any benefit by the blood of Christ, except ye have union with the person of Christ,* 1 John v. 12. Eph. iv. 16. Time was, when men fondly thought nothing was necessary to their salvation, but the death of Christ; but now the Lord shews them that their union with Christ by faith, is as necessary in the place of an *applying cause*, as the death of Christ is, in the place of a *meritorious cause*: The *purchase* of salvation is an act of Christ *without us*, whilst we are yet sinners: the *application* thereof, is by a work wrought *within us*, when we are believers, Col. i. 27. In the purchase, all the elect are redeemed together, by way of price: In the application, they are actually redeemed, each person, by way of power. Look, as the sin of the first Adam could never hurt us, unless he had been our head, by way of generation; so the righteousness of Christ can never benefit us, unless he be our head, by way of regeneration. In teaching this lesson, the Lord, in mercy, unteaches and blots out that dangerous principle, by which the greatest part of the Christianized world do perish, *viz.* that the death of Christ is, in itself, effectual to salvation, though a man be never regenerated, or united to him by saving faith.

Lesson 8. Eighthly, *God teaches the soul, whom he is bringing to Christ, that whatever is necessary to be wrought in us, or done by us, in order to our union with Christ, is to be obtained from him in the way of prayer,* Ezek. xxxvi. 37. And it is observable, that the soul no sooner comes under the effectual teachings of God, but the Spirit of prayer begins to breath in it, Acts ix. 8. "Behold, he prayeth:" Those that were taught to pray by men before, are now taught of the Lord to pray: to pray did I say? yea, and to pray fervently too, as men concerned for their eternal happiness; to pray not only with others, but to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret: for their hearts are as bottles full of new wine, which must vent or break. Now the soul returns upon its God often in the same day; now it can

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expreſs its burdens, and wants, in words and groans which the Spirit teacheth: They pray, and will not give over praying, till Chriſt come with complete ſalvation.

Leſſon 9. Ninthly, *All that come to Chriſt, are taught of God, to abandon their former ways, and companions in ſin, as ever they expect to be received unto mercy*, Iſa. lv. 7. 2 Cor. v. 17. Sins that were profitable, and pleaſant, that were as the right hand, and right eye, muſt now be cut off. Companions in ſin, who were once the delight of their lives muſt now be caſt off. Chriſt ſaith to the ſoul concerning theſe, as he ſaid in another caſe, John xviii. 8. "If therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way:" And the ſoul ſaith unto Chriſt, as it is, Pſal. cxix. 115. "De-"part from me ye evil-doers, for I will keep the command-"ments of my God:" And now pleaſant ſins, and companions in ſin, become the very burden, and ſhame of a man's ſoul: Objects of delight are become objects of pity and compaſſion: No endearments, no union of blood, no earthly intereſts whatſoever, are found ſtrong enough to hold the ſoul any longer from Chriſt: Nothing but the effectual teachings of God, are found ſufficient to diſſolve ſuch bonds of iniquity as theſe.

Leſſon 10. Tenthly, *All that come unto Chriſt are taught of God, that there is ſuch a beauty and excellency in the ways and people of God, as is not to be equalled in the whole world*, Pſal. xvi. 3. When the eyes of ſtrangers to Chriſt begin to be opened, and enlightened in his knowledge, you may ſee what a change of judgment is wrought in them, with reſpect to the people of God: and towards them eſpecially, whom God hath any way made inſtrumental for the good of their ſouls, Cant. v. 9. they then called the ſpouſe of Chriſt, "the faireſt among wo-"men." The convincing holineſs of the bride then began to enamour and affect them, with a deſire of nearer conjunction and communion: *We will ſeek him with thee; with thee*, that haſt *ſo charged us*; that haſt taken ſo much pains for the good of our ſouls: now, and never before, the righteous appeareth more excellent than his neighbour. Change of heart is always accompanied with change of judgment, with reſpect to the people of God: thus the jaylor, Acts xvi. 33. waſhed the apoſtle's ſtripes, to whom he had been ſo cruel before. The godly now ſeem to be the glory of the places where they live; and the glory of any place ſeems to be darkned by their removal; as one ſaid of holy Mr. Barrington, "Methinks the town is not at "home, when Mr. Barrington is out of town." They eſteem it a choice mercy to be in their company and acquaintance; Zech. viii. 23. "We will go with you, for we have heard that

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"God is with you." No people like the people of God now; as one said, when he heard of two faithful friends, *Utinam tertius essem!* O that I might make the third! Whatever vile or low thoughts they had of the people of God before, to be sure now they are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all their delight: the holiness of the saints might have some interest in their consciences before, but they never had such an interest in their estimations and affections, till this lesson was taught them by the Father.

Lesson 11. Eleventhly, *All that come to Christ are taught of God, that whatever difficulties they apprehend in religion, yet they must not, upon pain of damnation, be discouraged thereby, or return again to sin,* Luke ix. 62. "No man having put his "hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom "of God." Ploughing-work is hard work; a strong and steady hand is required for it: he that ploughs, must keep on, and make no balks of the hardest and toughest ground he meets with. Religion also is the running of a race, 1 Cor. ix. 24.; there is no standing still, much less turning back, if ever we hope to win the prize.

The devil, indeed, labours every way to discourage and daunt the soul, by representing the insuperable difficulties of religion to it; and young beginners are but too apt to be discouraged, and fall under despondency; but the teachings of the Father are encouraging teachings; they are carried on from strength to strength against all the oppositions they meet with from without them, and the many discouragements they find within them. To this conclusion they are brought by the teaching of God, *We must have Christ, we must get a pardon, we must strive for salvation, let the difficulties, troubles, and sufferings in the way be never so great or many.* As he said, *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam;* it is necessary that I go on, it is not necessary that I live: So saith the soul that is taught of God; it is easier for me to dispense with ease, honour, relations, yea, with life itself, than to part with Christ, and the hopes of eternal life.

Lesson 12. Twelfthly, *They that come to Christ, are taught of God, that whatever guilt and unworthiness they discover in themselves, and whatever fears and doubts are upon their hearts, as to pardon and acceptance; yet, as the case stands, it is their wisdom and great interest, to venture themselves in the way of faith, upon Jesus Christ, whatever the issue thereof be.*

Three great discouragments are usually found upon the hearts of those that come to Christ in the way of faith.

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First, The sensible greatness of guilt and sin. How can I go to Christ that am in such a case, that have been so vile a wretch? And here measuring the grace and mercy of Christ, by what it finds in itself, or in other creatures, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. the soul is ready to sink under the weight of its own discouraging, and misgiving thoughts.

Secondly, The sense they have of their own weakness, and inability to do what God requires, and must of necessity be done, if ever they be saved. My heart is harder than an adamant, how can I break it? My will is stubborn, and exceeding obstinate, I am no way able to bow it; the frame and temper of my spirit is altogether carnal, and earthly; and it is not in the power of my hand to alter and change it; alas! I cannot subdue any one corruption, nor perform one spiritual duty, nor bear one of those sufferings and burdens, which religion lays upon all that follow Christ: this also proves a great discouragement in the way of faith.

Thirdly, And, which is more than all, the soul that is coming to Jesus Christ, hath no assurance of acceptance with him, if it should adventure itself upon him: it is a great hazard, a great adventure; it is much more probable, if I look to myself, that Christ will shut the door of mercy against me.

But under all these discouragements the soul learns this lesson from God, That, as ungodly as it is, nevertheless it is every way its great duty and concernment to go on in the way of faith, and make that great adventure of itself upon Jesus Christ: and of this the Lord convinceth the soul by two things, *viz.*

1. From the absolute necessity of coming.
2. From the encouraging probabilities of speeding.

First, The soul seeth an absolute necessity of coming: necessity is laid upon it, there is no other way, Acts iv. 12. God hath shut it up by a blessed necessity to this only door of escape, Gal. iii. 23. Damnation lies in the neglect of Christ, Heb. ii. 3. The soul hath no choice in this case; angels, ministers, duties, repentance, reformation cannot save me; Christ, and none but Christ can deliver me from present guilt, and the wrath to come. Why do I dispute, demur, delay, when certain ruin must inevitably follow the neglect or refusal of gospel-offers?

Secondly, The Lord sheweth those that are under his teaching, the probabilities of mercy, for their encouragement in the way of believing. And these probabilities the soul is enabled to gather from the general and free invitations of the gospel, Isa. lv. 1, 7. Rev. xxii. 17. from the conditional promises of the gospel, John vi. 37. Math. xi. 28. Isa. i. 18. from the vast ex-

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tent of grace, beyond all the thoughts and hopes of the creatures, Isa. lv. 8, 9. Heb. vii. 25. from the encouraging examples of other sinners, who have found mercy in as bad a condition as they, 1 Tim. i. 13. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3. 2 Cor. vi. 10, 11. from the command of God, which warrants the action, and answers all the objections of unworthiness and presumption in them that come to Christ, 1 John iii. 23. and lastly, from the sensible changes already made upon the temper and frame of the heart. Time was, when I had no sense of sin, nor sorrow for sin; no desire after Christ, nor heart to duties. But it is not so with me now; I now see the evil of sin; so as I never saw it before; my heart is now broken in the sense of that evil; my desires begin to be enflamed after Jesus Christ; I am not at rest, nor where I would be, till I am in secret mourning after the Lord Jesus; surely these are the dawnings of the day of mercy; let me go on in this way. It saith, as the lepers at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. "If I stay here, I perish:" If I go to Christ, I can but perish. Hence believers bear up against all objected discouragements, *certum exitium commutemus incerto:* it is the dictate of wisdom, the vote of reason, to exchange a certain for an uncertain ruin. And thus you have here what those excellent lessons are, which all that come to Christ are taught by the Father.

SERMON XXIII.

JOHN vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

IN the former sermon, you have been taught this great truth;

Doct. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every soul that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

What the teachings of God import, hath been formerly opened; and what those special lessons are, which all believers hear and learn of the Father, was the last thing discoursed: that which remains to be further cleared about this subject, before I come to the application of the whole, will be to shew you,

1. What are the properties of divine teachings.
2. What influence they have in bringing souls to Christ.

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3. Why it is impoſſible for any man to come to Chriſt without theſe teachings of the Father.

Firſt, What are the properties of divine teachings? Concerning the teachings of God, we affirm in general, that, though they exclude not, yet they vaſtly differ from all human teachings: as the power of God in effecting tranſcends all human power, ſo the wiſdom of God in teaching, tranſcends all human wiſdom. For,

1. God teacheth powerfully; he ſpeaketh to the ſoul with a ſtrong hand; when the word cometh accompanied with the Spirit, it is "mighty through God, to caſt down all imaginations," 2 Cor. x. 4. Now the goſpel "comes not in word only, (as "it was wont to do), but in power," 1 Theſ. i. 4, 5. a power that makes the ſoul fall down before it, and acknowledge that God is in that word, 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

2. The teachings of God are ſweet teachings. Men never reliſh the ſweetneſs of a truth, till they learn it from God, Cant. i. 3. "His name is as ointment poured forth." Cant. v. 16. "His mouth is moſt ſweet." O how powerfully and how ſweetly doth the voice of God ſlide into the hearts of poor melting ſinners! how jejune, dry, and taſteleſs are the diſcourſes of men, compared with the teachings of the Father!

3. God teacheth plainly and clearly: He not only opens truths to the underſtanding, but he openeth the underſtanding alſo to perceive them, 2 Cor. iii. 16. In that day the vail is taken away from the heart; a light ſhineth into the ſoul; a clear beam from heaven is darted into the mind, Luke xxiv. 45. Divine teachings are fully ſatisfying; the ſoul doubts no more, ſtaggers and heſitates no more, but acquieſces in that which God teaches; it is ſo ſatisfied, that it can venture all upon the truth of what it hath learned from God; as that martyr ſaid, *I cannot diſpute, but I can die for Chriſt.* See Prov. viii. 8, 9.

Fourthly, The teachings of God are *infallible teachings*. The wiſeſt and holieſt of men may miſtake, and lead others into the ſame miſtakes with themſelves; but it is not ſo in the teachings of God. If we can be ſure that God teacheth us, we may be as ſure of the truth of what he teacheth; for his Spirit *guideth us into all truth*, John xvi. 13. and into nothing but truth.

Fifthly, The teachings of God are *abiding teachings*; they make everlaſting impreſſions upon the ſoul, Pſal. cxix. 98. *they are ever with it*: The words of men vaniſh from us; but the words of God abide by us: what God teacheth, he writeth upon the heart, Jer. xxxi. 33. and that will abide; *litera ſcripta manet*. 'Tis uſual with ſouls, whoſe underſtandings have been opened

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by the Lord, many years afterward to say, I shall never forget such a scripture that once convinced, such a promise that once encouraged me.

Sixthly, The teachings of God are *saving teachings:* they make the soul wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. There is a great deal of other knowledge that goes to hell with men: The pavement of hell (as one speaks) is pitched with the skulls of many great *scholars*, but eternal life is in the teachings of God, John xvii. 3. "This is eternal life, to know thee the only true "God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." This is deservedly stiled the light of this life, John viii. 12. "In this light "we shall see light," Psal. xxxvi. 9.

Seventhly, The teachings of God make their own way into the dullest, and weakest capacities, Isa. xxxii. 4. "The heart al- "so of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of "the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly:" Upon this account Christ said, Mat. xi. 25. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord "of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from "the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:" 'Tis admirable to see what clear illuminations some poor illiterate Christians have in the mysteries of Christ and salvation, which others, of great abilities, deep and searching heads, can never discover with all their learning and study.

Eighthly, To conclude, The teachings of God are *transforming teachings*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. they change the soul into the same image: God casts them, whom he teacheth, into the very mould of those truths which they learn from him, Rom. vi. 17. These are the teachings of God, and thus he instructeth those that come to Christ.

Secondly, Next let us see what influence divine teachings have upon souls, in bringing them to Christ; and we shall find a three-fold influence in them.

1. They have an influence upon the external *means*, by which they come to Christ.

2. They have an influence upon the mind, to remove what hindred it from Christ.

3. They have an influence upon the will, to allure and draw it to Christ.

First, They have an influence upon the *means*, by which we come to Christ: the best ordinances are but a dead letter except the Spirit, the teaching and quickening Spirit of God, work in fellowship with them, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The best ministers, like the disciples, cast forth the net, but take nothing, win not one soul to God, till God teach as well as they. Paul is nothing, and A-

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pollos nothing, but God that giveth the increaſe, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Let the moſt learned, eloquent, and powerful orator be in the pulpit, yet no man's heart is perſuaded, till it hears the voice of God; *Cathedram in coelis habet, qui corda docet.*

Secondly, They have influence upon the *mind*, to remove what hindred it from Chriſt. Except the minds of men be firſt untaught thoſe errors, by which they are prejudiced againſt Chriſt, they will never be perſuaded to come unto him; and nothing but the Father's teachings can unteach thoſe errors, and cure thoſe evils of the mind. The natural mind of man ſlights the truths of God, until God teach them; and then they tremble with an awful reverence of them. Sin is but a trifle, till God ſhews us the face of it in the glaſs of the law, and then it appears *exceeding ſinful*, Rom. vii. 13. We think God to be ſuch a one as ourſelves, Pſal. l. 21. until he diſcover himſelf unto us in his infinite greatneſs, awful holineſs, and ſevere juſtice; and then we cry, who can ſtand before this great and dreadful God! We thought it was time enough hereafter, to mind the concernments of another world, until the Lord open our eyes, to ſee in what danger we ſtand upon the very brink of eternity; and then nothing alarms us more, than the fears that our time will be finiſhed before the great work of Salvation be finiſhed. We thought ourſelves in a converted ſtate before, till God made us to ſee the neceſſity of another manner of converſation, upon pain of eternal damnation. We readily caught hold upon the promiſes before, when we had no right to them; but the teachings of God make the preſumptuous ſinner let go his hold, that he may take a better and ſurer hold of them in Chriſt. We once thought that the death of Chriſt, in itſelf, had been enough to ſecure our ſalvation; but under the teachings of God, we diſcern plainly the neceſſity of a change of heart and ſtate; or elſe the blood of Chriſt can never profit us. Thus the teachings of God remove the errors of the mind, by which men are with-held from Chriſt.

Thirdly, The teachings of God powerfully attract, and allure the will of a ſinner to Chriſt, Hoſ. ii. 14. But of theſe drawings of the father I have largely ſpoken before, and therefore ſhall ſay no more of it in this place, but haſten to the laſt thing propounded, *viz.*

Thirdly, Why it is impoſſible for any man to come to Chriſt, without the Father's teachings; and the impoſſibilities hereof will appear three ways.

1. From the power of ſin.
2. From the indiſpoſition of man.

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3. From the nature of faith.

By all which, the laſt point deſigned to be ſpoken to from this ſcripture, will be fully cleared, and the whole prepared for application.

Firſt, the impoſſibility of coming to Chriſt without the teachings of the father, will appear from the power of ſin, which hath ſo ſtrong an holdfaſt upon the hearts, and affections of all unregenerate men, that no human arguments, or perſuaſions whatſoever, can divorce or ſeparate them; for,

Firſt, Sin is connatural with the ſoul, 'tis born and bred with a man; Pſal. li. 4. Iſa. xlviii. 8. It is as natural for fallen man to ſin, as it is to breathe.

Secondly, The power of ſin hath been ſtrengthening itſelf from the beginning, by a long continued cuſtom, which gives it the force of a ſecond nature, and makes regeneration and mortification naturally impoſſible, Jer. xv. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change "his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may he alſo do good "that is accuſtomed to do evil."

Thirdly, Sin is the delight of the ſinner: "it is a ſport to a "fool to do miſchief," Prov. x. 23. Carnal men have no other pleaſure in this world, but what ariſes from their luſts; to cut off their corruptions by mortification, were at once to deprive them of all the pleaſure of their lives.

Fourthly, Sin being connatural, cuſtomary, and delightful, doth therefore bewitch their affections, and inchant their hearts, to that degree of madneſs and faſcination, that they rather chuſe damnation by God, than ſeparation from ſin: "Their hearts "are fully ſet in them to do evil," Eccleſ. viii. 11. they ruſh into ſin, as the "horſe ruſheth into the battle," Jer. viii. 6. And now, what, think you, can ſeparate a man from his beloved luſt, except the powerful and effectual teachings of God? Nothing but a light from heaven can rectify, and reduce the inchanted mind; no power, but that of God, can change and alter the ſinful bent, and inclination of the will; 'tis a taſk above all the power of the creature.

Secondly, The impoſſibility of coming to Chriſt, without the Father's teachings, evidently appears from the *indiſpoſedneſs* of man, the ſubject of this change: "The natural man receives not "the things which are of God," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Three things muſt be wrought upon man, before he can come to Chriſt: his blind underſtanding muſt be enlightned; his hard and rocky heart muſt be broken, and melted; his ſtiff, fixed, and obſtinate will muſt be conquered and ſubdued: but all theſe are effects

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of a ſupernatural power. The illumination of the mind is the peculiar work of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Rev. iii. 17. Eph. v. 8. The breaking and melting of the heart is the Lord's own work; 'tis he that giveth repentance, Acts v. 31. 'Tis the Lord that "takes away the heart of ſtone, and giveth an heart of fleſh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'Tis he that poureth out the ſpirit of contrition upon man, Zech. xii. 10. The changing of the natural bent, and inclination of the will, is the Lord's ſole prerogative, Phil. ii. 13. All theſe things are effectually done in the ſoul of man, when God teacheth it, and never till then.

Thirdly, The nature of faith, by which we come to Chriſt, plainly ſhews the impoſſibility of coming without the Father's teaching. Every thing in faith is ſupernatural; the implantation of the habit of faith is ſo, Eph. ii. 8. 'Tis not of *ourſelves*, but the gift of God; 'tis not an habit *acquired* by induſtry, but *infuſed* by grace, Phil. i. 29. The *light* of faith, by which *ſpiritual* things are diſcerned, is ſupernatural; Heb xi. 1, 27. It ſeeth things that are inviſible. The *adventures* of faith are ſupernatural; for "againſt hope, a man *believeth* in hope, giving "glory to God," Rom. iv. 18. By faith a man goeth unto Chriſt, againſt all the dictates, and diſcouragements of natural ſenſe and reaſon. The *ſelf-denial* of faith is ſupernatural; the cutting off the right-hand, and plucking out of right-eye-ſins, muſt needs be ſo, Mat. v. 29. The *victories* and conqueſts of faith do all ſpeak it to be ſupernatural: it overcomes the ſtrongeſt oppoſitions from without, Heb. xi. 33, 34. It ſubdueth and purgeth the moſt obſtinate and deep-rooted corruptions within, Acts xv. 9. It overcometh all the blandiſhments, and charming allurements of the bewitching world, 1 John v. 4. All which conſidered, how evident is the concluſion, that none can come to Chriſt without the Father's teachings? The uſes follow.

Firſt uſe for information.

Infer. 1. *How notoriouſly falſe and abſurd is that doctrine, which aſſerteth the poſſibility of believing without the efficacy of ſupernatural grace?* The deſire of ſelf-ſufficiency was the ruin of Adam, and the conceit of ſelf-ſufficiency is the ruin of multitudes of his poſterity. This doctrine is not only contradictory to the current ſtream of ſcripture, Phil. ii. 13. 1 John i. 13. with many other ſcriptures; but it is alſo contradictory to the common ſenſe and experience of believers: yet the pride of nature will ſtrive to maintain what ſcripture and experience plainly contradict and overthrow.

Infer. 2. *Hence we may alſo inform ourſelves, how it cometh to paſs that many rational, wiſe and learned men, miſs Chriſt; whilſt*

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the ſimple and illiterate, even babes in natural knowledge, obtain intereſt in him, and ſalvation by him. The reaſon hereof is plainly given us by Chriſt, in Mat. xiii. 11. "To you it is given to "know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it "is not given." It is the dropping and dews of divine teaching upon one, and not upon another, that dryeth up the green tree, and maketh the dry tree to flouriſh. Many natural men have very fine brains, ſearching wits, ſolid judgments, nimble fancies, tenacious memories; they can ſearch out the myſteries of nature, ſolve the *phoenomena*, ſatisfy the enquiries of the moſt curious; they can meaſure the earth, diſcover the motions of the heavens: but after all take up their place in hell, when, in the mean time, *the ſtatutes of the Lord* (by the help of his teachings) *make wiſe the ſimple*, Pſal. xix. 17. It is no matter how dull and incapable the ſcholar be, if God undertake to be the teacher. I remember, Auſtin ſpeaks of one who was commonly reputed a fool, and yet he could not but judge him to be truly godly, and that by two ſigns of grace which appeared in him; one was, his ſeriouſneſs when he heard any diſcourſes of Chriſt: the other was, his indignation manifeſted againſt ſin. It was truly ſaid by thoſe two Cardinals (who, riding to the council of Conſtance, overheard a poor ſhepherd in the fields with tears bewailing his ſins) *Surgent indocti et rapient coelum;* The unlearned will riſe and take heaven, whilſt we with all our learning ſhall deſcend into hell.

Infer. 3. *This alſo informs us of the true reaſon of the ſtrange and various ſucceſſes of the goſpel upon the ſouls of men.* Here we ſee why the miniſtry of one man becomes fruitful, and another's barren; yea, why the labours of the ſame man proſper exceedingly at one time, and not at another; theſe things are according as the teachings of God do accompany our teachings. We often ſee a weaker and plainer diſcourſe bleſſed with ſucceſs, whilſt that which is more artificial, neat and laboured, comes to nothing. St. Auſtin hath a pretty ſimilitude to illuſtrate this; Suppoſe, ſaith he, two *conduits*, the one very plain, the other curiouſly carved and adorned with images of lions, eagles, *&c.* the water doth not refreſh, and nouriſh, as it cometh from ſuch a curious *conduit*, but as it is water. Where we find moſt of man, we frequently find leaſt of God. I ſpeak not this to encourage careleſſneſs and lazineſs, but to provoke the diſpenſers of the goſpel to more earneſtneſs, and frequent prayer for the aſſiſtance, and bleſſing of the Spirit upon their labours, and to make men leſs fond of their own gifts and abilities: blear-

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eyed Leah may bear children, when beautiful Rachel proves barren.

Infer. 4. *Learn hence the tranſcendent excellency of ſaving, ſpiritual knowledge, above that which is merely literal and natural.* One drop of knowledge taught by God, is more excellent, than the whole ocean of human knowledge, and acquired gifts, Phil. iii. 8. John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Let no man therefore be dejected at the want of thoſe gifts, with which unſanctified men are adorned. If God have taught thee the evil of ſin, the worth of Chriſt, the neceſſity of regeneration, the myſtery of faith, the way of communion with God in duties; trouble not thyſelf becauſe of thine ignorance in natural, or moral things: thou haſt that, reader, which will bring thee to heaven; and he is a truly wiſe man that knows the way of ſalvation, though he be ignorant and unſkilful in other things: thou knoweſt thoſe things which all the learned doctors, and libraries in the world could never teach thee, but God hath revealed them to thee: others have more *ſcience*, thou haſt more *favour* and ſweetneſs: bleſs God, and be not diſcouraged.

Second uſe for examination.

If there be no coming to Chriſt without the teachings of the Father; then it greatly concerns us to examine our own hearts, whether ever we have been under the ſaving teachings of God, during the many years we have ſat under the preaching of the goſpel. Let not the queſtion be miſtaken, I do not aſk what books you have read, what miniſters you have heard, what ſtock of natural, or ſpeculative knowledge you have acquired; but the queſtion is, whether ever God ſpake to your hearts, and hath effectually taught you ſuch leſſons, as were mentioned in our laſt diſcourſe? O there is a vaſt difference betwixt that notional, ſpeculative, and traditional knowledge which man learneth from men, and that ſpiritual, operative, and transforming knowledge which a man learneth from God. If you aſk how the teachings of God may be diſcerned, from all other mere human teachings; I anſwer, they may be diſcerned, and diſtinguiſhed by theſe ſix ſigns.

Sign 1. *The teachings of God are very humbling to the ſoul that is taught.* Human knowledge puffeth up, 1 Cor. viii. 1. but the teachings of God do greatly abaſe the ſoul, Job xlii. 5. "I "have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine "eye ſeeth thee; wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt "and aſhes:" the ſame light which diſcovers to us the holineſs, juſtice, greatneſs, and goodneſs of God, diſcovereth alſo the vile-

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neſs, baſeneſs, emptineſs, and total unworthineſs of men; yea, of the beſt and holieſt of men, Iſa. vi. 5.

Sign 2. *The teachings of God are deeply affecting, and impreſſive teachings:* they fully reach the heart of man, Hoſ. ii. 14. "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and "ſpeak comfortably unto her:" or, as it is in the Hebrew, I will ſpeak to her heart. When God ſheweth unto man the evil of ſin, he ſo convinceth the ſoul, that no creature-comforts have any pleaſure, or ſweetneſs in them; and when he ſheweth unto man his righteouſneſs, pardon, and peace in Chriſt, he ſo comforteth, and refreſheth the heart, that no outward afflictions have any weight, or bitterneſs in them: one drop of conſolation from heaven, ſweetens a ſea of trouble upon earth, Pſal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, "thy comforts delight my ſoul."

Sign 3. *The teachings of God are ſanctifying and renewing teachings;* they reform and change the heart, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 23. "If ſo be that you have heard him, and been taught by "him, as the truth is in Jeſus; that ye put off concerning "the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt, ac-"cording to the deceitful luſts; and be renewed in the ſpirit "of your mind," *&c.* See here what holineſs, and purity is the effect of divine teaching! Holineſs, both external and internal, negative and poſitive: holineſs of every kind follows the Father's teachings: all the diſcoveries God makes to us of himſelf in Chriſt have an aſſimilating quality, and change the ſoul into their own likeneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Sign 4. *All God's teachings are practical, producing obedience.* Idle notions and uſeleſs ſpeculations are not learned from God. As God's creating words, ſo his teaching words are with effect: as when he ſaid, "Let there be light, and there was light;" ſo when he ſaith to the ſoul, Be comforted, be humbled; it is effectually comforted, Iſa lxvi. 13. it is humbled, Job xl. 4, 5. As God hath in nature made no creature in vain, ſo he ſpeaks no word in vain: every thing which men hear, or learn from the Father, is for uſe, practice, and benefit to the ſoul.

Sign 5. *All the teachings of God are agreeable with the written word:* The Spirit of God, and the word of God do never jar, John xiv. 26. "He ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you." When God ſpeaketh unto the heart of man, whether in a way of conviction, conſolation, or inſtruction in duty, he always either maketh uſe of the expreſs words of ſcripture, or ſpeaks to the heart in language every way conſentaneous and agreeable to ſcripture: So that the written word becomes the *ſtandard* to

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weigh, and try all divine teachings, Isa. viii. 20. "To the law, "and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this "word, it is because there is no light (or morning) in them." Whatever is disagreeing, or jarring with the scripture, must not pass for an inspiration of God, but a deluding sophism, and insinuation of Satan.

Sign 6. *The teachings of God are very satisfying teachings to the soul of man:* The understanding faculty, like a *dial*, is enlightened with the beams of divine truth shining upon it: this, no man's teachings can do: Men can only teach *objectively*, by propounding truth to the understanding; but they cannot enlighten the faculty itself, as God doth, 1 John v. 20. He giveth man understanding, as well as instructions, to be understood; he opens the eyes of the understanding, as well as propoundeth the object, Eph. i. 18. And thus we may discern and distinguish the teachings of God, from all other teachings.

3. *Use of exhortation.*

The last use I shall make of this point, shall be a word of *exhortation*, both to them that never were yet effectually taught of God, and to them also that have heard his voice, and are come to Christ.

First, To those that never yet heard the voice of God speaking to their hearts; and truly this is the general case of most men and women, in the professing world: They have heard the sound of the gospel, but it hath been a confused, empty, and ineffectual sound in their ears: we have heard the voice of man, but have never yet heard the voice of God. The gifts and abilities of preachers have, in a notional and mere human way, improved their understandings, and sometimes slightly touched their affections: All this is but the effect of man upon man. O that you would look for something which is beyond all this: satisfy not yourselves with what is merely natural, and human in ordinances; come to the word with higher ends and more spiritual designs, than to get some notions of truth which you had not before, or to judge the gifts and abilities of the speaker: If God speak not to your hearts, all the ordinances in the world can do you no good, 1 Cor. iii. 7. O remember what a solemn and awful thing it is to come to those ordinances, and attend upon that ministration, in and by which the eternal decrees of heaven are to be executed upon your souls, which must be to you the "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death:" Wrestle with God, by prayer, for a blessing upon the ordinances. Say, "Lord, speak thyself to my heart, let me hear thy voice, and "feel thy power in this prayer, or in this sermon: Others have

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" heard thy voice, cauſe me to hear it: It had been much bet-
" ter for me if I had never heard the voice of preachers, except
" I hear thy voice in them."

Secondly, Let all thoſe that have heard the voice of God, and are come to Chriſt in the virtue of his teachings, admire the wonderful condeſcenſion of God to them. O that God ſhould ſpeak to thy ſoul, and be ſilent to others! There be many thouſands living at this day under ordinances, to whom the Lord hath not given an ear to hear, or an heart to obey, Deut. xxix. 4. " To you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom
" of heaven, but to them it is not given," Mat. xiii. 11. And I beſeech you walk as men and women that have been taught of God. When Satan and your corruptions tempt you to ſin, and to walk in the ways of the carnal, and careleſs world; remember then that ſcripture, Eph. iv. 20, 21. " But ye have not ſo
" learned Chriſt, if ſo be that you have heard him, and have
" been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus." To conclude, ſee that you be exceeding humble, and lowly in ſpirit. Humility qualifies you for divine teachings, Pſal. xxv. 9. " The
" meek he will teach;" and the more ye are taught of God, the more humble you will ſtill be.

And thus you ſee, that no man can come to Chriſt without the *application of the law*, and *the teachings of the Father*; which being conſidered, may be very uſeful to convince us, (which indeed is the deſign of it) that among the multitudes of men and women, living under the ordinances of God, and the general profeſſion of religion, there are but few, very few to be found, who have effectually received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by ſaving faith.

And now, reader, I ſuppoſe by this time thou art deſirous to know by what ſigns and evidences thy union with Chriſt by faith may be cleared up, and made evident to thee; and how that great queſtion, whether thou haſt yet effectually applied Chriſt to thy ſoul, or no, may be clearly decided; which brings me to the third general uſe of the whole, *viz.*

The examination of our intereſt in Chriſt, by

1. The donation of the Spirit, from 1 John iii. 24.
2. The new creation, from 2 Cor. v. 17.
3. The mortification of ſin, from Gal. v. 24.
4. The imitation of Chriſt, from 1 John ii. 6.

Of each of theſe trials of our intereſt in Chriſt I ſhall ſpeak in their order: And, firſt, of the donation of the Spirit.

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SERMON XXIV.

Of the Manner, and Importance of the SPIRIT's Indwelling.

1 JOHN iii. 24. ——*And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

THE apoſtle in this chapter is engaged in a very trying diſcourſe; his ſcope is to diſcriminate the ſpirits, and ſtates of ſincere believers, from merely nominal, and pretended Chriſtians; which he attempts not to do by any thing that is external, but by the internal effects and operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts. His enquiry is not into thoſe things which men profeſs, or about the duties which they perform, but about the frames, and tempers of their hearts, and the principles by which they are acted in religion. According to this teſt, he puts believers upon the ſearch and ſtudy of their own hearts; calls them to reflect upon the effects and operations of the Spirit of God, wrought within their own ſouls, aſſuring them, that theſe gracious effects, and fruits of the Spirit in their hearts, will be a ſolid evidence unto them of their union with Jeſus Chriſt, amounting to much more than a general, conjectural ground of hope, under which it is poſſible there may *ſubeſſe falſum*, lurk a dangerous and fatal miſtake: But the gracious effects of the Spirit of God within them, are a foundation upon which they may build the certainty, and aſſurance of their union with Chriſt: *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* In which words we have three things to conſider, *viz.*

1. The thing to be tried, our union with Chriſt.
2. The trial of it, by the giving of his Spirit to us.
3. The certainty of the trial this way: *Hereby we know.*

Firſt, The thing to be tried; which is indeed the greateſt and weightieſt matter that can be brought to trial in this world, or in that to come, namely our union with Chriſt, expreſſed here by *his abiding in us*; a phraſe clearly expreſſing the difference betwixt thoſe that, by profeſſion and common eſtimation, paſs for Chriſtians among men, tho' they have no other union with Chriſt, but by an *external adheſion* to him in the external duties of religion, and thoſe whoſe union with Chriſt is real, vital and permanent, by the indwelling of the Spirit of Chriſt in their

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souls. John xv. 5, 6. opens the force, and importance of this phrase, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth "in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: if "a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is "withered." The thing then to be tried, is, whether we stand in Christ as dead branches in a living stock, which are only bound to it by external ligatures, or bonds, that hold them for a while together; or whether our souls have a vital union, and coalition with Christ, by the participation of the living sap of that blessed Root.

Secondly, The trial of this union, which is by the *giving of the Spirit to us*: The Spirit of Christ is the very bond of union betwixt him and our souls. I mean not that the very person of the Spirit dwelleth in us, imparting his *essential properties* to us; it were a rude blasphemy so to speak; but his saving influences are communicated to us in the way of sanctifying operations; as the sun is said to come into the house, when his beams and comforting influence come there. Nor yet must we think that the graces, or influences of the Spirit abide in us in the self-same measure, and manner as they do in Christ; "for God "giveth not the Spirit to him by measure;" in him all fulness dwells. He is anointed with the Spirit above his fellows; but there are measures and proportions of grace differently communicated to believers by the same Spirit; and these communicated graces, and real operations of the Spirit of grace in our hearts, do undoubtedly prove the reality of our union with Christ; as the communication of the self-same vital juice, or sap of the stock, to the branch whereby it lives, and brings forth fruit of the same kind, certainly proves it to be a real part, or a member of the same tree.

Thirdly, Which brings us to the third thing; namely, the certainty of the trial this way, ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, in this, or by *this we know*: We so know, that we cannot be deceived. To clear this, let us consider two things in grace, *viz.*

1. Somewhat *constitutive*,
2. Somewhat *manifestative*, } of its being.

There is something in grace which is essential, and *constitutive* of its being; and somewhat that flows from grace, and is *manifestative* of such a being: We cannot immediately, and intuitively discern the essence of grace, as it is in its simple nature. So God only discerns it, who is the author of it; but we may discern it *mediately* and *secondarily*, by the effects and operations of it. Could we see the simple essence of grace, or intui-

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tively discern our union with Christ, our knowledge would be *demonstrative, a priori ad posterius*, by seeing effects, as they are lodged in their cause: But we come to know the being of grace, and the reality of our union with Christ, *a posteriori*, as by ascending, in our knowledge, from the effects and operations, to their true cause and being.

And, accordingly, God hath furnished us with a power of self-intuition and reflection; whereby we are able to turn in upon our own hearts, and make a judgment upon ourselves, and upon our own acts. The soul hath not only a power to *project*, but a power also to *reflect* upon its own actions, not only to put forth a *direct act* of faith upon Jesus Christ, but to judge and discern that act also, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have "believed:" And this is the way in which believers attain their certainty, and knowledge of their union with Christ: from hence the observation will be.

Doct. *That interest in Christ may be certainly gathered, and concluded from the gift of the Spirit to us:* "No man (saith the "apostle) hath seen God at any time; if we love one another, "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us: Hereby "know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath "given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 12, 13. The being of God is invisible, but the operations of his Spirit in believers, are sensible, and discernable. The soul's union with Christ is a supernatural mystery, yet it is discoverable by the effects thereof, which are very perceptible in and by believers.

Two things require explication, and confirmation in the doctrinal part of this point.

1. What the giving of the Spirit imports and signifies.

2. How it evidences the soul's interest in Jesus Christ.

First, As to the import of this phrase, we are to enquire what is meant by the Spirit, and what by the giving of the Spirit.

Now the Spirit is taken in scripture two ways, *viz.*

Essentially; or personally.

In the first sense it is put for the Godhead, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Justified in the Spirit," *i. e.* By the power of his divine nature, which raised him from the dead. In the second sense it denotes the third person, or subsistence in the glorious and blessed Trinity; and to him this word *Spirit* is attributed, sometimes *properly* in the sense before-mentioned, as denoting his *personality*; at other times *metonymically*, and then it is put for the effects, fruits, graces, and gifts of the Spirit communicated by him unto men, Eph. v. 11. "Be ye filled with the Spirit." Now the fruits or gifts of the Spirit are either,

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1. Common and assisting gifts: Or,

2. Special and sanctifying gifts.

In the last sense and signification, it must be taken in this place; for, as to the common, assisting and ministring gifts of the Spirit, they are bestowed promiscuously upon one as well as another; such gifts in an excellent degree and a large measure, are found in the unregenerate, and therefore can never amount to a solid evidence of the soul's union with Christ: but his special sanctifying gifts, being the proper effect and consequent of that union, must needs strongly prove and confirm it. In this sense therefore we are to understand *the Spirit* in this place; and by *giving the Spirit to us*, we are to understand more than the *coming of the Spirit upon us*: The Spirit of God is said to come upon men in a transient way, for their present assistance in some particular service, though in themselves they be unsanctified persons: Thus *the Spirit of God came upon Balaam*, Numb. xxiv. 2. enabling him to prophesy of things to come: And, although those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit be now ceased, yet the Spirit ceaseth not to give his ordinary assistances unto men, both regenerate and unregenerate, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10, 31. compared: But, whatever gifts he gives to others, he is said to *be given, to dwell,* and *to abide* only in believers, 1 Cor. iii. 6. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spi-"rit of God dwelleth in you?" An expression denoting both his special propriety in them, and gracious familiarity with them. There is a great difference betwixt the *assisting* and the *indwelling* of the Spirit; the one is *transient*, the other *permanent*. That is a good rule the schoolmen give us, *Illa tantum dicuntur ineſſe, quae inſunt per modum quietis:* those things are only said to be in a man, which are in him by way of rest and permanency, and so the Spirit is in believers: Therefore they are said *to live in the Spirit*, Gal. v. 25. to be *led by the Spirit*, ver. 18. to be in the Spirit, and the Spirit to dwell in them, Rom. viii. 9. And so much of the first thing to be opened, *viz.* What we are to understand by the giving of the Spirit.

Secondly, In the next place we are to enquire and satisfy ourselves, how this giving of the Spirit evidently proves, and strongly concludes, that soul's interest in Christ unto whom he is given: and this will evidently appear by the consideration of these five particulars.

1. The Spirit of God in believers is the very bond by which they are united unto Christ: If therefore we find in ourselves the bond of union, we may warrantably conclude, that we have

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union with Jesus Christ: This is evidently held forth in those words of Christ, John xvii. 22, 23. "The glory which thou "gavest me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as "we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be "made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou "hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." It is the glory of Christ's human nature to be united to the Godhead: "This (said Christ) thou gavest me, and the glory thou "gavest me, I have given them," *i. e.* By me they are united unto thee. And how this is done, he sheweth us more particularly, *I in them;* there is Christ in us, *viz. mystically:* And, *thou in me;* there is God in Christ, *viz. hypostatically:* So that in Christ, God and believers meet in a blessed union: It is Christ's glory to be one with God; it is our glory to be one with Christ, and with God by him: But how is this done? Certainly, no other way but by the giving of his Spirit unto us; for so much that phrase, *I in them*, must needs import: Christ is in us by the sanctifying Spirit, which is the bond of our union with him.

Secondly, The scripture every where makes this giving, or indwelling of the spirit, the great mark and trial of our interest in Christ; concluding from the presence of it in us, *positively*, as in the text; and from the absence of it, *negatively*, as in Rom. viii. 9. "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same "is none of his," Jude ver. 19. "Sensual, not having the spi-"rit." This mark therefore agreeing to all believers, and to none but believers, and that always, and at all times, it must needs clearly infer the soul's union with Christ, in whomsoever it is found.

Thirdly, That which is a certain mark of our freedom from the covenant of works, and our title to the privileges of the covenant of grace, must needs also infer our union with Christ, and special interest in him; but the giving, or indwelling of the sanctifying spirit in us, is a certain mark of our freedom from the *first covenant*, under which all Christless persons still stand, and our title to the special privileges of the *second covenant*, in which none but the members are interested; and, consequently, it fully proves our union with the Lord Jesus. This is plain from the *apostle's* reasoning, Gal. iv. 6, 7. "And because ye are "sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your "hearts, crying, Abba Father: Wherefore thou art no more "a servant, but a son; and if a son, then heir of God, through "Christ." The spirit of the first covenant was a servile spirit, a spirit of fear and bondage, and they that were under that covenant were not *sons*, but *servants*; but the spirit of the new

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covenant is a free, ingenuous spirit, acting in the strength of God, and those that do so, are the children of God; and children inherit the blessed privileges, and royal immunities contained in that great charter, the covenant of grace: they are *heirs of God*, and the evidence of this their inheritance, by virtue of the second covenant, and of freedom from the servitude, and bondage of the first covenant, is *the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, crying, Abba Father*; So Gal. v. 18. "If ye be led by "the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Fourthly, If the eternal decree of God's electing love be executed, and the virtues and benefits of the death of Christ applied by the Spirit, unto every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a spirit of sanctification; then such a giving of the spirit unto us, must needs be a certain mark and proof of our special interest in Christ; but the decree of God's electing love is executed, and the benefits of the blood of Christ are applied unto every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a Spirit of sanctification. This is plain from 1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God "the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, "and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:" Where you see both God's election executed and the blood of Jesus sprinkled, or applied unto us by the Spirit, which is given to us as a Spirit of sanctification. There is a blessed order of working observed as proper to each person in the Godhead; the Father electeth, the Son redeemeth, the Spirit sanctifieth. The Spirit is the last efficient in the work of our salvation; what the Father decreed, and the Son purchased, that the Spirit applieth; and so puts the last hand to the compleat salvation of believers. And this some divines give as the reason why the sin against the Spirit is unpardonable, because he being the last agent, in order of working, if the heart of a man be filled with enmity against the Spirit, there can be no remedy for such a sin; there is no looking back to the death of Christ, or to the love of God, for remedy. This sin against the Spirit is that *obex infernalis*, the deadly stop and bar to the whole work of salvation; oppositely, where the Spirit is received, obeyed, and dwelleth in the way of sanctification; into that soul the eternal love of God, the inestimable benefits of the blood of Christ run freely, without any interruption; and, consequently, the interest of such a soul in Jesus Christ is beyond all dispute.

Fifthly, The giving of the Spirit to us, or his residing in us, as a sanctifying Spirit, is every where in scripture made the pledge and earnest of eternal salvation, and, consequently, must abundantly confirm, and prove the soul's interest in Christ, Eph.

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i. 13, 14. " In whom alſo after that ye believed, ye were ſealed " with that holy Spirit of promiſe; which is the earneſt of our " inheritance," *&c.* So, 2 Cor. i. 22. " who hath alſo ſealed " us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts." And thus you have the point opened and confirmed. The uſe of all followeth:

Uſe. Now the only uſe I make of this point, ſhall be that which lieth directly, both in the view of the text, and of the deſign for which it was choſen; namely, by it to try and examine the truth of our intereſt, and the validity of our claim to Jeſus Chriſt. In purſuance of which deſign, I ſhall firſt lay down ſome general rules, and then propoſe ſome particular trials.

Firſt, I ſhall lay down ſome general rules for the due information of our minds in this point, upon which ſo much depends.

Rule 1. *Though the Spirit of God be given to us, and worketh in us, yet he worketh not as a natural, and neceſſary, but as a free and arbitrary agent:* He neither aſſiſts, nor ſanctifies, as the fire burneth, *ad ultimum ſui poſſe*, as much as he can aſſiſt or ſanctify, but as much as he pleaſeth; " dividing to every " man ſeverally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 11. Beſtowing greater meaſures of gifts and graces upon ſome, than upon others; and aſſiſting the ſame perſon, more at one ſeaſon than another: and all this variety of operation floweth from his own good pleaſure: His grace is his own, he may give it as he pleaſeth.

Rule 2. *There is a great difference in the manner of the Spirit's working before, and after the work of regeneration.* Whilſt we are unregenerate, he works upon us, as upon dead creatures that work not at all with him; and what motion there is in our ſouls, is a counter-motion to the Spirit; but after regeneration it is not ſo, he then works upon a complying, and willing mind: we work, and he aſſiſts, Rom. viii. 26. Our conſcience witneſſeth, and he beareth witneſs with it, Rom. viii. 16. It is therefore an error of dangerous conſequence to think that ſanctified perſons are not bound to ſtir, or ſtrive in the way of duty, without a ſenſible impulſe, or perverting motion of the Spirit, Iſa. lxiv. 7.

Rule 3. *Though the Spirit of God be given to believers, and worketh in them, yet believers themſelves may do or omit ſuch things as may obſtruct the working, and obſcure the very being of the Spirit of God in them: ita nos tractat, ut a nobis tractatur:* He dealeth with us in his evidencing, and comforting-work, as we deal with him in point of tenderneſs and obedience to his dictates: there is a grieving, yea, there is a quenching of the Spirit by the

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lusts and corruptions of those hearts in which he dwelleth; and though he will not forsake his habitation, as a spirit of sanctification, yet he may for a time desert it is as a spirit of consolation, Psal. li. 11.

Rule 4. *Those things which discover the indwelling of the Spirit in believers are not so much the matter of their duties, or substance of their actions, as the more secret springs, holy aims, and spiritual manner of their doing, or performing of them.* It is not so much the matter of a prayer, the neat and orderly expressions in which it is uttered, as the inward sense and spiritual design of the soul: it is not the choice of elegant words, whereby our conceptions are cloathed, or the copiousness of the matter with which we are furnished; for even a poor stammering tongue, and broken language, may have more of the Spirit of God in it. This made Luther say, he saw more excellency in the duty of a plain rustic Christian, than in all the triumphs of Cesar and Alexander. The beauty and excellency of spiritua duties is an inward hidden thing.

Rule 5. *All the motions and operations of the Spirit are always harmonious, and suitable to the* written word, Isa. viii. 20. "To the "law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this "word, it is because there is no light in them." The scriptures are by the inspiration of the Spirit, therefore his inspiration into the hearts of believers, must either substantially agree with the scriptures, or the inspiration of the Spirit be self-repugnant, and contradictory to one another. It is very observable, that the works of grace wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, are represented to us in scripture, as a transcript, or copy of the written word, Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will write my law in their "hearts." Now, as a true copy answers the original, word for word, letter for letter, point for point; so do the works of the Spirit in our souls, harmonize with the dictates of the Spirit in the scriptures: whatsoever motion therefore shall be found repugnant thereto, must not be fathered upon the Spirit of God, but laid at the door of its proper parents, the spirit of error and corrupt nature.

Rule 6. *Although the works of the Spirit, in all sanctified persons, do substantially agree, both with the written word, and with one another, (as ten thousand copies, penned from one original, must needs agree within themselves); yet as to the manner of infusion and operation, there are found many circumstantial differences.* The Spirit of God doth not hold one and the same method of working upon all hearts: the work of grace is introduced into some souls with more terror and trouble for sin, than it is in

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others: he wrought upon Paul one way, upon Lydia in another way: he holds some much longer under terrors and troubles than he doth others: inveterate and more prophane sinners find stronger troubles for sin, and are held longer under them, than those are, into whose hearts grace is more early and insensibly infused by the Spirit's blessing upon religious education: but as these have less trouble than the other at first, so commonly they have less clearness, and more doubts and fears about the work of the Spirit afterwards.

Rule 7. *There is a great difference found betwixt the sanctifying, and the comforting influences of the Spirit upon believers, in respect of constancy and permanency.* His sanctifying influences abide for ever in the soul, they never depart; but his comforting influences come and go, and abide not long upon the hearts of believers. Sanctification belongs to the being of a Christian, consolation only to his well-being: the first therefore is fixing and abiding, the latter various and inconstant. Sanctification brings us to heaven hereafter, consolation brings heaven into us here: Our safety lies in the former, our cheerfulness only in the latter. There are times and seasons, in the lives of believers, wherein the Spirit of God doth more signally and eminently seal their spirits, and ravish their hearts with joy unspeakable: But what Bernard speaketh is certainly true in the experience of Christians: "* It is a sweet hour, and it is but an hour; "a thing of short continuance: the relish of it is exceeding sweet, "but it is not often that Christians taste it." And so much may suffice for the general rules about the inbeing, and workings of the Spirit in believers, for the better information of our understandings, and prevention of mistakes in this matter: I shall next, according to promise, lay down the particular marks and trials, by which we may discern whether God hath given us his Spirit or no; by which grown Christians, when they are in a due composed frame, may, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, (for which therefore they are bound to pray), discern his indwelling and working in themselves.

Evidence 1. *In whomsoever the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of sanctification, to that man or woman he hath been, more or less, a Spirit of conviction and humiliation.* This is the order which the Spirit constantly observes in adult, or grown converts, John xvi. 8, 9. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because

* *Rara hora, brevis mora; sapit quidem suavissime, sed gustatur rarissime.* Bern.

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" they believed not on me." This, you see, is the method he observes all the world over; he shall reprove, or convince the world of sin. Conviction of sin hath the same respect unto sanctification, as the blossoms of trees have to the fruits that follow them: A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*; an imperfect fruit in itself, and in order to a more perfect and noble fruit. Where there are no blossoms, we can expect no fruit; and where we see no conviction of sin, we can expect no conversion to Christ. Hath then the Spirit of God been a Spirit of conviction to thee? Hath he more particularly convinced thee of sin, " because thou hast not believed on him?" *i. e.* hath he shewn thee thy sin and misery, as an unbeliever? Not only terrified and affrighted thy conscience with this or that more notorious act of sin, but fully convinced thee of the state of sin that thou art in by reason of thy unbelief; which holding thee from Christ, must needs also hold thee under the guilt of all thy other sins. This gives, at least, a strong probability that God hath given thee his Spirit, especially, when this conviction remains day and night upon thy soul, so that nothing but Christ can give it rest, and consequently the great enquiry of thy soul is after Christ, and none but Christ.

Evidence 2. *As the Spirit of God hath been a convincing, so he is a quickening Spirit, to all those to whom he is given*; Rom. viii. 2. " The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath " made me free from the law of sin and death:" He is the Spirit of life, *(i. e.)* the principle of spiritual life in the souls whom he inhabiteth; for, uniting them to Christ, he unites them to the fountain of life; and this spiritual life, in believers, manifests itself as the natural life doth in vital actions and operations. When the Spirit of God comes into the soul of a man that was dead and senseless under sin, " O (saith he) now I begin to feel " the weight and load of sin, Rom. vii. 24. now I begin to " hunger and thirst after Christ, and his ordinances, 1 Pet. ii. 2. " now I begin to breathe after God in spiritual prayer," Acts ix. 11. Spiritual life hath its spiritual senses, and suitable operations. O think upon this, you that cannot feel any burthen in sin, you that have no hungerings or thirstings after Christ; how can the Spirit of God be in you? I do not deny but there may, at some times, be much deadness and senselessness upon the hearts of Christians, but this is their disease, not their nature; it is but at some times, not always, and when it is so with them, they are burdened with it, and complain of it, as their greatest affliction in this world; their spirits are not easy and at rest, in

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such a condition as yours are; their spirits are as a bone out of joint, an arm dislocated, which cannot move any way without pain.

Evidence 3. *Those to whom God giveth his Spirit have a tender sympathy with all the interests and concernments of Christ.* This must needs be so, if the same Spirit which is in Christ dwelleth also in thy heart; if thou be a partaker of his Spirit, then what he loves, thou loveſt, and what he hateth, thou hateſt. This is a very plain case; even in nature itself, we find that the many members of the same natural body being animated by one and the same spirit of life, "whether one member suffer, all the "members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the "members rejoice with it: now ye are the body of Christ, "and members in particular," 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. For look, as Christ, the head of that body is touched with a tender sense and feeling of the miseries, and troubles of his people, he is persecuted, when they are persecuted, Acts ix. 4. so they that have the Spirit of Christ in them, cannot be without a deep, and tender sense of the reproach, and dishonours that are done to Christ: this is "as it were a sword in their bones," Psal. xlii. 3. If his public worship cease, or the assemblies of his people are scattered; it cannot but go to the hearts of all, in whom the Spirit of Christ is: "They will be sorrowful for "the solemn assemblies; the reproach of them will be a bur"den," Zeph. iii. 18. Those that have the Spirit of Christ do not more earnestly long after any one thing in this world, than the advancement of Christ's interest, by conversion, and reformation in the kingdoms of the earth, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. Paul could rejoice that Christ was preached, though his own afflictions were increased, Phil. i. 16, 18. and John could rejoice that Christ increased, though he himself decreased; yet therein was his joy fulfilled, John iii. 29. So, certainly, the concernments of Christ must, and will touch that heart which is the habitation of his Spirit. I cannot deny, but even a good Baruch may be under a temptation to seek great things for himself, and be too much swallowed up in his own concernments, when God is plucking up and breaking down, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. But this is only the influence of a temptation: the true temper and spirit of a believer inclines him to sorrow and mourning, when things are in this sad posture: Ezek. ix. 4. "Go through the midst of "the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark up"on the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the "abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

O reader, lay thine hand upon thine heart: Is it thus with

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thee? Doſt thou ſympathize with the affairs and concernments of Chriſt in the world? or, careſt thou not which way things go with the people of God, and goſpel of Chriſt, ſo long as thine own affairs proſper, and all things are well with thee?

Evidence 4. *Wherever the Spirit of God dwelleth, he doth, in ſome degree, mortify and ſubdue the evils and corruptions of the ſoul in which he reſides.* This ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh, Gal. v. 7. and believers, "through the Spirit, do mortify the "deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. This is one ſpecial part of his ſanctifying work. I do not ſay he ſo kills, and ſubdues ſin in believers, as that it ſhall never trouble, or defile them any more: No, no, that freedom belongs to the perfect ſtate in heaven, but its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a ſeaſon: It lives in believers ſtill, but not upon the proviſion they willingly make to fulfil the luſt of it, Rom. xiii. 27. The deſign of every true believer, is co-incident with the deſign of the Spirit, to deſtroy, and mortify corruption: They long after the extirpation of it, and are daily in the uſe of all ſanctified means and inſtruments, to ſubdue and deſtroy it; the workings of their corruption, are the afflictions of their ſouls, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver "me from the body of this death?" And there is no one thing that ſweetens the thoughts of death to believers (except the ſight, and full enjoyment of God) more than their expected deliverance from ſin doth.

Evidence 5. *Wherever the Spirit of God dwelleth in the way of ſanctification, in all ſuch he is the Spirit of prayer and ſupplication,* Rom. viii. 26. "Likwiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our in-"firmities, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we "ought, but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us, with "groanings which cannot be uttered:" Wherever he is poured out as the Spirit of *grace*, he is alſo poured out as the Spirit of *ſupplication*, Zech. xii. 10. His praying, and his ſanctifying influences are undivided. There is a threefold aſſiſtance that the Spirit gives unto ſanctified perſons in prayer. He helps them before they pray, by ſetting an edge upon their deſires and affections: He helps them in prayer, by ſupplying matters of requeſt to them, teaching them what they ſhould ask of God: He aſſiſteth them in the manner of prayer, ſupplying them with ſuitable affections, and helping them to be ſincere in all their deſires to God. It is he that humbles the pride of their hearts, diſſolves, and breaks the hardneſs of their hearts: Out of deadneſs makes them lively; out of weakneſs makes them ſtrong.

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He assisteth the spirits of believers after prayer, helping them to faith and patience, to believe, and wait for the returns, and answers of their prayers. O reader, reflect upon thy duties, consider what spirituality, sincerity, humility, broken-heartedness, and melting affections after God, are to be found in thy duties: Is it so with thee? Or dost thou hurry over thy duties as an interruption to thy business, and pleasures? Are they an ungrateful task, imposed upon thee by God, and thy own conscience? Are there no hungerings, and thirstings after God in thy soul? Or, if there be any pleasure arising to thee out of prayer, is it not from the ostentation of thy gifts? If it be so, reflect sadly upon the carnal state of thy heart; these things do not speak the Spirit of grace and supplication to be given thee.

Evidence 6. *Wherever the Spirit of grace inhabits, there is an heavenly, spiritual frame of mind accompanying, and evidencing the indwelling of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5, 6. "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are "after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit: For, to be carnally "minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." By the mind, understand the musings, reasonings, yea, and the cares, fears, delights and pleasures of the soul, which follow the workings, and meditations of the mind. As these are, so are we; if these be ordinarily, and habitually taken up, and exercised about earthly things, then is the frame, and state of the man carnal, and earthly: The workings of every creature follow the being and nature of it. If God, Christ, heaven, and the world to come, engage the thoughts, and affections of the soul, and the temper of such a soul is spiritual, and the Spirit of God dwelleth there; this is the life of the regenerate, Phil. iii. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven;" and such a frame of heart is *life*, and *peace*: A serene, placid, and most comfortable life. No pleasures upon earth, no gratifications of the senses do relish, and savour, as spiritual things do. Consider, therefore, which way thy heart ordinarily works, especially in thy solitudes, and hours of retirement. These things will be a great evidence for, or against thy soul. David could say, "How precious are thy "thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them: "If I should count them, they are more in number than the "sand; when I awake, I am still with thee," Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18. Yet it must be acknowledged, for the relief of weaker Christians, that there is a great difference and variety found in this matter, among the people of God: For the strength, steadiness, and constancy of a spiritual mind, result from the depth, and improvement of sanctification: The more grace, still the more

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evenneſs, ſpirituality, and conſtancy, there is in the motions of the heart after God. The minds of weak Chriſtians are more eaſily entangled in earthly vanities, and more frequently diverted by inward corruptions; yet ſtill there is a ſpiritual *Pondus*, inclination, and bent of their hearts towards God; and the vanity, and corruption which hinders their communion with him, is their greateſt grief, and burthen under which they groan in this world.

Evidence 7. *Thoſe to whom the Spirit of grace is given, are led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 14. "As many as are led by the "Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God:" Sanctified ſouls give themſelves up to the government, and conduct of the Spirit; they obey his voice, beg his direction, follow his motion, deny the ſollicitations of the fleſh and blood, in obedience to him, Gal. i. 16. And they that do ſo, they are the ſons of God. It is the office of the Spirit to guide us in all truth; and it is our great duty to follow his guidance. Hence it is, that in all enterpriſes, and undertakings, the people of God ſo earneſtly beg direction, and counſel from him. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteouſ-"neſs, (ſaith David) make thy way ſtraight before my face," Pſal. viii. 5. They dare not, in doubtful caſes, lean to their own underſtandings; yea, in points of duty, and in points of ſin, they dare not neglect the one, or commit the other, againſt the convictions, and perſuaſions of their own conſciences; though troubles, and ſufferings be unavoidable in that path of duty, when they have balanced duties with ſufferings, in their moſt ſerious thoughts, the concluſion and reſult will ſtill be, it is better to obey God, than man, the dictates of the Spirit, rather than the counſels of fleſh and blood.

But, before I leave this point, I reckon myſelf a debtor unto weak Chriſtians, and ſhall endeavour to give ſatisfaction to ſome ſpecial doubts and fears, with which their minds are ordinarily entangled in this matter; for it is a very plain caſe, that many ſouls have the preſence, and ſanctification of the Spirit without the evidence and comfort thereof. Divers things are found in believers, which are ſo many fountains of fears; and doubts to them. And,

Objection 1. Firſt, I greatly doubt the Spirit of God is not in me (ſaith a poor Chriſtian) becauſe of the great darkneſs, and ignorance which clouds my ſoul; for I read, 1 John ii. 27. that he enlightneth the ſoul which he inhabiteth. "The anointing which "ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that "any man teach you, but as the ſame anointing teacheth you "of all things," &c. but, alas, my underſtanding is weak and

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cloudy, I have need to learn of the meaneſt of God's people: This only I know, that I know nothing as I ought to know.

Sol. Two things are to be regarded in ſpiritual knowledge; *viz.* the quantity, and the efficacy thereof. Your condition doth not ſo much depend upon the meaſures of knowledge; for, haply, you are under many natural diſadvantages, and want thoſe helps and means of encreaſing knowledge, which others plentifully enjoy. It may be you have wanted the helps of education, or have been encumbred by the neceſſities and cares of the world, which have allowed you but little leiſure for the improvement of your minds: But if that which you do know, be turned into practice and obedience, Col. i. 9, 10. If it have influence upon your hearts, and transform your affections into a ſpiritual frame and temper, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. If your ignorance humble you, and drive you to God daily for the increaſe of knowledge, one drop of ſuch knowledge, of Chriſt, and yourſelves as this, is more worth than a ſea of human, moral, unſanctified, and ſpeculative knowledge: Tho' you know but little, yet that little being ſanctified, is of great value: Though you know but little, time was when ye knew nothing of Jeſus Chriſt, or the ſtate of your own ſouls. In a word, though you know but little, that little you do know will be ſtill increaſing, "like the morning light, which ſhineth more and more unto the "perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. If thou knoweſt ſo much as brings thee to Chriſt, thou ſhalt ſhortly be where thy knowledge ſhall be as the light at noon-day.

Object. 2. I ſometimes find my heart raiſed, and my affections melted in duties, but I doubt it is in a natural way, and not from the Spirit of God: could I be aſſured thoſe motions of my heart were from the Spirit of grace, and not merely a natural thing, it would be ſingular comfort, and ſatisfaction to me.

Sol. Firſt, Conſider, whether this be not the ground of your fear and doubting, becauſe you are fain to take pains in the way of meditation, prayer, and other duties, to bring your hearts to reliſh and favour the things of God; whereas, it may be, you expect your ſpiritual enlargements and comforts ſhould flow in upon you ſpontaneouſly, and drop from heaven immediately of their own accord, without any pains or induſtry of yours. Here may be, (and probably is) a great miſtake in this matter; for the Spirit of God works in the natural method, wherein affections uſe to be raiſed, and makes uſe of ſuch duties as meditation and prayer, as inſtruments to do that work by, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. So David was forced to reaſon with, and chide his own heart, Pſal. xlii. 5. Thy comfort and enlarge-

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ment may nevertheleſs be the fruit of the Spirit, becauſe God makes it ſpring up, and grow upon thy duties.

Secondly, Take this as a ſure rule, whatſoever riſes from ſelf, always aims at, and terminates in ſelf. This ſtream cannot be carried higher than the fountain; if therefore thy aim, and end in ſtriving for affections and enlargements in duty, be only to win applauſe from men, and appear to be what in reality thou art not, this, indeed is the fruit of nature, and a very corrupt and hypocritical nature; but if thy heart be melted, or deſire to be melted in the ſenſe of the evil of ſin, in order to the farther mortification of it; and, under the apprehenſions of the free grace and mercy of God in the pardon of ſin, in order to the engaging of thy ſoul more firmly to him; if theſe, or ſuch like, be thy ends and deſigns, or be promoted and furthered by thine enlargements, and ſpiritual comforts, never reject them as the mere fruits of nature: A carnal root cannot bring forth ſuch fruits as theſe.

Object. 3. Upon the contrary, ſpiritual deadneſs, and indiſpoſedneſs to duties, and to thoſe eſpecially which are more ſecret, ſpiritual, and ſelf-denying than others, is the ground upon which many ſpiritual ſouls, who are yet truly gracious, do doubt the indwelling of the Spirit in them. O, ſaith ſuch a ſoul, if the Spirit of God be in me, Why is it thus? Could my heart be ſo dead, ſo backward, and averſe to ſpiritual duties? No, no; theſe things would be my meat and my drink, the delights and pleaſures of my life.

Sol. Firſt, Theſe things indeed are very ſad, and argue thy heart to be out of frame, as the body is, when it cannot reliſh the moſt deſirable meats, or drinks: But the queſtion will be, how thy ſoul behaves itſelf in ſuch a condition as this is? whether this be eaſy or burdenſome to be borne by thee? * and if thou complain under it as a burden; then, what pains thou takeſt to eaſe thyſelf, and get rid of it?

Secondly, Know alſo, that there is a great difference betwixt ſpiritual *death*, and ſpiritual *deadneſs*; the former is the ſtate of the unregenerate, the latter is the diſeaſe and complaint of many thouſand regenerate ſouls: If David had not felt it as well as thee, he would never have cried out nine times in the compaſs of one Pſalm, *Quicken me, quicken me.* Beſides,

* He who inclines to that which is good, and is averſe to that which is evil; has a deſire of pleaſing God, though ſometimes being ſeduced by evil concupiſcence, through infirmity he may commit that which is diſpleaſing to God. *Dawen.*

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Thirdly, Though it be *often*, it is not ſo *always* with thee: there are ſeaſons wherein the Lord breaks in upon thy heart, enlarges thy affections, and ſets thy ſoul at liberty; to which times thou wilt do well to have an eye, in theſe dark and cloudy days.

Object. 4. But the Spirit of God is the *comforter* as well as a *ſanctifier*: He doth not only enable men to believe, but after they believe, he alſo ſeals them, Eph. i. 13. But I walk in darkneſs, and am a ſtranger to the ſealing and comforting work of the Spirit: How therefore can I imagine the Spirit of God ſhould dwell in me, who go from day to day in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, mourning as without the ſun?

Sol. There is a two-fold ſealing, and two-fold comfort: The Spirit ſealeth both *objectively* in the work of ſanctification, and *formally*, in giving clear evidence of that work. Thou mayſt be ſealed in the firſt, whilſt thou are not yet ſealed in the ſecond ſenſe: If ſo, thy condition is ſafe, although it be at preſent uncomfortable. And, as to comfort, that alſo is of two ſorts, *viz. ſeminal*, or *actual*: in the root, or in the fruit; *Light is ſown for the righteous*, Pſal. xcvii. 11. though the harveſt, to reap and gather in that joy and comfort, be not yet come. And there are many other ways beſide that of joy and comfort, whereby the indwelling of the Spirit may evidence itſelf in thy ſoul: If he do not enable thee to rejoice, yet if he enable thee ſincerely to mourn for ſin; if he do not enlarge thy heart in comfort, yet if he humble and purge thy heart by ſorrows; if he deny thee the *aſſurance of faith*, and yet give thee the *dependance of faith*, thou haſt no reaſon to call in queſtion, or deny the indwelling of the Spirit in thee for that cauſe.

Object. 5. But the apoſtle ſaith, "They that walk in the Spi-"rit, fulfil the luſts of the fleſh," Gal. v. 16. but I find myſelf entangled, and frequently overcome by them: Therefore I doubt the Spirit of God is not in me.

Sol. It is poſſible the ground of your doubting may be your miſtake of the true ſenſe and meaning of that ſcripture: It is not the apoſtle's meaning in that place, that ſin in believers doth not work, tempt, and oftentimes overcome, and captivate them; for then he would contradict himſelf in Rom. vii. 23. where he thus complains, "But I ſee another law in my members, war-"ring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into capti-"vity to the law of ſin which is in my members." But two things are meant by that expreſſion, "Ye ſhall not fulfil the "luſts of the fleſh."

Firſt, That the principle of grace will give a check to ſin in

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its first motions, and cause it to miscarry in the womb, like an untimely birth, before it comes to its full maturity; it shall never be able to gain the full consent of the will, as it doth in the unregenerate.

Secondly, If, notwithstanding all the opposition grace makes to hinder the birth, or commission of it, it doth yet prevail, and break forth into act; yet such acts of sin, as they are not committed without *regret*, so they are followed with *shame*, *sorrow*, and true *repentance*: And those very surprizals, and captivities of sin at one time, are made cautions and warnings to prevent it at another time. If it be so with thee, thou dost not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

And now, reader, upon the whole, if upon examination of thy heart by these rules, the Lord shall help thee to discern the saving work of the Spirit upon thy soul, and thereby thine interest in Christ, What a happy man or woman art thou! what pleasure will arise to thy soul from such a discovery! Look upon the frame of thine heart *absolutely* as it is in itself at present, or *comparatively*, with what once it was, and others still are, and thou wilt find enough to transport and melt thy heart within thee: Certainly this is the most glorious piece of workmanship that ever God wrought in the world upon any man, Eph. ii. 10. The Spirit of God is come down from heaven, and hath hallowed thy soul to be a temple for himself to dwell in; as he hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will "be their God, and they shall be my people," 2 Cor. vii. 16. Moreover, this gift of the Spirit is a sure pledge and earnest of thy future glory: Time was, when there was no such work upon thy soul. And, considering the frame and temper of it, the total aversation, strong opposition, and rooted enmity that was in it; it is the wonder of wonders, that ever such a work as this should be wrought upon such an heart as thine; that ever the Spirit of God, whose nature is pure and perfect holiness, should chuse such an unclean, polluted, abominable heart to frame an habitation for himself there to dwell in; to say of thy soul (now his spiritual *temple*) as he once said of the material *temple* at *Jerusalem*, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. "The Lord hath "chosen it, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my "rest for ever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it." O what hath God done for thy soul!

Think, reader, and think again: Are there not many thousands in the world of more ingenuous, sweet, and amiable dispositions than thyself, whom yet the Spirit of God passeth by,

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and leaveth them as tabernacles for Satan to dwell in? Such a one thou lately waſt, and hadſt ſtill remained, if God had not wrought for thee, beyond all the expectations and deſires of thine own heart. O bleſs God, that you have received not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that ye might know the things which are freely given unto you of God.

SERMON XXV.

Of the Nature and Neceſſity of the NEW CREATURE.

2 COR. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſſed away; behold, all things are become new.*

YOU have ſeen one trial of an intereſt in Chriſt, in our laſt diſcourſe, namely, by the donation of the Spirit. We have here another trial of the ſame matter, from one of the greateſt, and moſt noble effects of the Spirit upon our ſouls; namely, his work of renovation, or *new creation*: "If any man "be in Chriſt, he is a new creature." The *apoſtle*'s ſcope in the immediate context, is to diſſuade Chriſtians from a carnal, ſinful partiality, in their reſpects to men: Not to deſpiſe them after the manner of the world, according to the external differences, but the real internal worth, and excellency that is in men. This the apoſtle preſſes by two arguments; one drawn from the end of Chriſt's death, verſe 15. which was to take off from theſe ſelfiſh deſigns, and carnal ends, by which the whole world is ſwayed. *Secondly*, From the *new Spirit*, by which believers are actuated: they that are in Chriſt, are to judge, and meaſure all things by a new rule: "If any man be "in Chriſt, he is a new creature: Old things are paſſed away;" *q. d.* we have done with that low, ſelfiſh ſpirit of the world, which was wholly governed by carnal intereſt; we are now to judge by a new rule, to be actuated from a new principle, aim at a new, and more noble end; "Behold, all things are become "new." In theſe words we have three general parts, to be diſtinctly conſidered, *viz.*

1. The great queſtion to be determined, "If any man be in "Chriſt?"

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2. The rule by which it may be determined; *viz.* "he is a "new creature."

3. This general rule more particularly explained; "Old "things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

First, We have here the great question to be determined, Whether a man be in Christ? A question, upon the determination whereof, we must stand, or fall for ever. By [*being in Christ*] the *apostle* doth not here mean the general profession of Christianity, which gives a man the *reputation* of an interest in him; but by being in Christ, he means an interest in him, by *vital union* with his person, and real participation of his benefits. Now this is the question to be determined, the matter to be tried; than which, nothing can be more solemn, and important in the whole world.

Secondly, The rule by which this great question may be determined, viz. *The new creation:* "If any man be in Christ, "he is a new creature." By this rule all the titles, and claims made to Christ in the professing world, are to be examined. [*If any man*] be he what he will, high, or low, great, or small; learned, or illiterate; young, or old; if he pretend interest in Christ, this is the standard by which he must be tried: if he be in Christ, he is *a new creature;* and if he be not *a new creature*, he is not in Christ, let his endowments, gifts, confidence, and reputation be what they will: [*A new creature*] not new physically, he is the same person he was; but a new creature, that is, a creature renewed by gracious principles, newly infused into him from above, which sway him, and guide him in another manner, and to another end than ever he acted before; and these gracious principles not being educed out of any thing, which was pre-existent in man, but infused *de novo*, from above, are therefore called, in this place, a new creature: This is the rule, by which our claim to Christ must be determined.

Thirdly, This general rule is here more particularly explained; "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become "new." He satisfies not himself to lay down this rule concisely, or express it in general terms, by telling us, the man in Christ must be a new creature; but more particularly, he shews us what this new creature is, and what the parts thereof are; *viz.* Both

1. The privative part; "Old things are passed away."

2. The positive part thereof; "All things are become new."

By old things, he means all those carnal principles, self-ends, and fleshly lusts, belonging to the carnal state, or the old man:

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all those are *passed away*; "* not simply, and perfectly, but "only in parts at present, and wholly in hope, and expectation "hereafter." So much briefly of the privative part of the new creature, "Old things are passed away." A word or two must be spoken of the *positive* part; "All things are become "new." He means not that the old faculties of the soul are abolished, and new ones created in their room: but as our bodies may be said to be new bodies, by reason of their new endowments, and qualities super-induced, and bestowed upon them in their resurrection; so our souls are now renewed by the infusion of new gracious principles into them, in the work of regeneration. These two parts, *viz.* the *privative* part, the passing away of old things; and the *positive* part, the renewing of all things, do, betwixt them, comprize the whole nature of sanctification, which, in other scriptures, is expressed by equivalent phrases; sometimes by putting off the old, and putting on the new man, Eph. iv. 24. sometimes by dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness, Rom. vi. 11. which is the self-same thing the apostle here intends, by the passing away of old things, and making all things new. And because this is the most excellent, glorious, and admirable work of the Spirit, which is, or can be wrought upon man in this world; therefore the apostle asserts it with an *ecce*, a note of special remark, and observation, "Behold, all things are become new;" *q. d.* Behold and admire this surprizing, marvellous change which God hath made upon men; they are come out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1. Pet. ii. 9. out of the old, as it were, into a new world; "Behold, all things are become new." Hence note,

Doct. *That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace in the soul of any man, is that man's sure, and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

Suitable hereunto are those words of the apostle, Eph. iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that "ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth "is in Jesus: That ye put off, concerning the former conversa-"tion, the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful "lusts: and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind: and that "ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righte-"ousness and true holiness." Where we have, in other words, of the same importance, the very self-same description of the man that is in Christ, which the apostle gives us in this text. Now,

* *Non simpliciter, et perfecte, sed partim spe.* Estius in loc.

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for the opening and stating of this point, it will be necessary that I shew you,

1. Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation.

2. In what respects every soul that is in Christ is renewed, or made a new creature.

3. What are the remarkable properties, and qualities of this new creature.

4. The necessity of this new creation to all that are in Christ.

5. How this new creation evidences our interest in Christ.

6. And then apply the whole in the proper uses of it.

First, Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation. This must be our first enquiry. And, doubtless, the reason of this appellation is the analogy, proportion, and similitude which is found betwixt the work of regeneration, and God's work in the first creation. And their agreement, and proportion will be found in the following particulars.

First, The same almighty Author who created the world, createth also this work of grace in the soul of man, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "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." The same powerful word which created the natural, createth also the spiritual light. † It is equally absurd for any man to say, I make my self to repent, or to believe, as it is to say, I made myself to exist, and be.

Secondly, The first thing that God created in the natural world was light, Gen. i. 3. and the first thing which God createth in the new creation, is the light of spiritual knowledge, Col. iii. 10. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed "in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Thirdly, Creation is out of nothing; it requires no pre-existent matter; it doth not bring one thing out of another, but something out of nothing; it gives a being to that which before had no being: So it is also in the new creation, 1 Pet. ii 9, 10. "Who "hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people "of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have ob-"tained mercy." The work of grace is not educed out of the power and principles of nature, but it is a pure work of creation.

† *Minus est, te fecisse hominem, quam sanctum, i. e.* We may sooner make ourselves men, than saints.

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The Heathen philoſophers could neither underſtand, nor acknowledge the creation of the world, becauſe that notion was repugnant to this maxim of reaſon, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing can be made. Thus did they *inſanire cum ratione*, befool themſelves with their own reaſonings; and after the ſame manner ſome great pretenders to reaſon among us, voting it an abſurdity to affirm, that the work of grace is not virtually, and potentially contained in nature, the new creation in the old.

Fourthly, It was the virtue and efficacy of the Spirit of God, which gave the natural world its being by creation; Gen. i. 2. the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; it hovered over the *chaos*, as the wings of a bird do over her eggs, as the ſame word is rendered, Deut. xxxii. 11. cheriſhing, as it were by incubation, that rude maſs by a ſecret quickening influence by which it drew all the creatures into their ſeveral forms, and particular natures. So it is in the new creation; a quickening influence muſt come from the Spirit of God, or elſe the new creation can never be formed in us; John iii. 8. "So "is every one that is born of the Spirit." And ver. 6. "That "which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit."

Fifthly, The word of God was the inſtrument of the firſt creation: Pſal xxxiii. 6, 9. "By the word of the Lord were "the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of "his mouth: For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, "and it ſtood faſt." The word of God is alſo the inſtrument of the new creation, or work of grace in man; 1 Pet. i. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorrup-"tible; by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth for "ever." So James i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us, with "the word of truth:" *Of his own will*, that was the impulſive cauſe; with the *word of truth*, that is the inſtrumental cauſe. Great reſpect, and honour, love and delight, is due to the word upon this account, that it is the inſtrument of our regeneration, or new creation.

Sixthly, The ſame power which created the world, ſtill under-props and ſupports it in its being: the world owes its converſation, as well as its exiſtence, to the power of God, without which it could not ſubſiſt one moment. Juſt ſo it is with the new creation, which entirely depends upon the preſerving power which firſt formed it; Jude ver. 1. "Preſerved in Chriſt "Jeſus;" and 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who were kept by the power of "God, through faith, unto ſalvation." As in a natural way "we live, move, and have our being in God," Acts xvii. 28. ſo in a ſpiritual way, we continue believing, repenting, loving,

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and delighting in God; without whose continued influence upon our souls, we could do neither.

Seventhly, In a word, God surveyed the first creation with complacence and great delight; he beheld the works of his hands, and approved them as very good, Gen. i. 31. So this also in the second creation; nothing pleaseth and delights God more than the works of grace in the souls of his people. It is not an outward privilege of nature, or gift of providence, which commends any man to God; "Circumcision is nothing, and "uncircumcision is nothing, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. And thus you see upon what grounds the work of regeneration in man, is stiled a new creature; which was the first thing to be opened.

Secondly, Next we must enquire, in what respects every soul that is in Christ, is renewed, or made a new creature: and here we shall find a threefold renovation of every man that is in Christ, *viz.*

1. In his state and condition.
2. In his frame and constitution.
3. In his practice and conversation.

First, He is renewed in his state and condition; for he passeth from death to life, in his justification, 1 John iii. 14. He was condemned by the law, he is now justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ: he was under the curse of the first covenant; he is under the blessing of the new covenant: he was afar off, but is now made nigh unto God: an alien, a stranger once, now of the household of God, Eph. ii. 12, 13. O blessed change, from a sad to a sweet and comfortable condition! "There is therefore no condemnation to them "which are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

Secondly, Every man in Christ is renewed in his frame and constitution; all the faculties and affections of his soul are renewed by regeneration: his understanding was dark, but now is light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. his conscience was dead and secure, or full of guilt and horror, but is now become tender, watchful, and full of peace, Heb. ix. 14. his will was rebellious, stubborn and inflexible; but is now made obedient, and complying with the will of God, Psal. cx. 2. his desires did once pant, and spend themselves in the pursuit of vanities, now they are set upon God, Isa. xxvi. 8. his love did fondly dote upon ensnaring earthly objects, now it is swallowed up in the infinite excellencies of God and Christ, Psal. cxix. 97. his joy was once in trifles, and things of nought, now his rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3. his fears once were about noxious

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creatures, now God is the object of the fear of reverence, Acts ix. 31. and ſin the object of the fear of caution, 2 Cor. vii. 11. his hopes and expectations were only from the world preſent, but now from that to come, Heb. vi. 19. Thus the ſoul in its faculties and affections is renewed; which being done, the members and ſenſes of the body muſt needs be deſtinated, and employed by it in new ſervices; no more to be the weapons of unrighteouſneſs, but inſtruments of ſervice to Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. vi. 19. And thus all that are in Chriſt are renewed in their frame and conſtitution.

Thirdly, The man in Chriſt is renewed in his practice and converſation: the manner of operation always follows the nature of beings. Now the regenerate not being what they were, cannot walk and act as once they did; Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. "And you "hath he quickened, who were once dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; "wherein ye walked according to the courſe of this world." They were carried away, like water by the ſtrength of the tide, by the influence of their own corrupt natures, and the cuſtoms and examples of the world; but the caſe is now altered. So in 1 Cor. vi. 11. the apoſtle ſhews believers their old companions in ſin, and tells them, "Such were ſome of you, but ye are "waſhed, but ye are ſanctified," *&c. q. d.* the world is now well altered with you, thanks be to the grace of God for it. This wonderful change of practice, which is ſo univerſal, and remarkable in all the regenerate, and immediately conſequent upon their converſion, ſets the world a wondering at them; 1 Pet. iv. 4. Wherein they think it ſtrange, that you run not "with them into the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you. "They think it ſtrange:" * The word ſignifies to ſtand and gaze, as the hen doth which hath brooded, and hatched partridge eggs, when ſhe ſeeth the chickens which ſhe hath brought forth, take the wing and fly away from her. Thus do the men of the world ſtand amazed to ſee their old companions in ſin, whoſe language once was vain and earthly, it may be, profane and filthy, now to be praying, ſpeaking of God, heaven, and things ſpiritual, having no more to do with them, as to ſin, except by way of reprehenſion and admonition: this amazes the world, and makes them look with a ſtrange admiring eye upon the people of God.

*Ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται, *i. e.* Then ſtand amazed, as at the ſight of an unſeen thing. *Bern. Ils ſe trouvent tous noveaux, et comme en un autre monde, i. e.* They find themſelves all new, and as in another world.

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Thirdly, In the next place let us enquire into the properties and qualities of this new creature, and ſhew you, as we are able, what they are: yet, reader, expect not here an exact and accurate account of that which is ſo great a myſtery; for if queſtions may be moved about a ſilly flie, which may puzzle the greateſt philoſopher to reſolve them; how much more may we conceive this great and marvellous work of God, the moſt myſterious and admirable of all his works, to ſurmount the underſtandings of the moſt illuminated Chriſtians? O how little do we know of the nature, properties and operations of this new creature! So far as God hath revealed it to our weak underſtandings, we may ſpeak of it. And,

Firſt, The ſcripture ſpeaks of it as a thing of great difficulty to be conceived by man, John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where "it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not "tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one "that is born of the Spirit." The original of winds is a queſtion of great difficulty in *philoſophy*: We hear the voice of the wind, feels its mighty force, and behold its ſtrange effects; but neither know whence it comes, or whither it goes. Ask a man, Do you hear the wind blow? Yes. Do you feel it blow? Yes, very ſenſibly. Do you ſee the effects of it, rending and overturning the trees? Yes, very plainly. But can you deſcribe its nature, or declare its original? No, that is a myſtery which I do not underſtand. Why juſt ſo it is with him that is born of the Spirit. The holy Spirit of God, whoſe nature, and operations we underſtand but little of, comes from heaven, quickens, and influences our ſouls, beats down, and mortifies our luſts by his almighty Power: Theſe effects of the Spirit in us we experimentally feel, and ſenſibly diſcern: But how the Spirit of God, firſt entred into, and quickened our ſouls, and produced this new creature in them, we underſtand little more of it, than how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccleſ. xi. 5. Therefore is the life of the new creature called a hidden life, Col. iii. 3. The nature of that life is not only hidden totally from all carnal men, but in a very great meaſure it is an hidden, and unknown life unto ſpiritual men, though themſelves be the ſubjects of it.

Secondly, But though this life of the new creature be a great myſtery, and ſecret in ſome reſpects; yet ſo far as it is known, and appears unto us, the new creature is the moſt *beautiful*, and lovely creature that ever God made; for the beauty of the Lord himſelf is upon it: "The new man is created after God,"

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Eph. iv. 24. As the picture is drawn after the man, it is a draught of God himself delineated by the Spirit, that admirable Artist, upon the soul of man. Holiness is the beauty, and glory of God; and in holiness the new creature is created after God's own image, Col. iii. 10. The regenerate soul hereby becomes holy, 1 John iii. 3. not *essentially* holy, as God is, nor yet *efficiently* holy; for the regenerate soul can neither make itself, nor others holy: But the life of the new creature may be said to resemble the life of God in this, that as God lives to himself, so the new creature wholly lives to God; as God loves holiness, and hates the contrary, so doth the new creature; it is in these things formed *after the image of God that created it.* When God creates this creature in the soul of man, we are said then to be "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. So that there can be nothing communicated unto men, which beautifies, and adorns their souls as this new creation doth: Men do not resemble God as they are noble, and as they are rich, but as they are holy: no gift, no endowment of nature imbellishes the soul as this new creature doth: An awful Majesty sits upon the brow of the newcreature, commanding the greatest, and worst of men to do homage to it, Mark vi. 20. Yea, such is the beauty of the new creature, that Christ, its *author*, is also its *admirer*, Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes."

Thirdly, This new creature is created in man, upon the highest design that ever any work of God was wrought: the end of its creation and infusion is high and noble: salvation to the soul in which it is wrought; this is both the *finis operis*, and the *finis operantis*: It is the design, both of the work, and of the workman that wrought it. When we receive the end of our faith, we receive the salvation of our souls; salvation is the end of faith: as death is the end of sin, so life eternal is the end of grace. The new creature doth, by the instinct and steady direction of its own nature, take its course as directly to God, and to heaven, the place of his full enjoyment, as the rivers do to the ocean; it declares itself to be made for God, by its restless workings after him; and as salvation is the end of the new creature, so it is the express design, and end of him that created it. 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self "same thing, is God;" by this workmanship of his upon our souls, he is now polishing, preparing, and "making them meet "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. i. 12.

Fourthly, This new creation is the most necessary work that ever God wrought upon the soul of man: the eternal well-be-

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ing of his soul depends upon it; and without it no man shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. and John i. 3, 5. "Except ye be regene-" rate, and born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God." Can you be saved without Christ? You know you cannot. Can you have interest in Christ without the new creature? My text expressly tells you it can never be; for, "If any man be in Christ, " he is a new creature." O reader, whatever slight thoughts of this matter, and with what a careless and unconcerned eye soever thou readest these lines; yet know thou must either be a new creature, or a miserable and damned creature for ever. If civility without the new creature could save thee, why are not the *moral Heathens* saved also? If strictness of life without the new creature could save thee, why did it not save the Scribes and Pharisees also? If an high profession of religion without the new creature can save thee, why did it not save Judas, Hymenaeus and Philetus also? Nothing is more evident than this, that no repentance, obedience, self-denial, prayers, tears, reformations or ordinances, without the new creation, avail any thing to the salvation of thy soul: the very blood of Christ himself without the new creature never did, and never will save any man. Oh how necessary a work is the new creation! "Circumcision a-" vails nothing, and uncircumcision nothing: but a new crea-" ture."

Fifthly, The new creature is a marvellous and wonderful creature: there are many wonders in the first creation, "The " works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have " pleasure therein," Psal. cxi. 2. But there are no wonders in nature, like those in grace. Is it not the greatest wonder that ever was seen in the world (except the incarnation of the Son of God) to see the nature and temper of man so altered and changed as it is by grace? to see *lascivious Corinthians*, and *idolatrous Ephesians* become mortified and heavenly Christians? to see a fierce and cruel *persecutor*, become a glorious *confessor* and sufferer for Christ? Gal. i. 23. to see the carnal mind of man, which was lately fully set in a strong bent to the world, to be wholly taken off from its lusts, and set upon things that are spiritual and heavenly? Certainly it was not a greater miracle to see dead Lazarus come out of his *sepulchre*, than it is to see the dead and carnal mind coming out of its lusts to embrace Jesus Christ; it was not a greater wonder to see the dead and dry bones in the valley to move and come together, than it is to see a dead soul moving after God, and moving to Christ, in the way of faith.

Sixthly, The new creature is an *immortal creature*, a crea-

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ture that shall never see death, John iv. 14. it is in the soul of man, a well of water, springing up unto eternal life. I will not adventure to say, it is immortal in its own nature, for it is but a creature, as my text calls it; and we know, that essential interminability is the incommunicable property of God: The new creature hath, both a beginning, and succession; and therefore might, also, have an end, as to any thing in itself, or its own nature: Experience, also, shews us, that it is capable, both of increasing, and decreasing, and may be brought nigh unto death, Rev. iii. 2. The works of the Spirit, in believers, *may be ready to die;* but though its perpetuity flow not out of its own nature, it flows out of God's covenant and promises, which make it an immortal creature: when all other excellencies in man go away, as at death they will, Job iv. 21. this excellency, only, remains: our gifts may leave us, our friends leave us, our estates leave us; but our graces will never leave us: they ascend with the soul, (in which they inhere), into glory, when the stroke of death separates it from the body.

Seventhly, The new creature is an *heavenly creature:* "It "is not born of flesh, nor of blood, or of the will of man, but "of God," John i. 13. its descent and original is heavenly, it is spirit born of spirit, John iii. 6. its center is heaven, and thither are all its tendencies, Psal. lxiii. 8. its proper food, on which it lives, are heavenly things, Psal. iv. 6, 7. It cannot feed, as other creatures do, upon earthly things; the object of all its delight, and love, is in heaven, Psal. lxxiii. 26. "Whom have "I in heaven but thee?" The hopes and expectations of the new creature are all from heaven; it looks for little in this world, but waits for the coming of the Lord. The life of the new creature upon earth, is a life of patient waiting for Christ; his desires, and longings, are after heaven, Phil. i. 23. The flesh, indeed, lingers, and would delay, but the new creature hastens, and would fain be gone, 2 Cor. v. 2. It is not at home whilst it is here; it came from heaven, and cannot be quiet, nor suffer the soul, in which it dwells, to be so, until it comes thither again.

Eightly, The new creature is an active, and laborious creature: no sooner it is born, but it is acting in the soul. Acts ix. 6. *Behold he prayeth!* Activity is its very nature. Gal. v. 25. "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." Nor is it to be admired, that it should be always active, and stirring in the soul, seeing activity in obedience was the very end for which it was created. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ "Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. and he that is acted in

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the duties of religion, by this principle of the new creature, or nature, will (so far as that principle acts him) delight to do the will of God; rejoice in the way of his commandments, and find the sweetest pleasure in the paths of duty.

Ninthly, The new creature is a *thriving creature*, growing from strength to strength, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and changing, the soul in which it is subjected, from glory unto glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The vigorous tendencies, and constant strivings, of this new creature, are to attain its just perfection and maturity, Phil. iii. 11. It can endure no stints and limits to its desires, short of perfection; every degree of strength it attains, doth but whet and sharpen his desires after higher degrees: Upon this account, it greatly delights in the ordinances of God, duties of religion, and society of the saints; as they are helps and improvements to it, in order to its great design.

Tenthly, The new creature, is *a creature of wonderful preservations* *: There are many wonders of divine providence, in the preservation of our natural lives, but none like those whereby the life of the new creature is preserved in our souls: There are critical times of temptation and desertion, in which it is ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. the degrees of its strength, and livelinesS, are sometimes sadly abated, and its sweet and comfortable workings intermitted, Rev. ii. 4. the evidences by which its being in us, was wont to be discovered, may be, and often are darkened, 2 Pet. i. 9. and the soul, in which it is, may draw very sad conclusions, about the issue and event; concluding its life not only to be hazarded, but quite extinguished, Psal. li. 10. 11, 12. but though it be ready to die, God wonderfully preserves it from death; it hath as well its reviving, as its fainting seasons. And thus you see, what are the lovely, and eximious properties of the new creature. In the next place,

Fourthly, We will demonstrate the necessity of this new creation, to all that are in Christ, and by him expect to attain salvation; and the necessity of the new creature will appear divers ways.

First, From the positive and express will of God, revealed in scripture, touching this matter: Search the scriptures, and you

* Grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost, but there may be an omission of the act, though not an omission of the habit, the act may be perverted though the faith cannot be subverted, it may be shaken, though not shaken out; its fruits may fall, but its sap lies hid in the root; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved. *Suffrag. Brit.*

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shall find God hath laid the whole stress and weight of your eternal happiness, by Jesus Christ, upon this work of the Spirit in your souls. So our Saviour tells Nicodemus, John iii. 5. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, "and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Agreeable whereunto are those words of the apostle, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And whereas some may think, that their birth-right privileges, enjoyment of ordinances, and profession of religion, may commend them to God's acceptance, without this new creation; he shews them how fond, and ungrounded, all such hopes are. Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor "uncircumcision, but a new creature." Christ, and heaven, are the gifts of God, and he is at liberty to bestow them, upon what terms and conditions he pleaseth; and this is the way, the only way, and stated method, in which he will bring men, by Christ, unto glory: Men may raise out the impressions of these things from their own hearts, but they can never alter the settled course and method of salvation: Either we must be new creatures, as the precepts of the word command us, or lost, and damned creatures, as the threatenings of the word plainly tell us.

Secondly, This new creation, is the inchoative part of that great salvation which we expect, through Christ, and therefore, without this, all hopes, and expectations of salvation, must vanish: Salvation, and renovation, are inseparably connected. Our glory in heaven, if we rightly understand its nature, consisteth in two things; namely, our assimilation to God, and our fruition of God: and both these take their beginning, and rise, from our renovation in this world. Here we begin to be changed into his image, in some degree, 2 Cor. iii. 18. for the new man is created *after God*, as was opened above. In the work of Grace, God is said *to begin that good work*, which is to be *finished*, or consummated, in the day of Christ, Phil. i. 6. Now nothing can be more irrational, than to imagine, that ever that design, or work, should be finished, or perfected, which never had a beginning.

Thirdly, So necessary is the new creation, to all that expect salvation by Christ, that, without this, heaven would be no heaven, and the glory thereof no glory to us, by reason of the unsuitableness, and aversion of our carnal minds thereunto; "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. and enmity is exclusive of all complacency and delight: There is a necessity of a suitable and agreeable frame of heart to God, in

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order to that complacential reſt of our ſouls in him: And this agreeable temper is wrought by our new creation. 2 Cor. v. 5. "He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God:" Renovation, you ſee, is the working, or moulding of a man's ſpirit into an agreeable temper, or, as it is in Col. i. 12. the making of us meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light.

From all which, it follows, that ſeeing there can be no complacence, or delight in God, without ſuitableneſs, and conformity to him, as is plain, from 1 John iii. 2. as well as from the reaſon and nature of the thing itſelf; either God muſt become, like us, ſuitable to our ſinful, corrupt, and vain hearts, which were but a rude blaſphemy once to imagine; or elſe we muſt be made agreeable and ſuitable to God, which is the very thing I am now proving the neceſſity of.

Fourthly, There is an abſolute neceſſity of the new creature, to all that expect intereſt in Chriſt, and the glory to come; ſince all the characters, marks, and ſigns of ſuch an intereſt, are conſtantly taken from the new creature wrought in us. Look over all the marks and ſigns of intereſt in Chriſt, or ſalvation by him, which are diſperſed through the ſcriptures, and you ſhall ſtill find purity of heart, Mat. v. 8. Holineſs both in principle, and practice, Heb. xii. 14. Mortification of ſin, Rom. viii. 13. Longing for Chriſt's appearance, 2 Tim. iv. 8. with multitudes more of the ſame nature, to be conſtantly made the marks, and ſigns of our ſalvation by Chriſt. So that either we muſt have a *new bible*, or a *new heart*: For if theſe ſcriptures be the true and faithful words of God, no unrenewed creature can ſee his face; which was the fourth thing to be opened.

Fifthly, The laſt thing to be opened, is, how the new creation is an infallible proof, and evidence, of the ſoul's intereſt in Chriſt; and this will appear divers ways.

Firſt, Where all the ſaving graces of the Spirit are, there intereſt in Chriſt, muſt needs be certain; and where the new creature is, there all the ſaving graces of the Spirit are: For what is the new creature, but the frame, or ſyſtem of all ſpecial ſaving graces? It is not this, or that particular grace, as faith, or hope, or love to God, which conſtitutes the new creature; for theſe are but as ſo many particular limbs, or branches of it: but the new creature is comprehenſive of all the graces of the Spirit. Gal. v. 22, 23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy, "long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temper-"ance," *&c.* Any one of the ſaving, ſpecial graces of the Spirit gives proof of our intereſt in Chriſt: how much more, then,

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the new creature, which is the complex frame, or ſyſtem of all the graces together?

Secondly, To conclude; Where all the cauſes of an intereſt in Chriſt are found, and all the effects and fruits of an intereſt in Chriſt do appear; there, undoubtedly, a real intereſt in Chriſt is found: but wherever you find a new creature, you find all the cauſes, and all the effects of an intereſt in Chriſt: For there you ſhall find,

Firſt, The impulſive cauſe, *viz.* The electing love of God, from which the new creature is inſeparable, 1 Pet. i. 2.; with the new creature, alſo, the meritorious, efficient, and final cauſes of intereſt in Chriſt, and union with him, are ever found, Eph. ii. 10. chap. i. 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, All the effects and fruits of intereſt in Chriſt, are found in the new creature; there are all the fruits of obedience, for we are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, *Eph.* ii. 10. Rom. vii. 4. there is true, ſpiritual oppoſition to ſin. 1 John v. 18. "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, "and that wicked one toucheth him not." There is love to the people of God; 1 John iv. 7. "Every one that loveth, is born "of God." There is a conſcientious reſpect to the duties of both tables; for the new creature is created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Eph. iv. 24. There is perſeverance in the ways of God, to the very end, and victory over all temptations; for whoſoever is born of God, overcometh the world, 1 John v. 4. It were eaſy to run over all other particular fruits of our union with Chriſt, and ſhew you every one of them in the new creature. And thus much of the doctrinal part of this point.

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SERMON XXVI.

2 COR. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

AFTER the explication of the sense of this scripture, we observed,

Doct. *That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace, in the soul of any man, is that man's sure, and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

You have heard why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation; in what respect every soul in Christ is renewed; what the eximious properties of this new creature are; the indispensibleness, and necessity thereof, hath been also proved; and how it evidences our interest in Christ, was cleared in the doctrinal part: Which we now come to improve, in the several uses serving for our

1. Information.
2. Conviction.
3. Examination.
4. Exhortation.
5. Consolation.

First use, for information.

Is the new creature the sure and infallible evidence of our saving interest in Christ? From hence then we are informed,

Infer. 1. *How miserable, and deplorable an estate, all unrenewed souls are in;* who can lay no claim to Christ, during that state, and therefore are under an impossibility of salvation. O reader! if this be the state of thy soul, better had it been for thee not to have been God's natural workmanship, as a man, except thou be his spiritual workmanship, also, as a new man. I know the schoolmen determine otherwise, and say, that damnation is rather to be chosen, than annihilation; a miserable being is better than no being: and it is very true, with respect to the glory of God, whose justice shall triumph for ever, in the damnation of the unregenerate; but, with respect to us, 'tis much better never to have been his creatures, in the way of generation, than not to be his new creatures, in the way of *regeneration.* So Christ speaks of Judas, that son of perdition, Mark xiv. 21. "Good had it been for that man, if he had never

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been born: For what is a being, without the comfort of it? What is life, without the joy and pleasure of life? A damned being is a being without comfort; no glimpse of light shines into that darkness; they shall, indeed, see, and understand the felicity, light and joy of the saints in glory; but not partake, in the least measure, of the comfort. Luke xiii. 28. "They "shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of "God, but they themselves shut out:" Such a sight is so far from giving any comfort, that it will be the aggravation, and increase of torment, O it is better to have no being at all, than to have a being only to capacitate a man for misery; to desire death, while death flies from him, Rev. iv. 6. The opinion of the Schoolmen will never pass for sound doctrine among the damned. Think on it, reader, and lay it to thine heart, better thou hadst died from the womb, better the knees had prevented thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked, than that thou shouldest live and die a stranger to the new birth, or that thy mother should bring thee forth only to increase, and fill up the number of the damned.

Infer. 2. *And, on the contrary, we may hence learn, what cause regenerate souls have to bless God, for the day wherein they were born.* O what a privileged state doth the new birth bring men into! 'Tis possible, for the present, they understand it not; for many believers are like a great *heir* lying in the *cradle*, that knows not to what an estate, and honour he is born: nevertheless, on the same day, wherein we become new creatures, by regeneration, we have a firm title, and solid claim to all the privileges of the sons of God, John i. 12, 13. God becomes our Father, by a triple title, not only the Father of our *beings*, by nature, which was all the relation we had to him before, but our Father by *adoption*, and by *regeneration*: which is a much sweeter, and more comfortable relation. In that day the image of God is restored, Eph. iv. 24. this is both the health and beauty of the soul. In that day we are begotten again to a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. a hope more worth than ten thousand worlds, in the *troubles of life*, and in the *straits of death*: this is a creature which lives for ever, and will make thy life happy for ever. Some have kept their birth day as a *festival*, a day of rejoicing; but none have more cause to rejoice that ever they were born, than those that are new born.

Infer. 3. *Learn from hence, that the work of grace is wholly supernatural; 'tis a creation, and a creation-work is above the power of the creature.* No power, but that which gave being to the world, can give a being to the new creature: almighty

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power goes forth to give being to the new creature. This creature is not born of flesh, or of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13. The nature of this new creature speaks its original to be above the power of nature; the very notion of a new creation spoils the proud boasts of the great asserters of the power, and ability of the will of man. When God, therefore, puts the question, who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou, that thou hast not received? Let thy soul, reader, answer it, with all humility, and thankfulness, 'Tis thou, Lord, thou only, that madest me to differ from another; and what I have received, I have received from thy free grace.

Infer. 4. *If the work of grace be a new creation, let not the parents and friends of the unregenerate utterly despair of the conversion of their relations, how great soever their present discouragements are.* If it had been possible for a man to have seen the rude, and indigested *chaos*, before the Spirit of God moved upon it, would he not have said, can such a beautiful order of beings, such a pleasant variety of creatures, spring out of this dark lump? Surely it would have been very hard for a man to have imagined it. It may be, you see no dispositions, or hopeful inclinations in your friends, towards God, and spiritual things; nay, possibly they are totally opposite, and filled with enmity, against them; they deride, and jeer all serious piety, wherever they behold it: this, indeed, is very sad; but yet remember the work of grace is creation-work: though there be no disposition at all in their wills, no tenderness in their consciences, no light, or knowledge in their minds; yet God, that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: he can say to the dry bones, live; to the proud and stubborn heart, come down and yield thyself to the will of God; and if he command, the work is done. God can make thee yet to rejoice over thy most uncomfortable relations, to say with the father of the prodigal, Luke xv. 24. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he "was lost and is found; and they began to be merry;" difficulties are for men, but not for God: he works, in conversion, by a power which is able to subdue all things unto itself.

Infer. 5. *If none but new creatures be in Christ, how small a remnant, among men, belong to Christ, in this world!* Among the multitude of rational creatures inhabiting this world, how few, how very few, are new creatures? 'Tis the observation of the learned Mr. Brerewood, that if the world be divided into

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thirty parts, nineteen parts are heathenish Idolaters: six parts Mahometans; and only five, out of thirty, which may be, in a large sense, called Christians; of which, the far greater part is overspread with Popish darkness: separate from the remainder, the multitudes of prophane, merely civil, and hypocritical professors of religion; and how few will remain for Jesus Christ, in this world? Look over the *cities*, *towns*, and *parishes*, in this populous *kingdom*; and how few shall you find that speak the language, or do the works of new creatures? How few have ever had any awakening convictions on them? And how many of those, that have been convinced, have miscarried, and never come to the new birth? The more cause have they, whom God hath indeed regenerated, to admire the riches of God's distinguishing mercy to them.

Infer. 6. *If the change, by grace, be a new creation, how universal, and marvellous a change, doth regeneration make upon men!* The new creation speaks a marvellous, and universal alteration, both upon the state, and tempers of men; they come out of darkness, gross, hellish darkness, into light, a marvellous, and heavenly light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Eph. v. 8. their condition, disposition, and conversation, (as you have heard) is all new; and yet this marvellous change, as great and universal as it is, is not alike evident, and clearly discernible, in all new creatures: and the reasons are,

First, Because the work of grace is wrought in divers methods, and manners, in the people of God. Some are changed from a state of notorious prophaneness, unto serious godliness; there the change is conspicuous, and very evident; all the neighbourhood rings of it: but, in others, it is more insensibly distilled in their tender years, by the blessing of God, upon religious education, and there it is more indiscernible.

Secondly, Though a great change be wrought, yet much natural corruption still remains for their humiliation and daily exercise; and this is a ground of fear and doubtings; they see not how such corruptions are consistent with the new creature.

Thirdly, In some, the new creature shews itself, mostly, in the affectionate part, in desires and breathings after God; and but little in the clearness of their understandings, and strength of their judgments; for want of which, they are entangled, and kept in darkness, most of their days.

Fourthly, Some Christians are more tried, and exercised, by temptation from Satan, than others are; and these clouds darken the work of grace in them.

Fifthly, There is great difference, and variety, found in the

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natural tempers and constitutions of the regenerate; some are of a more melancholy, fearful, and suspicious temper, than others are; and are therefore much longer held under doubtings, and trouble of spirit: nevertheless, what differences soever these things make, the change made by grace, is a marvellous change.

Infer. 7. Lastly, *How incongruous are carnal ways, and courses, to the Spirit of Christians! who being new creatures, can never delight, or find pleasure in their former sinful companions and practices.* Alas! those things are now most unsuitable, loathsome, and detestable, how pleasant soever they once were; that which they counted their liberty, would now be reckoned their greatest bondage; that which was their glory, is now their shame; Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had ye, then, in those "things, whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those "things is death:" they need not be pressed by others, but will freely confess, of themselves, what fools and mad men, they once were. None can censure their former conversation more severely than themselves do, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14.

Second use, for conviction.

If none be in Christ, but new creatures, and the new creation makes such a change, as hath been described; this may convince us, how many of us deceive ourselves, and run into dangerous and fatal mistakes, in the greatest concernment we have in this world. But, before I urge this use, I desire none may make a perverse and ill use of it; let not the wicked conclude, from hence, that there is no such thing as true religion in the world, or that all who do profess it, are but hypocrites; neither let the godly injure themselves, by that which is designed for their benefit: let none conclude, that seeing there are so many mistakes committed about this new creature, that therefore assurance must needs be impossible, as the Papists affirm it to be. The proper use that should be made of this doctrine, is, to undeceive false pretenders, and to awaken all, to a more deep, and thorough search of their own conditions; which being precautioned, let all men be convinced of the following truths.

First, That the change made by civility, upon such as were lewd and prophane, is, in its whole kind and nature, a different thing from the new creature; the power and efficacy of moral virtue is one thing, the influence of the regenerating Spirit is quite another thing; however some have studied to confound them. The Heathens excelled in moral and homilitical virtues: Plato, Aristides, Seneca, and multitudes more, have outvied many professed Christians, in justice, temperance, patience, *&c.* yet were perfect strangers to the new creation. A man may be

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very strict, and temperate, free from the gross pollutions of the world; and yet a perfect stranger to regeneration, all the while, John iii. 10.

Secondly, That many strong convictions and troubles for sin, may be found, where the new creature is never formed. Conviction, indeed, is an antecedent unto, and preparative for the new creature, as the blossoms of the tree are to the fruit that follow them; but as fruit doth not always follow, where those blossoms and flowers appear; so neither doth the new creature follow all convictions and troubles for sin. Conviction is a common work of the Spirit, both upon the elect and reprobates; but the new creature is formed only in God's elect. Convictions may be blasted, and vanish away, and the man that was under troubles for sin, may return again, with "the dog to his "vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the "mire," 2 Pet. ii. 22. but the new creature never perishes, nor can consist with such a return unto sin.

Thirdly, That excellent gifts and abilities, fitting men for service in the church of God, may be where the new creature is not; for these are promiscuously dispensed, by the Spirit, both to the regenerate and unregenerate: Mat. vii. 22. "Many will "say unto me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied "in thy name?" Gifts are attainable by study, prayer and preaching are reduced to an art; but regeneration is wholly supernatural. Sin, in dominion, is consistent with excellent gifts, but wholly incompatible with the new creature. In a word, these things are so different in nature from the new creature, that they oft-times prove the greatest bars and obstacles in the world, to the regenerating-work of the Spirit. Let no man, therefore, trust to things whereby multitudes deceive and destroy their own souls. Reader, it may cost thee many an aking head to obtain gifts, but thou wilt find an aking heart for sin, if ever God make thee a new creature.

Fourthly, Be convinced, that multitudes of religious duties may be performed by men, in whom the new creature was never formed. Though all new creatures perform the duties of religion, yet all that perform the duties of religion, are not new creatures; regeneration is not the only root from which the duties of religion spring. Isa. lviii. 2. "Yet they seek me daily, and de-"light to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and "forsook not the ordinances of their God, they ask of me the "ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God." These are but weak and slippery foundations for men to build their confidence and hopes upon.

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Third use, for examination.

Next, therefore, let me perſuade every man to try the ſtate of his own heart, in this matter, and cloſely conſider and weigh this great queſtion; Am I really and indeed a new creature? or, am I an old creature ſtill, in the new creature's dreſs and habit? Some light may be given for the diſcovery hereof, from the conſideration of the

1. Antecedents,
2. Concomitants, } of the new creation.
3. Conſequents,

Firſt, Weigh and conſider well, the *antecedents* of the new creature: have thoſe things paſſed upon your ſouls, which ordinarily make way for the new creature, in whomſoever the Lord forms it?

1. Hath the Lord opened the eyes of your underſtanding, in the knowledge of ſin, and of Chriſt? Hath he ſhewed you both your diſeaſe and remedy, by a new light ſhining from heaven into your ſouls! Thus the Lord doth, wherever he forms the new creature, Acts xxvi. 18.

2. Hath he brought home the word with mighty power and efficacy upon your hearts, to convince and humble them? This is the method in which the new creature is produced, Rom. vii. 9. 1 Theſ. i. 5.

3. Have theſe convictions over-turned your vain confidences, and brought you to a great concern, and inward diſtreſs of ſoul; making you to cry, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* Theſe are the ways of the Spirit, in the formation of the new creature, Acts xvi. 29. Acts ii. 37. If no ſuch antecedent works of the Spirit have paſſed upon your hearts, you have no ground for your confidence, that the new creature is formed in you.

Secondly, Conſider the *concomitant* frames, and workings of Spirit, which ordinarily attend the production of the new creature, and judge impartially, betwixt God and your own ſouls, whether they have been the very frames and workings of your hearts.

1. Have your vain Spirits been compoſed to the greateſt ſeriouſneſs, and moſt ſolemn conſideration of things eternal, as the hearts of all thoſe are, whom God regenerates? When the Lord is about this great work, upon the ſoul of man, whatever vanity, levity, and ſinful jollity, was there before, it is baniſhed from the heart, at this time; for now heaven and hell, life and death, are before a man's eyes, and theſe are the moſt awful, and ſolemn things, that ever our thoughts converſed with in this world. Now a man of the moſt airy, and pleaſant conſti-

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tution, when brought to the ſight and ſenſe of thoſe things, ſaith of "Laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it?" Eccl. ii. 2.

2. A lowly, meek, and humble frame of heart, accompanies the new creation; the ſoul is weary, and heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28. Convictions of ſin have plucked down the pride, and loftineſs of the ſpirit of man, emptied him of his vain conceits; thoſe that were of lofty, proud, and bluſtering humours before, are meekened, and brought down to the very duſt now: it is with them (to ſpeak alluſively) as it was with Jeruſalem, that lofty city, Iſa. xxix. 1, 4. "Wo to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where Da-"vid dwelt; thou ſhalt be brought down, and ſhalt ſpeak out "of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall be low out of the duſt." Ariel ſignifies the *Lion of God*; ſo Jeruſalem, in her proſperity, was; other cities trembled at her voice; but when God brought her down, by humbling judgments, then ſhe whiſpered out of the duſt. So it is in this caſe.

3. A longing, thirſting frame of ſpirit, accompanies the new creation; the deſires of the ſoul are ardent after Chriſt; never did the hireling long for the ſhadow, as the weary ſoul doth for Chriſt, and reſt in him: if no ſuch frames have accompanied that which you take for your new birth, you have the greateſt reaſon in the world to ſuſpect yourſelves under a deluſion.

Thirdly, Weigh well the effects, and *conſequents* of the new creature, and conſider, whether ſuch fruits as theſe are found in your hearts and lives.

1. Wherever the new creature is formed, there a man's courſe and converſation is changed; Eph. iv. 22. "That ye "put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man, "which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts; and be "renewed in the ſpirit of your mind:" the new creature cannot but bluſh, and be aſhamed of the old creature's converſation, Rom. vi. 21.

2. The new creature continually oppoſes, and conflicts with the motions of ſin in the heart; Gal. v. 17. "The ſpirit luſt-"eth againſt the fleſh." Grace can no more incorporate with ſin, than oil with water: contraries cannot conſiſt in the ſame ſubject, longer than they are fighting with each other: if there be no conflict with ſin in thy ſoul, or if that conflict be only betwixt the conſcience and affections, light in the one, ſtruggling with luſt in the other; thou wanteſt that fruit which ſhould evidence thee to be a new creature.

3. The mind and affections of the new creature, are ſet upon

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heavenly and ſpiritual things, Col. iii. 1, 2. Eph. iv. 23. Rom. viii. 5. If, therefore, thy heart and affections be habitually earthly, and wholly intent upon things below, driving eagerly after the world, as the great buſineſs and end of thy life; deceive not thyſelf, this is not the fruit of the new creature, nor conſiſtent with it.

4. The new creature is a praying creature, living by its daily communion with God, which is its livelihood and ſubſiſtence, Zech. xii. 10. Acts ix. 11. If, therefore, thou be a prayerleſs ſoul, or if, in all thy prayers, thou art a ſtranger to communion with God: if there be no brokenneſs of heart for ſin, in thy confeſſions, no melting affections for Chriſt, and holineſs, in thy ſupplications; ſurely Satan doth but baffle, and delude thy over-credulous ſoul, in perſuading thee that thou art a new creature.

Fifthly, The new creature is reſtleſs, after falls into ſin, until it have recovered peace and pardon; it cannot endure itſel in a ſtate of defilement and pollution, Pſal. li. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. It is with the conſcience of a new creature, under ſin, as it is with the eye, when any thing offends it; it cannot leave twinkling, and watering, till it have wept it out: and in the very ſame reſtleſs ſtate it is, under the hiding of God's face, and divine withdrawments, Cant. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. If, therefore, thou canſt ſin, and ſin again, without ſuch a burthenſome ſenſe of ſin, or reſtleſſneſs, or ſollicitude how to recover purity and peace, with the light of God's countenance ſhining, as in days paſt, upon thy ſoul; delude not thyſelf, thou haſt not the ſigns of a new creature in thee.

Fourth uſe, of exhortation.

If the new creation be a ſound evidence of our intereſt in Chriſt, then, hence, let me perſuade all that are in Chriſt, to evidence themſelves to be ſo, by walking as it becomes new creatures.

The new creature is *born from above*, all its tendencies are heaven-ward; accordingly, ſet your affections on things that are above, and let your converſation be in heaven: if you live earthly and ſenſual lives, as others do, you muſt croſs your new nature therein: and can thoſe acts be pleaſant unto you, which are done with ſo much regret? wherein you muſt put a force upon your own ſpirits, and offer a kind of violence to your own hearts. Earthly delights and ſorrows, are ſuitable enough to the unregenerate and ſenſual men in the world, but exceedingly contrary unto that ſpirit by which you are reno-

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vated. If ever you will act becoming the principles and nature of new creatures, then seek earthly things with submission, enjoy them with fear and caution, resign them with cheerfulness and readiness; and thus "let your moderation be known unto "all men," Phil. iv. 5. Let your hearts daily meditate, and your tongues discourse about heavenly things; be exceeding tender of sin, strict and punctual in ever duty; and hereby convince the world, that you are men and women of another spirit.

Fifth use, for consolation.

Let every new creature be cheerful and thankful: if God hath renewed your natures, and thus altered the frame and temper of your hearts, he hath bestowed the richest mercy upon you that heaven or earth affords. This is a work of the greatest rarity; a new creature may be called, One among a thousand: it is also an everlasting work, never to be destroyed, as all other natural works of God (how excellent soever) must be: it is a work carried on by almighty Power, through unspeakable difficulties and mighty oppositions, Eph. i. 12. The exceeding greatness of God's power goes forth to produce it; and indeed no less is required to enlighten the blind mind, break the rocky heart, and bow the stubborn will of man; and the same almighty power, which at first created it, is necessary to be continued every moment, to preserve and continue it, 1 Pet. i. 5. The new creature is a mercy, which draws a train of innumerable and invaluable mercies after it, Eph. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. iii. 20. When God hath given us a new nature, then he dignifies us with a *new name*, Rev. ii. 17. brings us into a *new covenant*, Jer. xxxi. 33. begets us again to a *new hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. intitles us to a *new inheritance*, John i. 12, 13. It is the new creature which through Christ makes our persons and duties acceptable with God, Gal. vi. 15. In a word, it is the wonderful work of God, of which we may say, "This is the Lord's "doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." There are unsearchable wonders in its *generation*, in its *operation*, and in its *preservation*. Let all therefore, whom the Lord hath thus renewed, fall down at the feet of God, in an humble admiration of the unsearchable riches of free grace, and never open their mouths to complain under any adverse or bitter providences of God.

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SERMON XXVII.

Of the Nature, Principle, and Neceſſity, of Mortification.

GAL. v. 24: *And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.*

TWO great trials of our intereſt in Chriſt, are finiſhed; we now proceed to a third, namely, *The mortification of ſin*: "They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh." The ſcope of the apoſtle, in this context, is, to heal the unchriſtian breaches among the Galatians, prevailing, by the inſtigation of Satan, to the breach of brotherly love. To cure this, he urges four weighty arguments.

Firſt, From the great commandment, to *love one another*; upon which the whole law *(i. e.)* all the duties of the ſecond table, do depend, ver. 15.

Secondly, He powerfully diſſuades them, from the conſideration of the ſad events of their bitter conteſts, calumnies, and detractions, *viz.* mutual ruin, and deſtruction, ver. 15.

Thirdly, He diſſuades them, from the conſideration of the contrariety of theſe practices, unto the Spirit of God, by whom they all profeſs themſelves to be governed, from ver. 17. to ver. 23.

Fourthly, He powerfully diſſuades them from theſe animoſities, from the inconſiſtency of theſe, or any other luſts of the fleſh, with an intereſt in Chriſt: "They that be Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh," &c. *q. d.* You all profeſs yourſelves to be members of Chriſt, to be followers of him; but how incongruous are theſe practices, to ſuch a profeſſion? Is this the fruit of the dove-like Spirit of Chriſt? Are theſe the fruits of your faith, and profeſſed mortification? Shall the ſheep of Chriſt ſnarl, and fight like rabid, and furious beaſts of prey? *Tantaene animis cæleſtibus irae? So much rage in heavenly ſouls?* O how repugnant are theſe practices with the ſtudy of mortification *, which is the great ſtudy and endeavour, of all that are in

* -------*Non ſecus ac.*
Cum duo converſis inimica, in praelia tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt-- --
Shall Chriſtians one another wound and puſh,
Like furious bulls, when they together ruſh?

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Christ! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." So much for the order of the words; the words themselves are a *proposition* wherein we have to consider, both

1. The subject.

2. The predicate.

First, The *subject* of the proposition, they that are Christ's, *viz.* † "True Christians, real members of Christ; such as truly "belong to Christ, such as have given themselves up to be go- "verned by him," and are, indeed, acted by his Spirit; such, all such persons (for the indefinite is equipollent to an universal) all such, and none but such.

Secondly, The predicate; "They have crucified the flesh, "with the affections and lusts." By flesh, we are here to understand carnal concupiscence, the workings, and motions of corrupt nature; and by the affections, we are to understand, not the natural, but the inordinate affections; for Christ doth not abolish, and destroy, but correct, and regulate the affections of those that are in him: And by crucifying the flesh, we are not to understand the total extinction, or perfect subduing of corrupt nature; but only the deposing of corruption from its regency, and dominion in the soul; its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season; but yet, as death surely, tho' slowly, follows crucifixion, (the life of crucified persons gradually departing from them, with their blood) it is just so in the mortification of sin; and therefore what the apostle, in this place, calls crucifying, he calls, in Rom. viii. 13. mortifying. "If "ye, through the Spirit, do mortify," θανατοῦτε; if ye put to death the deeds of the body: But he chuses, in this place, to call it crucifying, to shew, not only the conformity there is betwixt the death of Christ, and the death of sin, in respect of shame, pain, and lingering slowness; but to denote, also, the principle, means, and instrument of mortification, *viz.* the death, or cross of Jesus Christ, in the virtue whereof, believers do mortify the corruptions, of their flesh; the great arguments, and persuasives to mortification, being drawn from the sufferings of Christ for sin. In a word, he doth not say, They that believe Christ was crucified, for sin, are Christ's; but they, and they only, are his, who *feel*, as well as *profess* the power, and efficacy, of the sufferings of Christ, in the mortification, and sub-

† *Vere Christiani qui ad Christum pertinent, qui se ei dedere regendos.* Pol. Synop.

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duing of their lusts, and sinful affections. And so much, briefly, of the parts, and sense of the words.

The observation followeth.

Doct. *That a saving interest in Christ, may be regularly, and strongly inferred, and concluded, from the mortification of the flesh, with its affections, and lusts.*

This point is fully confirmed, by those words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. "For if we have been planted together in "the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his "resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with "him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth "we should not serve sin; for he that is dead, is free from sin: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also "live with him."

Mark the force of the apostle's reasoning; if we have been planted into the likeness of his death, *viz.* by the mortification of sin, which resembles, or hath a likeness to the kind and manner of Christ's death (as was noted above) then we shall be, also, in the likeness of his resurrection; and why so, but because this mortification of sin is an undoubted evidence of the union of such a soul with Christ, which is the very ground-work, and principle, of that blessed, and glorious resurrection: And therefore he saith, ver. 11. "Reckon ye, also, yourselves to be dead, "indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ "our Lord;" *q. d.* Reason thus with yourselves, these mortifying influences of the death of Christ, are unquestionable presages of your future blessedness, God never taking this course with any, but those who are in Christ, and are designed to be glorified with him. The death of your sin is as evidential, as any thing in the world can be, of your spiritual life for the present, and of your eternal life with God hereafter. Mortification is the fruit, and evidence of your union, and that union is the firm ground-work, and certain pledge, of your glorification; and so you ought to reckon, or reason the case with yourselves, as the word λογιζεσθε there signifies. Now for the stating, and explicating of this point, I shall, in the doctrinal part, labour to open and confirm these five things.

1. What the mortification, or crucifixion of sin, imports.
2. Why this work of the Spirit is expressed by crucifying.
3. Why all that are in Christ, must be so crucified, or mortified unto sin.
4. What is the true evangelical principle of mortification.
5. How the mortification of sin evinces our interest in Christ.

And then apply the whole.

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First, What the mortification, or crucifixion of sin, imports.

And, for clearness sake, I shall speak to it, both *negatively*, and *positively*; shewing you what is not intended, and what is principally aimed at, by the Spirit of God, in this expression.

First, "The ‡ crucifying of the flesh doth not imply the "total abolition of sin, in believers, or the destruction of its "very being and existence in them, for the present; sanctified "souls so put off their corruptions with their dead bodies at "death:" This will be the effect of our future glorification, not of our present sanctification. Sin doth exist in the most mortified believer in the world, Rom. vii. 17. it still acteth, and lusteth in the regenerate soul, Gal. v. 17. yea, notwithstanding its crucifixion in believers, it still may, in respect of single acts, surprize, and captivate them, Psal. lxv. 3. Rom. vii. 23. This, therefore, is not the intention of the Spirit of God, in this expression.

Secondly, Nor doth the crucifixion of sin consist in the suppression of the external acts of sin only; for sin may reign over the souls of men, whilst it doth not break forth into their lives, in gross, and open actions, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Mat. xii. 43. *Morality* in the Heathens (as Tertuallian well observes) did *abscondere, sed non abscindere vitia, hide* them, when it could not *kill* them; Many a man shews a white, and fair hand, who yet hath a very foul, and black heart.

Thirdly, The crucifixion of the flesh doth not consist in the cessation of the external acts of sin; for, in that respect, the lusts of men may die of their own accord, even a kind of natural death. The members of the body are the weapons of unrighteousness, as the apostle calls them; age or sickness, may so blunt, or break those weapons, that the soul cannot use them to such sinful purposes, and services, as it was wont to do, in the vigorous, and healthful season of life; not that there is less sin in the heart, but because there is less strength and activity in the body. Just as it is with an old soldier, who hath as much skill, policy, and delight, as ever in military actions; but age, and hard services have so enfeebled him, that he can no longer follow the camp.

Fourthly, The crucifixion of sin doth not consist in the severe castigation of the body, and penancing it by stripes, fasting, and tiresome pilgrimages. This may pass for mortification among

‡ *Mortificari carnem non est eam ita perimi, ut aut prorsus non sit, aut nulla prava in homine desideria commoveat, quod in corpore mortis hujus non contingit, &c.* Estius in loc.

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Papists, but never was any lust of the flesh destroyed by this rigour. Christians, indeed, are bound not to indulge and pamper the body, which is the instrument of sin; nor yet must we think that the spiritual corruptions of the soul feel those stripes which are inflicted upon the body: See Col. ii. 23. it is not the vanity of superstition, but the power of true religion, which crucifies and destroys corruption; it is faith in Christ's blood, not the spilling of our own blood, which gives sin the mortal wound.

Secondly, But if you inquire, what then is implied in the mortification or crucifixion of sin, and wherein it doth consist? I answer,

First, It necessarily implies the soul's implantation into Christ, and union with him; without which it is impossible that any one corruption should be mortified, *they that are* [*Christ's*] *have crucified the flesh:* * The attempts and endeavours of all others are vain and ineffectual: "When we were in the flesh, "(saith the apostle) the motions of sin which were by the law, "did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom. vii. 5. sin was then in its full dominion, no abstinence, rigour, or outward severity; no purposes, promises, or solemn vows could mortify or destroy it; there must be an implantation into Christ, before there can be any effectual crucifixion of sin: What believer almost hath not in the days of his first convictions, tried all external methods and means of mortifying sin, and found all, in experience, to be to as little purpose as the binding of Sampson with green withs or cords? But when he hath once come to act faith upon the death of Christ, then the design of mortification hath prospered, and succeeded to good purpose.

Secondly, Mortification of sin, implies the *agency of the Spirit of God* in that work, without whose assistances, and aids all our endeavours must needs be fruitless: Of this work we may say, as it was said in another case, Zech. iv. 6. "Not by might, "nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." When the *apostle* therefore would shew by what hand this work of mortification is performed, he thus expresseth it, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye "shall live:" The duty is ours, but the power whereby we

* They mistake the very nature of Christian mortification, who place it in afflicting and using violence to the body; whereas true mortification refers not principally to the body, or inferior part of the soul, but chiefly to the mind and will. *Dav. on Col. p.* 256.

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perform it, is God's: The Spirit is the only ſucceſsful combatant againſt the luſts that war in our members, Gal. v. 17. it is true, this excludes not, but implies our endeavours; for it is we through the Spirit that mortify the deeds of the body; but yet all our endeavours, without the Spirit's aid and influence avail nothing.

Thirdly, The crucifixion of ſin neceſſarily implies *the ſubverſion of its dominion* in the ſoul: A mortified ſin cannot be a reigning ſin, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. Two things conſtitute the dominion of ſin, *viz.* the fulneſs of its power, and the ſoul's ſubjection to it. As to the fulneſs of its power, that riſes from the ſuitableneſs it hath, and pleaſure it gives to the corrupt heart of man: It ſeems to be as neceſſary as the right hand, as uſeful and pleaſant as the right eye, Mat. v. 29. but the mortified heart is dead to all pleaſures and profits of ſin; it hath no delight or pleaſure in it; it becomes its burden and daily complaint. Mortification preſuppoſes the illumination of the mind, and conviction of the conſcience; by reaſon whereof, ſin cannot deceive and blind the mind, or bewitch and enſnare the will and affections, as it was wont to do, and conſequently its dominion over the ſoul is deſtroyed and loſt.

Fourthly, The crucifying of the fleſh implies a *gradual weakning of the power of ſin* in the ſoul. The death of the croſs was a ſlow and lingering death, and the crucified perſon grew weaker and weaker every hour; ſo it is in the mortification of ſin: The ſoul is ſtill "cleanſing itſelf from all filthineſs of the fleſh "and ſpirit, and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. And as the body of ſin is weakened more and more; ſo the inward man, or the new creature, is "renewed day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 16. For ſanctification is a progreſſive work of the Spirit: And as holineſs increaſes, and roots itſelf deeper and deeper in the ſoul; ſo the power and intereſt of ſin proportionably abates, and ſinks lower and lower, until at length it be ſwallowed up in victory.

Fifthly, The crucifying of the fleſh, notes to us the believers *deſigned application of all ſpiritual means*, and ſanctified inſtruments, for the deſtruction of it: There is nothing in this world which a gracious heart more vehemently deſires, and longs for, than the death of ſin, and perfect deliverance from it, Rom. vii. 24. the ſincerity of which deſires doth accordingly manifeſt itſelf in the daily application of all God's remedies: ſuch are daily watching againſt the occaſions of ſin, Job xxxi. 1. "I have "made a covenant with mine eyes;" more than ordinary vigilancy over their ſpecial or proper ſin, Pſal. xviii. 23. "I kept

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" myſelf from mine iniquity:" Earneſt cries to heaven for preventing grace. Pſal. xix. 13. " Keep back thy ſervant alſo from " preſumptuous ſins, let them not have dominion over me:" Deep humblings of ſoul for ſins paſt, which is an excellent preventive unto future ſins, 2 Cor. ii. 11. " in that ye ſorrowed " after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs wrought it?" Care to give no furtherance or advantage to the deſign of ſin, by making proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof, as others do, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Willingneſs to bear the due reproofs of ſin, Pſal. cxli. 5. " Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a " kindneſs:" Theſe, and ſuch like means of mortification, regenerate ſouls are daily uſing, and applying, in order to the death of ſin. And ſo much of the firſt particular, what the mortification of ſin, or crucifying of the fleſh implies.

Secondly, In the next place, we ſhall examine the reaſons, why this work of the Spirit is expreſſed under that *trope*, or figurative expreſſion, of *crucifying the fleſh*. Now the ground and reaſon of the uſe of this expreſſion, is the reſemblance which the mortification of ſin bears unto the death of the croſs: And this appears in five particulars.

Firſt, The death of the croſs was a *painful death*, and the mortification of ſin is a very painful work, Mat. xxv. 29. it is as the cutting off our right hands, and plucking out our right eyes; it will coſt many thouſand tears, and groans, prayers, and ſtrong cries to heaven, before one ſin will be mortified. Upon the account of the difficulty of this work, and mainly upon this account, the ſcripture ſaith, " narrow is the way, and " ſtrait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that " find it," Mat. vii. 14. and that the righteous themſelves are *ſcarcely ſaved*.

Secondly, The death of the croſs was *univerſally painful*; every member, every ſenſe, every ſinew, every *nerve* was the ſeat and ſubject of tormenting pain. So is it in the mortification of ſin; it is not this, or that particular member, or act; but the whole body of ſin that is to be deſtroyed, Rom. vi. 6. and accordingly the conflict is in every faculty of the ſoul; for the Spirit of God, by whoſe hand ſin is mortified, doth not combat with this, or that particular luſt only, but with ſin, as ſin; and for that reaſon with every ſin, in every faculty of the ſoul. So that there are conflicts, and anguiſh in every part.

Thirdly, The death of the croſs was a *ſlow, and lingering death*; denying unto them that ſuffered it the favour of a quick diſpatch. Juſt ſo it is in the death of ſin; though the Spirit of

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God be mortifying it day by day, † yet this is a truth sealed by the sad experience of all believers in the world, *that sin is long a dying:* And if we ask a reason of this dispensation of God, among others, this seems to be one; corruptions in believers, like the Canaanites in the land of Israel, are left to prove, and to exercise the people of God, to keep us watching and praying, mourning and believing; yea, wondering, and admiring at the riches of pardoning, and preserving mercy all our days.

Fourthly, The death of the cross was a very *opprobrious, and shameful* death; they that died upon the cross were loaded with ignominy; the crimes for which they died were exposed to the public view; after this manner dieth sin, a very shameful, and ignominious death. Every true believer draws up a charge against it in every prayer, aggravates and condemns it in every confession, bewails the evil of it with multitudes of tears and groans, making sin as vile, and odious as they can find words to express it, though not so vile as it is in its own nature. "O my "God (saith Ezra) I am ashamed, and even blush to look up "unto thee," Ezra ix. 6. So Daniel in his confession, Dan. ix. 7. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us "confusion of faces, as at this day." Nor can it grieve any believer in the world, to accuse, condemn, and shame himself for sin, whilst he remembers and considers, that all that shame and confusion of face which he takes to himself, goes to the vindication, glory and honour of his God: As David was content to be more vile still for God, so it pleaseth the heart of a Christian to magnify, and advance the name, and glory of God, by exposing his own shame, in humble, and broken-hearted confessions of sin.

Fifthly, In a word, the death of the cross *was not a natural, but a violent death:* Such also is the death of sin: sin dies not of its own accord, as nature dieth in old men, in whom the *balsamum radicale*, or radical moisture is consumed; for if the Spirit of God did not kill it, it would live to eternity in the souls of men; it is not the everlasting burnings, and all the wrath of God which lies upon the damned for ever, that can destroy sin. Sin, like a *salamander*, can live to eternity in the fire of God's wrath; so that either it must die a violent death

† Mortification of sin is not compleated in one moment, but is a daily conflict. Sin languishes as soon as the work of mortification is begun; in the progress of it, sin wastes and pines away, and in the end, even at our death, it is destroyed. *Origen on Ep. to Rom.*

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by the hand of the Spirit, or it never dieth at all. And thus you see, why the mortification of sin is, *tropically*, expressed by the crucifying of the flesh.

Thirdly, Why all that are in Christ must be so crucified, or mortified unto sin: And the necessity of this will appear divers ways.

First, From the inconsistency and contrariety that there is betwixt Christ and unmortified lust, Gal. v. 17. "These are "contrary the one to the other." There is a threefold inconsistency betwixt Christ and such corruptions; they are not only contrary to the *holiness of Christ*, 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever a-"bideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen "him, neither known him," *(i. e.)* whosoever is thus ingulphed and plunged into the lust of the flesh, can have no communion with the pure and holy Christ; but there is also an inconsistency betwixt such sin and the *honour of Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from "iniquity:" As Alexander said to a soldier of his name, *recordare nominis Alexandri*, remember thy name is *Alexander*, and do no nothing unworthy of that name. And unmortified lusts are also contrary to the *dominion*, and government of *Christ*, Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come after me, let him deny "himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me:" These are the self-denying terms upon which all men are admitted into Christ's service: And without mortification and self-denial, he allows no man to call him Lord and Master.

Secondly, The necessity of mortification appears, from the necessity of conformity betwixt Christ the head, and all the members of his mystical body; for how incongruous and uncomely would it be to see a holy, heavenly Christ, leading a company of unclean, carnal, and sensual members? Matth. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am "meek and lowly," *q. d.* it would be monstrous to the world, to behold a company of *lions* and *wolves* following a meek and harmless *lamb*: Men of raging, and unmortified lusts, professing and owning me for their head of government: And again, 1 John ii. 6. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also "so to walk, even as he walked," *q. d.* either imitate Christ in your *practice*, or never make pretensions to Christ in your *profession*: This was what the apostle complained of, Phil. iii. 18. for "many walk of whom I have told you often, and now "tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross "of Christ:" Men cannot study to put a greater dishonour and

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reproach upon Christ, than by making his name and profession a cloke and cover to their filthy lusts.

Thirdly, The necessity of crucifying the flesh, appears from the method of salvation, as it is stated in the gospel. God every where requires the practice of mortification, under pain of damnation. Mat. xviii. 8. "Wherefore if thy hand, or thy foot, "offend thee; cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is bet-"ter for thee to enter into life halt," or maimed, rather than, "having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." The gospel legitimates no hopes of salvation, but such as are accompanied with serious endeavours of mortification. 1 John iii. 3. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth him-"self, even as he is pure." 'Twas one special end of Christ's coming into the world, "to save his people from their sins," Mat. i. 21. nor will he be, a saviour unto any who remain under the dominion of their own lusts.

Fourthly, The whole stream, and current of the gospel, puts us under the necessity of mortification; gospel-precepts have respect unto this, Col. iii. 5. "Mortify your members, therefore, "which are upon the earth." 1 Pet. i. 15. "Be ye holy, for I "am holy." Gospel presidents have respect unto this, Heb. xii. 1. "Wherefore seeing we, also, are compassed about with so great "a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the "sin which doth so easily beset us," *&c.* Gospel threatenings are written for this end, and do all press mortification in a thundering dialect. Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall "die." Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from hea-"ven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men." The *promises* of the gospel are written designedly to promote it, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." But in vain are all these precepts, presidents, threatenings, and promises written in the scripture, except mortification, be the daily study, and practice of professors.

Fifthly, Mortification is the very scope and aim of our regeneration, and the infusion of the principles of grace. "If we live "in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit," Gal. v. 25. In vain were the habits of grace planted, if the fruits of holiness, and mortification, be not produced; yea, mortification is not only the design, and aim, but it is a special part, even the one half of our sanctification.

Sixthly, If mortification be not the daily practice, and endeavour of believers, then the way to heaven, no way answers to

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Christ's description of it in the gospel. He tells us, Mat. vii. 13. 14. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to de- "struction, and many there be that go in thereat; because "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto "life, and few there be that find it." Well, then, either Christ must be mistaken in the account he gave of the way to glory, or else all unmortified persons are out of the way: for what makes the way of salvation narrow, but the difficulties, and severities of mortification?

Seventhly, In a word, he that denies the necessity of mortification, confounds all discriminating marks betwixt saints, and sinners; pulls down the pale of distinction, and lets the world into the church, and the church into the world: 'Tis a great design of the gospel, to preserve the boundaries betwixt the one and the other, Rom. ii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 13. But if men may be Christians without mortification, we may as well go into the *taverns*, *ale-houses*, or *brothel-houses*, among the roaring, or sottish crew of sinners, and say, here are those that are redeemed by the blood of Christ; here are his disciples, and followers; as go to seek them in the purest churches, or most strictly religious families: by all which the necessity of mortification, unto all that are in Christ, is abundantly evidenced.

Fourthly, In the next place, we are to enquire into the true *principle* of mortification; 'tis true, there are many ways attempted, by men, for the mortification of sin, and many rules laid down, to guide men in that great work; some of which are very trifling, and impertinent things: such are those prescribed by *Popish Votaries*. But I shall lay down this as a sure conclusion, that *the sanctifying Spirit is the only effectual principle of mortification*; and, without him, no resolutions, vows, abstinences, castigations of the body, or any other external endeavours, can ever avail, to the mortification of one sin. The *moral Heathens* have prescribed many pretty rules, and helps, for the suppression of vice: Aristides, Seneca, and Cato, were renowned, among them, upon this account: formal Christians, have, also, gone far in the reformation of their lives, but could never attain true mortification; formality pares off the excrescences of vice, but never kills the root of it; it usually recovers itself again, and their souls, like a body not well purged, relapses into a worse condition than before, Mat. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

This work of mortification, is peculiar to the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 17. and the Spirit becomes a principle of mortification in believers two ways, namely,

1. By the implantation of contrary habits.

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2. By assisting those implanted habits, in all the times of need.

First, The Spirit of God implants habits of a contrary nature, which are destructive to sin, and are purgative of corruption, 1 John v. 4. Acts xv. 9. Grace is, to corruption, what water is to fire; betwixt which, there is both a *formal* and *effective opposition*; a contrariety, both in nature, and operation, Gal. v. 17. There is a threefold, remarkable advantage, given us by grace, for the destruction, and mortification of sin. For,

First, Grace gives the mind, and heart of man, a contrary bent, and inclination; by reason whereof, spiritual, and heavenly things, become connatural, to the regenerate soul. Rom. vii. 22. "For I delight in the law of God, after the inner-man." Sanctification is, in the soul, as a living spring running with a kind of *central force* heaven-ward, John iv. 14.

Secondly, Holy principles destroy the interest that sin once had in the love, and delight of the soul; the sanctified soul cannot take pleasure in sin, or find delight in that which grieves God, as it was wont to do; but that which was the object of delight, hereby becomes the object of grief, and hatred. Rom. vii. 15. *What I hate, that I do.*

Thirdly, From both these follow a third advantage for the mortification of sin, in as much as sin being contrary to the new nature, and the object of grief, and hatred, cannot possibly be committed without reluctancy, and very sensible regret of mind; and actions done with regret, are neither done frequently, nor easily. The case of a regenerate soul, under the surprizals, and particular victories of temptation, being like that of a captive in war, who marches, not with delight, but by constraint, among his enemies *. So the apostle expresseth himself, Rom. vii. 23. "But I see another law, in my members, warring against the law "of my mind; and bringing me into captivity unto the law of "sin, which is in my members." Thus the Spirit of God promotes the design of mortification, by the implantation of contrary habits.

Secondly, By assisting those gracious habits, in all the times of need, which he doth many ways; sometimes, notably awakening, and rouzing grace, out of the dull, and sleepy habit, and drawing forth the activity, and power of it, into actual, and successful resistances of temptations. As Gen. xxxix. 9.

* Αιχμαλωτιζω, *i. e.* When one is so taken that he can neither struggle, nor resist him by whom he is taken captive.

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" How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" Holy fear awakens firſt and raiſes all the powers of grace in the ſoul, to make a vigorous reſiſtance of temptation: the Spirit, alſo ſtrengthens weak grace, in the ſoul. 2 Cor. xii. 9. " My " grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in " weakneſs:" And, by reaſon of grace, thus implanted, and thus aſſiſted, " he that is born of God, keepeth himſelf, and " the wicked one toucheth him not."

Fifthly, The laſt query, to be ſatisfied, is, how mortification of ſin ſolidly evinceth the ſoul's intereſt in Chriſt; and this it doth divers ways, affording the mortified ſoul many ſound evidences thereof. As,

Evidence. 1. Whatſoever evidences the indwelling of the holy Spirit of God in us, muſt needs be evidential of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, as hath been fully proved before; but the mortification of ſin doth plainly evidence the indwelling of the Spirit of God; for, as we proved but now, it can proceed from no other principle. There is as ſtrong, and inſeparable a connexion betwixt mortification, and the ſpirit, as betwixt the effect, and its proper cauſe; and the ſelf-ſame connexion betwixt the inbeing of the Spirit, and union with Chriſt: So that to reaſon from mortification, to the inhabitation of the Spirit, and from the inhabitation of the Spirit to our union with Chriſt, is a ſtrong ſcriptural way of reaſoning.

Evidence 2. That which proves a ſoul to be under the *covenant of grace*, evidently proves its intereſt in Chriſt; for Chriſt is the head of that *covenant*, and none, but ſound believers, are under the bleſſings, and promiſes of it: but mortification of ſin is a ſound evidence of the ſoul's being under the covenant of grace, as is plain, from thoſe words of the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. " Let not ſin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, " that ye ſhould obey it in the luſt thereof; neither yield ye " your members, as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin; " but yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from " the dead, and your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs " unto God: for ſin ſhall not have dominion over you; for ye " are not under the law, but under grace." Where the apoſtle preſſeth believers unto mortification by this encouragement, that it will be a good evidence unto them of a new covenant-intereſt; for all legal duties, and endeavours, can never mortify ſin: 'tis the Spirit, in the new covenant, which produces this. Whoever, therefore, hath his corruptions mortified, hath his intereſt in the covenant, and conſequently in Chriſt, ſo far cleared unto him.

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Evidence 3. That which is the fruit and evidence of saving faith, must needs be a good evidence of our interest in Christ; but mortification of sin, is the fruit, and evidence of saving faith. Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith." 1 John v. 4. "This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith." Faith overcomes both the allurements of the world, on the one hand; and the terrors of the world on the other hand; by mortifying the heart, and affections, to all earthly things: a mortified heart is not easily taken with the ensnaring pleasures of the world, or much moved with the disgraces, losses, and sufferings, it meets with from the world; and so the strength, and force of its temptations, is broken, and the mortified soul becomes victorious over it; and all this by the instrumentality of faith.

Evidence 4. In a word, there is an intimate, and indissoluble connexion betwixt the mortification of sin, and the life of grace. Rom. vi. 11. "Reckon yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, "but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ:" and the life of Christ must needs involve a saving interest in Christ. By all which, is fully proved, what was asserted in the observation from this text. The application follows, in the next sermon.

The End of the Second Volume.

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