

WORKS OF ISAAC AMBROSE,
SOMETIME MINISTER OF GARSTANG, IN LANCASHIRE; NAMELY,
LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
OR
THE SOUL'S EYEING OF JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK
OF MAN'S SALVATION

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LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

BOOK I.

“Looking unto Jesus, the beginner and finisher of our faith.”

Heb. XII. 2.

CHAP. I.

The Division and Opening of the Words.

The most excellent subject to discourse or write of is Jesus Christ. Augustin having read Cicero’s works, commended them for their eloquence but he passed this sentence upon them, “They are not sweet, because the name of Jesus is not in them.” Indeed all we say is but unsavoury, if it be not seasoned with this salt. “I determined not to know any thing among you,” saith Paul, “save Jesus Christ, and

him crucified.” He resolved with himself, before he preached among the Corinthians, that this should be the only point of knowledge that he would profess himself to have skill in, and that in the course of his ministry he would labor to bring them to. This he made the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of his knowledge. Yea, doubtless, saith he, “and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” In this knowledge of Christ there is an excellency above all other knowledge in the world. There is nothing more pleasing and comfortable, more animating and enlivening. Christ is the sun and centre of all divine and revealed truths: we can preach nothing else as the object of our faith, which doth not some way or other either meet in Christ, or refer to Christ. Only Christ is the whole of man’s happiness; the sun to enlighten him, the physician to heal him, the wall of fire to defend him, the friend to comfort him, the pearl to enrich him, the ark to support him, the rock to sustain him under the heaviest pressures; “As an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Only Christ is that ladder between earth and heaven, the Mediator betwixt God and man; a mystery which the angels of heaven desire to pry into. Here is a blessed subject indeed: who would not be glad to be acquainted with it? “This is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” Come then! let us look on this Sun of righteousness; we cannot receive harm, but good,

by such a look. Indeed, by looking long on the natural sun we may have our eyes dazzled, and our faces blackened; but by looking unto Jesus, we shall have our eyes clearer, and our faces fairer. If the light of the eye rejoice the heart, how much more when we have such a blessed object to look upon! As Christ is more excellent than all the world, so this sight transcends all other sights. Looking unto Jesus, is the epitome of a Christian's happiness, the quintessence of evangelical duties.

In the text we have the act and object. The act in the original is very emphatical, but the English doth not fully express it; it signifies a drawing of the eye from one object to another: there are two expressions; the one signifies a turning of the eye from all other objects; the other, a fast fixing of the eye upon such an object, and only upon such. So is it both a looking off, and a looking on. On what? That is the object, a looking unto Jesus: a title that denotes his mercy, as Christ denotes his office. My meaning is not to insist on this name, in contradiction to any other names of Christ. He is often called Christ, and Lord, and Mediator, and Son of God, and Emmanuel: but Jesus is all these; Jesus is Christ, as he is the Anointed of God; and Jesus is Lord, as he hath dominion over all the world; and Jesus is mediator, as he is the reconciler of God and man; and Jesus is the Son of God, as he was eternally begotten before all worlds; and Jesus is Emmanuel, as he was

incarnate, and so God with us. Only because Jesus signifies Saviour, and this name was given him upon that very account; “for he shall save his people from their sins”: I shall make this my design to look at Jesus more especially, as carrying on the great work of our salvation from first to last. This indeed is the glad tidings, the gospel, the gospel privilege, and our gospel duty -- looking unto Jesus.

CHAP. II.

The Duty of looking off all other Things, confirmed and cleared.

But first we must look off all other things. We must take off our minds from everything, which might divert us in our Christian race from looking unto Jesus.

But what things are they we must look off in this respect? I answer; 1. Good things. 2. Evil things.

1. Good things. The apostle tells us of “a cloud of witnesses” in the former verse, which no question in their season we are to look unto. But when this second object comes in sight, he scatters the cloud quite, and sets up Jesus himself: now the apostle willeth us to turn our eyes from them, and to turn hither to Jesus Christ as if he had said. If you will indeed see a sight once for all, look to him. The saints,

though they be guides to us, yet are they but followers to him; he is the leader of them, and of us all; look on him. There is a time, when James may say, “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example”; but when Jesus comes forth, that saith, “I have given you an example,” an example above all examples, then be silent all flesh before the Lord. Let all saints and seraphim then cover their faces with their wings that we may look on Jesus, and let all other sights go.

2. Evil things. We must look off all that is in the world; and that the apostle compriseth under these three heads, “the lusts of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life”; or, pleasures, profits, and honours.

1. We must look off this world in respect of its sinful pleasures. Jude tells us, “such as are sensual have not the Spirit.” We cannot fixedly look on pleasures, and look on Jesus, at once.

2. We must look off this world in respect of its sinful profits. A look on this keeps off our looking unto Jesus. “Whosoever loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Just so much as the world prevails in us, so much is God’s love abated both in us and towards us. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses,” saith St. James, “know

ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?”When we have enough of God and Christ, and yet desire to make up our happiness in the creature, this is plain spiritual whoredom.

3. We must look off the world in respect of its honours. What is this desire to be well thought of, or well spoken of? As if a man should run up and down after a feather flying in the air. It is a question whether ever he get it; but if he do, it is but a feather: such is honour; it is hard to obtain it, but, if obtained, it is but the breath of a few men’s mouths but what is worst of all, it hinders our sight of Christ. “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.”

Worldly honour keeps many back from Christ.

But why must we look off everything that diverts our looking unto Jesus?

1. Because we cannot look fixedly on Christ, and such things, at once. The eye cannot look upwards and downwards at once; we cannot seriously mind heaven and earth in one thought. “No man can serve two masters”; especially such as jar, and have contrary employments, as Christ and Mammon have.

2. Because whilst we look on these things, we cannot see the beauty that is in Christ. Our wishing looks on other things, makes Christ but mean and contemptible in our eyes.

3. Because all other things, in comparison of Christ, are not worthy a look; they are but poor, low, mean, base things, in comparison of Christ: “I count all things but loss,” saith St. Paul, “For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. -- I count them but dung that I may win Christ.” Some translate it, from the original, chaff, others dog’s meat, others excrements, dung: all agree, it is such a thing as men usually cast away from them with indignation.

4. Because it is according to the very law of marriage: “Therefore shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.” The Lord Christ marries himself to the souls of his saints; and for this cause the soul must forsake all, and cleave unto Christ.

5. Because Christ is a jealous God. Now jealousy is a passion in the soul, that will not endure any sharing in the object beloved. And so Christ cannot endure that we should look on any other things, so as to lust after them.

6. Because all other things can never satisfy the eye. “All things are full of labour,” saith Solomon, “man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing”: it is but wearied with looking on divers objects, and yet still desires new ones; but once admit it to that glorious sight of Christ, and then it rests fully satisfied.

CHAP. III.

Sect. I. -- An Explanation of the Act and Object of Looking.

An experimental looking on Jesus, is that my text aims at: it is not a swimming knowledge of Christ, but an hearty feeling of Christ's inward workings; it is not notions of Christ, but hearty motions towards Christ, that are implied in this inward looking.

2. For the object; you must look on Jesus. It is the blesseddest object that the eye of the mind can possibly fix upon. Of all objects under heaven, Jesus hath the preeminence in perfection, and he should have the preeminence in our meditation. It is he that will make us most happy when we posses him, and we cannot but be joyful to look upon him, especially when looking is a degree of possessing. Jesus signifies Saviour, it is an Hebrew name; the Greeks borrowed it from the Hebrews,

the Latins from the Greeks, and all other languages from the Latins. It comes from the Hebrew word Jehoshua, or Joshua, which in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (written after the Babylonian captivity) is Jeshua; and so is our Saviour's name always written in the Syriac translation of the New Testament. This name, Jesus, was given to Christ the Son of God, by his Father, and brought from heaven by an angel, first to Mary, and then to Joseph; and on the day when he was circumcised, as the manner was, this name was given him by his parents, as it was commanded from the Lord, by the angel Gabriel. It includes both his office, and his natures. He is the alone Saviour of man; "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." And he is a perfect and absolute Saviour; "he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." I will not deny, but that the work of salvation is common to all the three Persons in the Trinity: it is a known rule, "All outward actions are equally common to the three Persons." For as they are all one in nature and will, so must they be also one in operation; the Father saveth, the Son saveth, and the Holy Ghost saveth; yet we must distinguish them in the manner of saving: the Father saveth by the Son; the Son saveth by paying the ransom and price of our salvation; the Holy Ghost saveth by a particular applying of that ransom unto men. Now whereas the Son pays the price of our redemption, and not

the Father, nor the Holy Ghost; therefore, in this special respect, he is called our Saviour, our Jesus.

Herein is set forth the offices of Christ, the two natures of Christ, the qualities of Christ, the excellencies of Christ. Oh! what variety of sweet matter is in Jesus! he hath in him all the powders of the merchants. An holy soul cannot tire itself in viewing Jesus. We know one thing tires quickly unless that one be all: Christ is so, and none else; he is all, and in all; all belonging to being, and all belonging to well-being. In things below Jesus, some have this excellency, and some have that, but none have all. Oh! what variety is in Jesus! variety of time, he is Alpha and Omega; variety of beauty, he is white and ruddy; variety of quality, he is a lion and lamb, a servant and a son; variety of excellency, he is man and God. Oh! where shall we begin in this view of Jesus? “Who shall declare his generation?” All the evangelists exhibit unto us the Saviour, but every one of them in his particular method. Mark describes not all the genealogy of Jesus, but begins his history at his baptism. Matthew searcheth out his original from Abraham. Luke follows it backwards as far as Adam. John passeth further upwards, even to the eternal generation of this “Word that was made flesh.” So they lead us to Jesus, mounting up four several steps: in the one, we see him only among the men of his own time; in the second, he is seen in the tent of Abraham; in the third, he is yet higher, to

wit, in Adam; and finally, having traversed all ages, through so many generations, we come to contemplate him in the beginning, in the bosom of the Father, in that eternity in which he was with God before all worlds. And there let us begin, still looking unto Jesus, as he carries on the great work of our salvation from first to last, from everlasting to everlasting.

Sect. II. -- The main Doctrine and Confirmation of it

But for the foundation of our building, take this note –

Inward experiential looking unto Jesus such as stirs up affections in the heart, and the effects thereof in our life, is an ordinance of Christ, a choice, an high gospel ordinance.

Or thus: inward experimental knowing, considering, desiring, hoping, believing, loving, joying, calling on Jesus, and conforming to Jesus, is the most precious ordinance of Jesus Christ.

Looking unto Jesus, is that great ordinance appointed by God for our most especial good. How many souls have blessed themselves in the use of other means, and though in them Christ hath communicated some virtue to them, yet because they did not trade more with them, they had little in comparison? Such a one as deals

immediately with Christ, will do more in a day than another in a year; and therefore I call it a choice, a complete, an high gospel-ordinance.

1. Jesus is the object; and Jesus, as Jesus, as he is our Saviour, as he hath negotiated, or shall yet negotiate, the great business of our salvation. Looking unto, is the act; but such as includes all these acts, knowing, considering, desiring, hoping, believing, loving, joying, enjoying of Jesus, and conforming to Jesus. It is such a look as stirs up affections in the heart, and the effects thereof in our life; it is such a look as leaves a quickening upon the spirit; it is such a look as works us into a warm affection, raised resolution, an holy and upright conversation: briefly, it is an inward, experimental looking unto Jesus.

This was the Lord's charge to the Gentiles of old; "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. -- And I said, behold me! behold me! unto a nation that was not called by my name." And according to this command was their practice; "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord," saith David. "They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." And according to this command is the practice of gospel believers; "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Instead of the vail of Mosaical figures,

God hath now given to his church the clear glass of the gospel: and hence all believers under the gospel do, by contemplative faith, behold Christ, together with the glorious light of his mercy, truth, and the rest of his divine attributes; and by means thereof, they are made like unto him in the glory of holiness, and in newness of life.

Sect. III. -- Use of Reproof

Well then! is inward experimental looking unto Jesus a choice, an high gospel-ordinance? How may this reprove thousands? how many are there that mind not this duty? The truth is, that as the whole world lies in wickedness, so the eyes of the whole world are misplaced. There are few that have a care of this choice, of this high gospel-ordinance. I shall therefore reprove both the ungodly and godly.

1. For the ungodly; not Christ, nor God, is in all their thoughts. Alas! they cannot tell what it means, to look unto Jesus. Nor speak I only of poor Indians, and other savages, who came into the world, not knowing wherefore; and go out of the world, not knowing whither; but of such as live within the Christian church, that have nothing to distinguish them from those Indian miscreants, but outward formalities, the charity of others, and their own slight imaginations. Why, alas!

these are they that the Lord complains of, that “they have eyes, and see not. My people have forgotten me days without number.”

You will say. Is there any such here? Can I tax any of you, that you do not look up to Jesus? are not your eyes towards Christ in your prayers, praise, public and private duties? nay, are not you now in the duty, whilst I am speaking, and you hearing? I answer. However you may deem that you do this or that, yet God reckons it as a thing not done in these respects: --

1. When it is not done to purpose: as, if our looking to Christ makes us not like Christ; if there be no effectual impression upon the heart, Christ takes it as if we had never looked towards him at all.

2. When it is done unwillingly. Let no man deceive himself; though he cast his eyes towards heaven all the day long, if he love not his work, he doth nothing; he looks not at Jesus.

3. When a man makes it not his course to look unto Jesus. A man may come unto a carpenter's house, and take up his tools, and do something at his work, but this makes him not a carpenter, because it is not his trade. So, ungodly men may look

and think of Christ; but because this is not their course and trade, they make it not their work to look to Christ; they are therefore said, not to look to him.

Consider, you that plead that you are Christians, and that you mind Christ at this very instant, that you are in the duty, even whilst I am speaking of it, and yet you neither do it to purpose, nor willingly; is it not with you as it is with them of whom Christ spake, “Many will say to me at that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name, have cast out devils? and in in thy name have done many wonderful works?” They will plead at the last day, as you plead now; but for all that, you know the answer, “I never knew you; depart from me ye workers of iniquity.”

2. For the godly, are not they careless of this duty? I know not whether through want of skill, or through want of will; but sure I am, this duty lies neglected of most of the people of God: their faults I may express in these respects:

1. In not pointing their minds towards Jesus; “I write unto you,” saith the apostle, “to stir up your minds, by way of remembrance”: it is in the original, “to awaken your pure minds”; and it was but need. Awaking, is a word that imports rousing, as birds that provoke their young ones by flight to make use of their wings: now how

few are there who thus call upon themselves! It was the prophet's complaint, "No man stirs up himself to take hold of God"; -- O what a shame is this! Is it fit that our understandings, which God hath entrusted us with, should be no more improved? Is it fit that our minds (those golden cabinets which God hath given us, to be filled with heavenly treasure) should either be empty, or stuffed with vanity, nothing, worse than nothing? Oh! that such glorious things as our immortal spirits, should run after vanity, which, if rightly improved, should walk with angels, should lodge themselves in the bosom of the glorious God! Do we not see how Christ is sending out to us continually? The thoughts of his heart are love, eternal love. And shall not we send out our thoughts towards him? shall not we let our minds run out towards him?

2. In not bending of their minds to this work. It may be the mind looks up, but it is so feeble, that, like an arrow shot from a bow weakly bent, it reacheth not the mark. It is the wiseman's counsel. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Oh! that God's people should be so lazy, dull, sluggish, slothful, in this spiritual work! As Jesus said to the multitudes concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" so may I ask believers, in their looking unto Jesus. What went ye out to see? When you crawl, and move, as if you had no hearts nor spirits within you, whom go ye forth to see? Him that is the Lord of

glory? him that is the “brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person?” What! are such heavy and lazy aspects fit to take in such a glory as this is? You see in what large streams your thoughts fly forth to other things; and are you only languishing, weak, and feeble, in things of so great concernment? Oh! that Christians should be cold in spirituals, and hot in the pursuit of temporal things!

3. In not binding of their minds to this object, in not staying the eye on Jesus Christ. Some may give a glance at Christ, but they are presently wheeled off again. But why doth not the eye abide there? Is not Christ worthy, on whom our souls should dwell? Certainly if we love our Jesus, that love will hold us: as the loadstone, having drawn the iron, keeps it fast to the object loved. Is Christ so tender in his love towards us that he ever minds us; and shall our minds be so loose to him? shall there be no more care to bind ourselves in cords of love to him who hath bound himself in such cords of love to us?

4. In not daily exercising this blessed duty. It may be now and then they are awakened, and they get up into heaven to see their Jesus; but it is not daily. Oh! consider, is this now and then going to heaven within the veil, to live the life of friends? is this to carry ourselves as children? What! to be so strange at home?

there to be seldom, where we should always be? Is Jesus Christ such a mean thing, that a visit now and then should serve the turn? The queen of Sheba, hearing Solomon's wisdom, said, "Blessed are those thy servants, that always stand before thee, and hear thy wisdom": if she was so taken with Solomon, remember that "a greater than Solomon is here." And shall we deprive ourselves of that blessedness, which we might enjoy by standing always in the presence of Christ, to hear his wisdom, and to behold his glory?

O my brethren, let us take shame to ourselves, that to this day we have been so careless in sending, bending, and binding our minds to this blessed object, Jesus Christ; yea, let us blush that we have not made it our daily business. David describes the blessed man by his "delighting in the law of the Lord," and by his "meditating thereon day and night"; how then is he to be reprov'd, that neither meditates on the law of the Lord, nor on the Lord, the law-maker, day and night?

Sect. IV. -- Use of Exhortation

Is inward, experimental looking unto Jesus, a choice and high gospel-ordinance? then I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ; I beseech you brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, to look

unto Jesus; or, if my beseeching will not prevail, yet look on me as an “ambassador of Christ”; consider as “though God did beseech you by me.” I beseech, I pray you, in Christ’s stead; it is a message that I have from God to your souls, to look unto Jesus; and therefore set your hearts to all the words that I testify to you this day, for it is not a vain thing, but it is for your lives.

Oh! that I should need thus to persuade your hearts to look unto Jesus! What, is not your Jesus worthy of this? why then are your thoughts no more upon him? why are not your hearts continually with him? why are not your strongest desires, and daily delights, in, and after, the Lord Jesus? What is the matter? will not God give you leave to approach this light? will he not suffer your souls to taste and see? why then are these words in the text? why then doth he cry, and double his cry. “Behold me! behold me!” Ah! vile hearts! how delightfully and unweariedly can we think of vanity! how freely, and how frequently, can we think of our pleasures, friends, yea, of our miseries, wrongs, sufferings, and fears! And what! is not Christ in all our thoughts? Christians, humble and cast down your sensual hearts that have in them no more of Christ. O chide them for their willful or weak strangeness to Christ! O turn your thoughts from off all earthly vanities, and bend your souls to study Christ; habituate yourselves to such contemplations, and let not those thoughts be seldom or cursory, but settle upon them, dwell there, bathe your souls

in those delights, drench your affections in those rivers of pleasures, or rather in the sea of consolation. Have your eyes continually set on Christ. Say not you are not unable to do thus; this must be God's work only, and therefore all our exhortations are in vain. A learned divine can tell you, though God be the chief disposer of your hearts, yet next under him you have the greatest command of them yourselves. Though without Christ you can do nothing, yet under him you may do much; or else it will be undone, and you undone through your neglect. Do your own parts, and you have no cause to distrust whether Christ will do his. It is not usual with Christ to forsake his own people in that very work he sets them on. If your souls were sound and right, they would perceive incomparably more delight in knowing, thinking, believing, loving, and rejoicing in Jesus Christ, than the soundest stomach finds in his food, or the strongest senses in the enjoyment of their objects. Now, for shame never say, you cannot reach it: "I can do all things," saith Paul, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." It is our sloth, our security, our carnal mind, which is enmity to God and Christ, that keeps us off.

Sect. V. -- Motives from our Wants in case of Neglect

To quicken us to this duty, I shall propound some moving considerations: ponder them with an impartial judgment; who knows but through the assistance of Christ

they may prove effectual with your hearts, and make you resolve upon this excellent duty of looking unto Jesus.

Consider, 1. our wants in case of neglect. If Christ be not in view, there is nothing but wants.

Suppose first a Christless soul, a poor creature - without any ray of this Sun of righteousness, and what a sad condition is he in! I may say of such a one --

1. He is without light: there is no oil of saving knowledge, no star of spiritual light arising in his soul. "Ye were once darkness," saith the apostle to his Ephesians: not only dark, but darkness itself; they were wholly dark, universally dark, having no mixture nor glimpse (whilst without Christ) of spiritual light in them.

2. Such a one is without grace, without holiness. Christ is our sanctification, as well as righteousness and redemption. Where Christ is not, there is no inclination to the ways and works of sanctification.

3. Such a one is without content. The soul in this case finds nothing but emptiness and vanity in the greatest abundance. Let a man have what the world can give, yet

if he have not Christ, he is nothing worth. Christ is the marrow and fatness, the fullness and sweetness, of all our endowments; separate Christ from them, and they are bitter, and do not please us; empty, and do not fill us. Joram asking Jehu, “Is it peace?” was answered, “What hast thou to do with peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?” A Christless man asking, Is it peace, O messenger of God? can look for no other but Jehu’s answer, What hast thou to do with peace, so long as thy lusts are so strong within thee, and thy estrangements from the Prince of peace so great? The soul that is without Jesus Christ, is an enemy to the God of peace, an alien to the way of peace. “There is no peace to the wicked,” saith my God.

4. Such a one is without life. “He that hath not the Son, hath not life,” saith John; Christ lives not in that soul; it is a dead soul, dead in sin and trespasses. As the dead see nothing of all that sweet and glorious light which the sun casts forth upon them, so the dead in sin have no comfortable apprehension of Christ, though he shine in the gospel more gloriously than the sun at noon. And as the dead know not anything, so the dead in sin know nothing of the wisdom of Christ guiding them, or of the holiness of Christ sanctifying them, or of the fullness of Christ satisfying them, or of the death of Christ mortifying their lusts:

2. yea, suppose those that have known Christ, but do not now look unto Jesus, how great is the sin and sadness of those souls! Oh, the wants attending such poor creatures!

1. They have not that wisdom, knowledge, discerning of Christ, as they might have. By looking, and serious observing of Christ, we gain more and more knowledge of Christ; but if we will not look, how should we understand those great mysteries of grace? Without looking on Christ, we cannot expect that virtue should go out of Christ.

2. They do not so taste the goodness of Christ, as they might; Christ is no other unto them, but as an eclipsed star: Christ is not sweet to them in his ordinances, they find not in them that delight and refreshment, which they usually minister. -- They are in the case of Barzillai, “who could not taste what he did eat, or what he did drink; nor could hear any more the voice of singing men or of singing women”: so they cannot taste the things of God, nor hear the spiritual melody which Christ makes to the souls of them that look unto him.

3. They have not that sense of Christ’s love, which those that exercise his duty have. Whilst the soul neglects Christ, it cannot possibly discern the love of Christ;

it perceives not Christ applying the doctrines of his love to the conscience: Christ appears not in his banqueting-house, he enables not the soul to pray with confidence, he makes it not joyful in the house of prayer. And hence it is, that such souls move so slowly in God's service; they are just like Pharaoh's chariots without wheels; they perceive not the love of Christ, either in the clear revelation of his secrets, or in the free community of his graces, or in the sanctifying and sweetening of their trials, or in sealing the pardon of their sins. Oh, the want! Oh, the misery of this want!

Thus far of their wants, that neglect this duty of looking unto Jesus.

Sect. VI. -- Motives from our Riches, in case we are lively in this Duty

2. For our riches, in case we are lively in this duty! Oh, the blessed incomes to such souls! we may reckon up here those very particulars which the other wanted:

1. That Christ gives light unto them. As the receiving of the sun gives light to the body, so the receiving of the "Sun of righteousness" gives spiritual, heavenly, comfortable light to their souls.

2. That Christ gives grace and holiness unto them. “Of his fullness we receive grace for grace.” As the print upon the wax answers to the seal, or as the characters upon the Son answers to the Father; so there are certain stamps of the grace of Christ upon the saints, that what good they do, it springs not from external motives only, but from Christ working in them.

3. That Christ gives content or satisfaction unto them. As the pearl satisfied the merchant in the parable, so Christ satisfieth the soul with understanding, with the sense of his love in the heart, with sure and blessed peace in the conscience. They that rightly look unto Jesus, may say as Jacob did, “I have enough.”

4. That Christ gives life unto them. “He that hath the Son, hath life.” He that hath Christ in his heart, as a root of life living in him, or as a king setting up his throne within him, or as a bridegroom betrothing himself in loving kindness to him, he hath life, the life of grace, and the earnest of the life of glory.

5. That Christ gives a taste of his goodness unto them. They cannot look unto him, but he makes them joyful with the feeling of himself and Spirit: and hence it is that many times they break out into psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Here is a goodness of illumination,

regeneration, sanctification, and spiritual freedom, flowing from Christ to the souls of his saints, which to carnal men is a sealed well, whose waters their palates never tasted.

6. That Christ gives the sense of his love to them. They cannot look on Christ, but they see him loving and embracing their humble souls; they see him binding up their broken hearts; they behold him gathering to himself, and bearing in the bosom of his love, and comforting with the promises of his word, their wounded spirits; they behold him, like Jacob, serving in the heat and in the cold for Rachel, serving in manifold afflictions from his cradle to his cross, to make a spouse unto himself.

7. That Christ gives the sense of his own worth and excellency unto them. They see now in Christ is wisdom surpassing the brightness of the sun, even all the treasures of wisdom; in Christ is power excelling the strength of rocks, he is not only strong, but strength itself; in Christ is honour transcending all the kings of the earth, for he is “King of kings, and Lord of lords”; in Christ is beauty excelling the “rose of Sharon, and lily of the valleys”; he is fairer than all the flowers of the field, than all the precious stones of the earth, than all the lights in the firmament, than all the saints and angels in the highest heavens.

8. That Christ gives all things unto them. “All things are yours,” saith the apostle, “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” All things are yours: first, all the ministers of Christ from the highest to the lowest, “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas”; they are your servants, they are men that watch over you for your salvation. Secondly, the world is yours: indeed the world stands but for your sakes; if your number were but once completed, quickly would the world be set on fire. Thirdly, life is yours: it is a fitting you for a better life, even for eternity. Fourthly, death is yours: for you shall die just then when it is best for you. Death shall serve but as a servant to your advantage. Fifthly, things present, and things to come, are yours. “Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come.” Sixthly, the Lord himself is yours: take God, and look on him in his greatness, in his mighty power, even this great God, the Lord of heaven and earth, is yours; he is yours, and all that he hath is yours, and all that he doth is yours, and all that he can do is yours. “I will be thine,” saith God to Abraham, “I will be to thee an exceeding great reward.” Here is a catalogue, an inventory, of a Christian’s riches: have Christ, and have all. When an heathen was but asked, where all his treasure was, he answered, “Where Cyrus my friend is”: and if any asked you, where all your treasure is, you may answer. Where Christ your friend

is: in this respect you may truly say, there is no end of your riches; they are called “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Paul could find no bottom of these riches. Oh! who would not look unto Jesus? If Christ be yours, God is yours, the Father is yours, the Spirit is yours, all the promises are yours; for in Christ they are all made, and for him they shall be performed. Come, let the proud man boast in his honour, and the mighty man in his valor, and the rich man in his wealth; but let the Christian pronounce himself happy, only happy, truly happy, fully happy, in beholding Christ, enjoying Christ, having Christ, -- in looking unto Jesus.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

FROM THE CREATION UNTIL HIS FIRST COMING.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Sect. I. -- Of Christ promised by Degrees.

In this period we shall first lay down the object; and then direct you how to look upon it.

The object is Jesus, carrying on the work of man's salvation in that dark time before his coming in the flesh.

No sooner is the world made, and the things therein, but man was created. And now it was that God's eternal purpose was to come into execution. Indeed, at the first there was no need of Christ; for man was made in holiness, "the image of God," and to bear rule over the rest of the visible creatures; though this his state was but of a short standing, for it was not long before Adam by his sin deprived himself, and all his posterity, of the image of God. All mankind was in his loins, so by the appointment of God all mankind partake with him in the guilt of his sins.

In this sad hour of temptation, God stepped in. He will not leave man without hope: he tells the devil, who begun this mischief, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." At the very instant, when God was pronouncing judgment upon the several delinquents, nay, before judgment was pronounced on the persons tempted, Jesus is hinted, the covenant of grace is proclaimed. Oh! the infinite riches of the mercy of God in Christ.

But you will say, how comes Jesus in? How carried he on the great work of our salvation in this dark time?

I answer, 1. By assuming the shape of man, and so discharging some special offices. We read often of Christ's apparition before his incarnation, and then especially when he had to do with man's eternal happiness. After man had sinned, Christ appeared to Adam, then to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob, then to Moses. First, he appeared to Adam in the garden: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day." God, as he is God, hath neither voice to speak, nor feet to walk, but assuming the form of a man, he exercised both; and so he was the first that published that first promise to the worlds, "It shall bruise thy head." -- 2. He appeared to Abraham in the plain of Mamre, where the Lord talked with Abraham; and Abraham calls him "the Judge of all the earth," which can be ascribed to none but Christ the judge of quick and dead. -- 3. He appeared to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 2. -- and to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24, 30. -- and to Moses, Exod. xx. 1, 2, 3. -- and to many others: and these apparitions of Christ were as preludiums of his incarnation.

2. Christ carried on the great work of our salvation in the dark time, not by himself exhibited (as when he was incarnate) but only promised. The great King would first have his harbingers to lead the way, before he would come in person.

To this purpose we read, that as Christ, so the covenant of grace (which applies Christ to us) was first promised, and then promulgated. The covenant of promise was that covenant which God made with Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David, and all Israel, in Jesus Christ; to be incarnate, crucified, and to rise from the dead; and it was meet that the promise should go before the gospel, and be fulfilled in the gospel, that so great a good might earnestly be desired, before it was bestowed. In a time of darkness, men desire light. As the morning watch watcheth and longeth for the morning, so the obscure revelation of Christ in a promise raised the hearts of the patriarchs to an earnest desire of Christ's coming in the flesh. But in this obscurity we may observe some degrees: before the law given by Moses, the promise was more obscure; the law being given, even to the time of the prophets, the promise was a little more clear: in the time of the prophets, even to John the Baptist, it was clearer yet; as the coming of the Messiah did approach nearer and nearer, so was the promise clearer and clearer still. Just as the approach of the sun is nearer or further off, so is the light that goes before it greater or lesser: in like manner was the revelation that went before Christ more dim or clear, as the rising

of the “Sun of righteousness” was more remote, or nigh at hand. My present business is to set forth Jesus in the covenant of grace, as promised; and because the promise receives distinction of degrees according to the several breakings out of it to the dark world, we will consider it as it was manifested,

1. From Adam until Abraham.
2. From Abraham until Moses.
3. From Moses until David.
4. From David until the Babylonish captivity.
5. From the Captivity until Christ.

In every of these periods will appear further and further discoveries of God’s mercy in Christ; of our Jesus carrying on the great work of man’s salvation in that dark time.

Sect. II. -- Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifest in Adam.

The covenant of grace is a compact made betwixt God and man, touching reconciliation, and life eternal, by Christ. This gracious covenant was, immediately

after the fall, expressed in these words; “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

This promise contains good news of the overthrow of Satan’s kingdom, and of man’s freedom by the death of Christ.

For the sense of the words we shall open these terms, 1. Who is the serpent? 2. Who is the woman? 3. What is the seed of the serpent? 4. What is the seed of the woman? 5. What is that *hu* (in our bible translated *it*)? 6. What is the serpent’s head, and the bruising of it? 7. What is the heel of the seed of the woman, and the bruising of it? 8. Amongst whom was the enmity, or rather enmities? (for in the text we find many); “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.”

1. Who is the serpent? It was both Satan and the serpent; the serpent possessed of the devil. Satan could not provoke our first parents to sin by any inward temptation, nor could he enter into their bodies or minds; and therefore he presumed to take a beast of the earth, and by disposing of his tongue, he speaks within him.

Such was God's love to man, that he condemns both the author and instrument of that evil: as one that in anger breaks the sword wherewith his son or his friend was wounded. The serpent is punished according to the letter of the text, and Satan in the spiritual meaning.

2. The woman, wheresoever mentioned in this text, is Eve, and none but Eve; she it was whom the tempter had seduced, and, in just judgment for her familiarity with the tempter, God meets with her, saying to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman."

3. The seed of the serpent is taken collectively, for all the families of devils, for the devil and his angels, as Christ calls them; and for all the sons of the devil, *i.e.* for all reprobate men, whose father and prince is the devil; as Christ told the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do": and as John tells us, "He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."

4. The seed of the woman is that posterity of the woman which do not degenerate into the seed of the serpent. Hence "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall

suffer persecution,” saith the apostle: “And I will put enmity,” saith God, “between thee and the woman; also between thy seed and her seed.” And who can deny but these enmities have been ever since betwixt Satan’s brood and the saints?

5. What is that *hu*, (in our bible translated *it*)? “It shall bruise thy head.” He, or it, or that same seed, *i.e.* one person of that same seed, even Jesus, the Son of the living God. Here is the first hint of Jesus that ever was read or heard of in this world. This was the first gospel that ever was published after the creation. Oh, blessed news, fit for God’s mouth to speak, and to break first to the world now fallen! As David alone of all the host of Israel goes forth to fight with Goliath, and overcomes him; so Christ alone, of all the seed of the woman, was to fight with the serpent, to overcome him, and to bruise his head.

(2.) The bruising of the head doth plainly discover this *it*, or *he*, is Jesus Christ; for none can bruise the serpent’s head but only God. “The God of peace,” saith the apostle, “shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Now there was none of the seed of the woman, that was ever God, but only Christ, God-man, blessed for ever; and therefore it must needs be Christ, and only Christ, that can bruise this serpent’s head.

(3.) God himself in other places of scripture doth expressly declare that this seed here promised is Christ. Mark but where this promise is repeated to the patriarchs, as when the Lord said to Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”: and when the Lord said to David, “I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom”; and you may see it clear that this seed is Christ, and only Christ: that promise to Abraham, the apostle so interprets. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made; he saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ”: and that promise to David, the prophet so interprets. “He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it.” -- Who is that? In the former verse, his name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, he Prince of peace.”

Yet I will not deny, but by way of participation this promise may pertain to the whole body of Christ: “Through him that loved us, we are more than conquerors,” saith the apostle. We may conquer Satan, though not in our own strength; and so in a secondary sense, by way of communication with Christ, under this seed all the faithful may be contained: 1. Because the head and members are all one body. “Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all one.” 2. Because the faithful are called the seed of Christ. “When thou shall make thy soul an offering

for sin, he shall see his seed.” 3. Because Satan’s overthrow by Christ our head is diffused to all the members. In this sense many extend this seed to the whole body of Christ; but primarily and properly it belongs to none but the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. What is the serpent’s head, and the bruising of it? 1. For the serpent’s head, it is the power, rage, reign, and kingdom of Satan. It is observed, that in the head of a serpent lies the strength, power, and life of a serpent; so by a phrase of speech fitted to the condition of this serpent that was Satan’s instrument, God tells the devil of the danger of his head, *i.e.* of his power and kingdom. Now this power and kingdom of Satan consists more especially in sin and death; “for the sting of death is sin,” and the power of death is in Satan. 2. For the bruising of this head, it is the overthrowing of Satan’s power. “He shall bruise thy head,” *i.e.* Christ shall break thy power, Christ shall destroy sin and death, “and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil.” I say Christ shall do it, though, as I have said, in a secondary sense the faithful shall do it. Christ overcomes by his own power, and the faithful overcome by the power of Christ. The serpent’s head is bruised, *i.e.* the devil, and sin, and death, and hell, are overthrown; not only the devil in his person, but the works of the devil, which by the fall he had planted in our natures; as,

pride, vain-glory, ignorance, lust; not only Satan's works, but the fruits and effects of his works, as death and hell; so that all the faithful may sing with Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

7. What is the heel of the seed of the woman, and the bruising of it? 1. The heel is the humanity of Christ. 2. The bruising of his heel, is the miseries, mockings, woundings, death and burial, of Christ, all which he endured in his heel, *i.e.* in his humanity; or, it extends further, to all the hurts, reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, of the faithful, by the devil and his agents.

8. Amongst whom was the enmity, or this hostile war? We find in the text three hosts, and three battles:

1. Betwixt Satan and the woman: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman": *i.e.* betwixt thee, the seducer, and her whom thou hast seduced. This enmity is opposed to the amity which had been between the woman and the serpent; not but that enmity must be betwixt the devil and man, as well as betwixt the devil and the woman: but because the woman had more tampered with Satan, and, being

deceived by Satan, was first in the transgression, therefore she only is named; “I will put enmity between thee and the woman.”

2. Betwixt Satan’s seed, and the seed of the woman. “I will put enmity,” not only between thee and the woman, but also “between thy seed and her seed”; as if he had said, This enmity shall not cease with the death of the woman, but it shall continue to her seed, and to her seed’s seed, even to the end of the world. We see to this day how the serpent and serpent’s seed are warring against the church; and a wonder it is, considering the malice of the enemy, that there is a church upon earth, but only, that we have Christ’s promise, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it”: and, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

3. Betwixt Christ and the serpent. This is a bloody conflict on both sides. “He shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” 1. “He shall bruise thy head”; Christ shall break thy power. He fights not so much with the seed, as with the serpent: if Satan be overthrown, his seed cannot stand. 2. “Thou shall bruise his heel”; thou shalt afflict him and his, thou shalt cast out of thy mouth a flood of persecutions; thou shalt make war with him, and all them which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

We learn hence, 1. That a Saviour was promised from the beginning of the world.

2. That this Saviour should free all his saints from sin, death, and hell; the head and the power of the devil. 3. That to this end this Saviour should be a Mediator; for God would not grant an immediate pardon, but the promised seed must first intervene. 4. That this Mediator should be of the seed of the woman, that is, a man, and yet stronger than the devil, endued with a divine power, and so he is God. 5. That this Man-God should, according to his priestly office, be a sacrifice for sin, the serpent should “bruise his heel”; he should suffer and die for the people, and yet, according to his kingly office, he should overcome Satan; for he should “bruise his head,” overthrow his kingdom, and make us “more than conquerors.” 6. That this promise of Christ, and of our justification, is free; God, of mere mercy and free grace, brings forth this promise. There could be now after the fall no merit in man; and even now he promiseth remission of sins and life eternal, in, for, and through, the Lord Jesus Christ. No question but in belief of this promise, the patriarchs and fathers of old obtained life, and glory, and immortality. “By faith, the elders obtained a good report. By faith, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. By faith, Enoch was translated, that he should not see death. By faith, Noah became heir of the righteousness of Christ.” And how should it but revive us in these last times, to hear that the first thing that ever God did after the world was fallen, was this act of mercy, to make a promise of Christ, and to reconcile lost

man to himself through the same Jesus Christ? Surely he began to do that soon, which he meant to be always doing, even to the end of the world. Thus far of the promise, as it was manifested from Adam to Abraham.

Sect. III. -- Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Abraham.

The second breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to Abraham: and now it shines in a more glorious light than it did before. At first it was propounded in dark terms; but in this second manifestation, we have it laid down in plainer terms: “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generation, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” For the right understanding of this, we shall examine these particulars: --

1. What a covenant is?
2. What is the establishing of this covenant?
3. Betwixt whom is the covenant to be established?
4. For what time is the established covenant to endure?

5. What are the privileges of this covenant?

6. What is the condition of this covenant?

7. Who is the head, both as the undertaker, purchaser, and treasurer, upon whom this covenant is established?

1. What is a covenant? It is a contract of mutual peace and good-will, obliging parties on both hands to the performance of mutual offices. Thus was the covenant betwixt God and Abraham: there was a mutual stipulation in it on God's part, to perform his promises of temporal, spiritual, and eternal grace; and on Abraham's part, to receive this grace by faith, and to perform due obedience to God. Hence a little nearer, we say the covenant is a mutual compact betwixt God and man, whereby God promised all good things, especially eternal happiness, unto man; and man doth promise to walk before God in all acceptable, free, and willing obedience; expecting all good from God, and happiness in God, according to his promise, for the praise and glory of his grace. Others describe the covenant of grace thus: "The covenant of grace is a free and gracious compact, which God, of his mere mercy in Jesus Christ, hath made with sinful man, promising unto him

pardon of sins, and eternal happiness, if he will but repent of sin, and embrace mercy reaching forth by faith unfeigned, and walk before God in willing, faithful, and sincere obedience.” In this description many things are considered; as 1. That the author of this covenant is God; not as our Creator, but as our merciful God and Father in Christ Jesus. 2. That the cause of this covenant is not any worth, or dignity, or merit in man, but the mere mercy, love, and favour of God. 3. That the foundation of this covenant is Jesus Christ, in and through whom we are reconciled unto God; for since God and man were separated by sin, no covenant can pass betwixt them, no reconciliation can be expected, nor pardon obtained, but in and through a Mediator. 4. That the party covenanted with is sinful man; the fall of our first parents was the occasion of this covenant; and God was pleased to permit the fall, that he might manifest the riches of his mercy in man’s recovery. 5. That the form of this covenant stands, on God’s part, in gracious and free promises of forgiveness, holiness, and happiness; and on man’s part, in a restipulation of such duties as will stand with the free grace and mercy of God in Christ. 6. That the stipulation, on man’s part required, is repentance from sin, belief in the promises, and a yielding of fear, reverence, worship, and obedience, to God, according to his word.

2. What is the establishing of this covenant? The Lord had before made a covenant with Abraham, Gen. xv. 4, 5. And now he doth not abolish the former and make another, but rather confirms and establisheth the former. It may be there was some doubting in Abraham, but now God would assure him infallibly of his will; so he adds the seal of circumcision. “Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin,” saith God, “and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.” But what is circumcision to the covenant? Much every way. Circumcision was not without shedding of blood, because the covenant was not yet established in the blood of the Messiah: sure there was much in this, however the right of itself was nothing; yet as it led the faithful patriarchs to the blood of Christ, and as it assured the purging away of sin by the blood of Christ, and as it signed the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit of Christ, so it found acceptance with God.

3. Betwixt whom is the covenant to be established? “Betwixt me and thee,” saith God, “and thy seed after thee.” The two heads of this covenant are God and Abraham; on God’s part are, the whole Trinity of persons, the blessed angels, and all the host of heaven; on Abraham’s part are all his seed, *i.e.* the spiritual seed of Abraham. Now, under the seed, 1. all believing Jews, and 2. all Gentiles, are comprehended. All may be called the spiritual seed of Abraham, that walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham; and indeed thus runs the promise: “In thee shall all

the families of the earth be blessed,” Gen. xii. 3. “And in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed,” Gen. xviii. 18. Christians! here is your happiness; the covenant was not written for Abraham’s sake alone, but for us also, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. You may think all this while we are only discovering the privileges of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and of the Jews; no, blessed be God, heaven is no freer to a Jew than to a Gentile. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, male nor female; --but if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

4. For what time is the established covenant to endure? It is not for a few days, or months, or years, but forever and ever: it is an everlasting covenant; and indeed, the word established sounds this way; “I will establish my covenant,” I will have it stand and continue forever.

5. What are the privileges of the covenant? I answer, As they are great things, and great blessings, which our great God promiseth, so they are very many and numerous. The covenant is full of blessings; it is a rich store-house, replenished with all manner of blessings; it is not dry, nor barren, but like the fat olive or fruitful vine; it is a well of salvation, a fountain of good things, a treasure full of goods or unsearchable riches, which can never be emptied. Hence it is that our

narrow capacities can never apprehend the infinite grace that this covenant contains; yet as we may see things darkly in a map, so let us endeavor, as we are able, to view them in some map; that by the little we see, we may be raised up to the consideration of things not seen, which shall be revealed in due time.

The privileges of the covenant are folded up in the promises of it: every promise contains a privilege, but the time of unfolding every promise is not yet come. Then only shall all the promises of all sorts be unfolded, when the heavens as a vesture shall be folded up. I shall, for the present, confine myself to those promises and privileges which were manifested to Abraham. And they were,

1st. Of things temporal. Thus we read God promiseth Abraham, “I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and unto thy seed will I give this land.” – “By myself have I sworn,” saith the Lord, “that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”

(1.) “I will make of thee a great nation.” It seemed a thing incredible, because Abraham was old, and Sarah was barren and old; yet for all this, God is all-sufficient: Abraham shall have his desire, he shall be a father, not only of a few children, but of a numerous nation, yea, of many nations.

(2) I will bless thee, saith God: and this blessing had relation to his wealth: “Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.” No question those riches came from this blessing: “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich.”

(3.) “I will make thy name great,” saith God. No monarch was ever so famous in conquering nations, as Abraham for his faith and obedience. God hath magnified his name amongst the Hebrews, who for these three thousand years and upwards have acknowledged none, except Moses, greater than Abraham: and God hath so magnified his name amongst Christians, that all believers look upon it as a glory to be called “children of Abraham.”

(4.) “Unto thy seed will I give this land,” saith God, “as an everlasting possession,” Gen. xvii. 8. The answer is, that the word translated everlasting, doth not ever signify that which shall have no end, but an age, a term, or continuance; as it was said of Samuel, “He shall appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever”: *i.e.* as

long as he lived. And the desolations of the captivity were called “perpetual desolations,” *i.e.* long desolations, even for seventy years.

(2d.) Of things spiritual thus we read. “Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward”; I am God all-sufficient or omnipotent, the Almighty God, and I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. Oh, what precious promises are these! -- 1. I am thy shield, to keep thee from all evil, such a shield that no creature can pry through, such a shield as shall cover thee over; nay, such a shield as shall cover thee about. 2. “I am thy exceeding great reward: I am the Almighty God: I will be a God unto thee.” This is the very soul of the covenant, and of all the promises of God. All I am is thine, myself, my goods, my grace, my glory, whatsoever is in me, all that I have, and all my attributes, are thine. My power, my wisdom, my goodness, my riches, whatsoever is mine in the whole world, I will give it thee for thy portion; I and all that I have are thine, for thy use. Christians! was not this an exceeding great reward? Who can understand the height and depth, and length and breadth, of this reward? -- Surely “happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

6. What is the condition of this covenant? I answer, the condition of the covenant of grace is faith, and only faith; to this purpose it was said of Abraham, “He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.” And that act of faith, whereby Abraham believed that he should have a son, and that his children should possess the land of Canaan, was a shadow, a pledge, of that main act of faith, whereby he believed the promised seed, in whom himself and all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But let this be remembered, that Abraham did not only believe the temporal promises, but every promise; as, “I will be thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward”: Now who is our shield, but Christ? and who is our reward, but Christ? Especially he believed the promise of the seed; and who is the head of the seed, but Christ? Yea, he believed in that promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and who was that, but Christ? “Your Father Abraham,” saith Christ, “rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” He saw it! how could he see it? “Thou art not yet fifty years old, said the Jews, and hast thou seen Abraham?” or could Abraham see thee, or thy day? Yes, even then he saw it when he believed in Christ, he could see it no other ways but by faith; and therefore no question he believed in Christ, and that “was counted to him for righteousness.”

7. Who is the head, both as undertaker, and purchaser, and treasurer, upon whom this covenant is established? I answer, Christ: “All the promises of God in him are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us.” This was darkly set forth in the first manifestation of the covenant to Adam, but in this second, it is fully expressed and often repeated; thus, Gen. xii. 3. “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed”; and Gen. xviii. 18. All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham, and Gen. xxii. 18. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. In comparing these texts, we have a clear understanding thereof: “in thee,” in Abraham, shall all the families and nations of the earth be blessed; but lest Abraham himself should be thought author of this universal blessing, therefore is the explication, in thee, *i.e.* in “thy seed”; which, saith the Apostle expressly, is Jesus Christ.

Thus far of the covenant of promise, as it was manifested from Abraham to Moses.

Sect. IV. -- Of the Covenant of Promise as manifested to Moses.

The next breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to Moses. The revenging justice of God had now seized on mankind for many generations, so that now it was high time for God in the midst of wrath to remember mercy, and to break out

into a clearer expression of the promise. To this purpose the Lord calls up Moses to mount Sinai, and there of his infinite love and undeserved mercy, he makes and renews his covenant with him and the children of Israel. “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: Thou shall have no other gods before me.”

For the right understanding of this, we shall examine these particulars:

1. Whether the law was delivered in a covenant way?
2. In what sense is the law a covenant of grace?
3. How may it appear that the law in any sense is a covenant of grace?
4. Why should God in the law deal with us in a covenant-way, rather than a mere absolute supreme way?
5. What are the good things promised in this expression of the covenant?
6. What is the condition of this covenant on our part?

7. Who was the mediator of this covenant?

8. What of Christ, and his death, do we find in this manifestation of the covenant?

For the first. Whether the law was delivered in a covenant way? -- It is affirmed on these grounds:

1st. In that it hath the name of a covenant. 2d. In that it hath the real properties of a covenant. -- (1). The name of a covenant, as it appears in these texts: -- “And the Lord said unto Moses, Write these words; for after the tenor of these words, I have made a covenant with thee, and with Israel, And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. -- And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.”

(2.) The law hath the real properties of a covenant, which are the mutual consent and stipulation on both sides. You may see a full relation of this in Exod. xxiv. 3-8. “And Moses came and told all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all

the people answered with one voice. All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, -- and he took the book of the covenant, and read it the audience of the people; and they said. All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. 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.” In the words you may observe these properties of a covenant; -- 1. That God on his part expresseth his consent and willingness to be their God. 2. That the people on their part give their full consent and ready willingness to be his servants.

2. In what sense is the law a covenant of grace? I answer, The law may be considered in several senses, as, 1. Sometimes it signifies largely any heavenly doctrine, whether it be promise or precept; and in this sense the apostle tells us of the law of works, and of the law of faith. 2. Sometimes it signifies any part of the Old Testament, in which sense Jesus answered the Jews, “Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods?” 3. Sometimes, it signifies the whole economy, and peculiar dispensation, of God’s worship unto the Jews; in which sense it is said to continue until John, “The law and the prophets were until John.” 4. Sometimes it is taken for some acts of the law only, “Against such there is no law.” 5. Sometimes it is taken only for the ceremonial law, “The law having a

shadow of good things to come.” 6. Sometimes it is taken for that part of the moral law which is merely perceptive, without any promise at all. 7. Sometimes it is taken for the whole moral law, with the preface and promises added to it; and in this last sense we take it, when we say it is a covenant of grace.

3. How may it appear that the law in this sense is a covenant of grace? -- It appears, (1.) By that contract betwixt God and Israel before the promulgation of the law. “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Whereunto the prophet Jeremiah hath reference, saying, “Obey my voice, and do according to all which I command you, so shall you be my people, and I will be your God.” Both these scriptures speak of the moral law, or ten commandments, containing the preface and promises; and how should that law be any other but a covenant of grace, which runs in this tenor, -- I will be your God, and you shall be my people; my peculiar treasure; a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, if you will hear and obey my commandments. Surely these privileges could never have been obtained by a covenant of works. What! To be a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, a peculiar treasure to the Lord? What! To be beloved of God as a desirable treasure (for so it is in the original,) which a king delivers not into the hands of any of his officers,

but keepeth it to himself? This cannot be of works; no, no, these are privileges vouchsafed of mere grace in Jesus Christ; and therefore Peter applies this very promise to the people of God under the gospel, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

(2.) It appears by that contract betwixt God and Israel in the promulgation of the law; then it was that God proclaimed himself to be the God of Israel, saying, “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” This is a preface to the whole law, prefixed as a reason to persuade obedience to every commandment. But all acknowledge that is a free covenant, which promiseth pardon of sin, and requireth faith in the Messiah. When God saith to Israel -- I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt -- doth he not propound himself as their King, Judge, Saviour, and Redeemer; yea, and spiritual Redeemer, from their bondage of sin and Satan, whereof that temporal deliverance from Egypt was a type?

4. Why should God in the law deal with us in a covenant-way rather than in a mere absolute supreme way? I answer, (I.) In respect of God: it was his pleasure in giving the law not only to manifest his wisdom, and power, and sovereignty, but his faithfulness, and truth, and love, and the glory of his grace. If he had given

the precept without any promise, he might fully have discovered his supreme power, but his dear love and faithfulness could not have been known. Now therefore let the world take notice of his singular love and faithfulness; as Moses said to Israel, “Because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the hands of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”

(2.) In respect of us, God would rather deal with us in a covenant-way, than in a mere absolute supreme way, upon these grounds: -- 1. That he might bind us the faster to himself. A covenant binds on both parts. The Lord doth not bind himself to us, and leave us free; no, “I will bring you,” saith God, “into the bond of the covenant.” You may say a command binds as well as a covenant. It is true; but a covenant doth, as it were, twist the cords of the law, and double the precept upon the soul. When it is only a precept, then God alone commands it; but when I have made a promise to it, then I command it and bind it upon myself.

(3.) That our obedience might be more willing and free. An absolute law might seem to extort obedience, but a covenant and agreement makes it clearly to appear more free and willing. This is the nature of the covenant of grace: First, God promiseth mercy, to be our exceeding great reward; and then we promise obedience, to be his free, willing people: and thus we become God's, not only by a property founded in his sovereign power and love, but by a property growing out of our own voluntary consents. We are not only his people, but his willing people.

(4.) That our consolations might be stronger; that in all our difficulties and distresses we might ever have recourse to the faithfulness and love of God. This indeed was the prime end why God delivered his law in way of a covenant, that he might endear himself to us, and so draw us to him with cords of love. Had God so pleased, he might have required all obedience from us, and when he had done all, he might have reduced us into nothing, or at least not have given us heaven for an inheritance, or himself for a portion; but his love is such, that he will not only command but he will covenant, that he might further express and communicate his love. How then should this encourage us to go to God in all distresses? -- Oh! what thankful loving thoughts should we have of God that would thus infinitely condescend to covenant with us!

5. What are the good things promised in his expression of the covenant? Not to reckon up the temporal promises, the great mercies of God are expressed in these terms: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” This is the great promise of the covenant; it is as great as God himself. That we may better see it and know it, I shall take it in pieces: the gold is so pure, that it is pity the least filing should be lost. Here God describes himself by these notes: -- 1. By his only eternal and perfect essence, “I am the Lord.” 2. By the plurality of persons in that one essence, “I am the Lord God, Jehovah Elohim.” 3. By the propriety his people have in Jehovah Elohim, “I am the Lord thy God.” 4. By the fruit of that propriety in reference to Israel, “Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

(1.) I am Jehovah. This name denotes both his being, and his performance of his promise. Thus he was not known to the patriarchs: they only were sustained by faith in God’s almighty power, without receiving the thing promised; but when the Israelites came to receive the promise, and to have full knowledge and experience of his power and goodness, then they knew the efficacy of his name Jehovah.

(2.) I am Jehovah Elohim. This denotes the plurality of persons. God, in delivering of the law, doth not only show his being, but the manner of his being, or the trinity

of persons in the unity of essence. The word signifies strong, potent, mighty; or if we express it plurally, it signifies the almighties, or the almighty powers. Hence the scriptures apply the general name, God, to the persons severally, the Father is God, Heb. i. 1, 2. The Son is God, Acts xx. 28. And the Holy Ghost is God, Acts v. 3, 4.

(3.) I am the Lord thy God. Herein is the propriety, and indeed here is the mercy, that God speaks thus to every faithful soul, I am thy God. By this appropriation God gives us a right in him, yea, a possession of him. 1. A right in him: as the woman may say of him to whom she is married, this man is my husband, so may every faithful soul say of the Lord, he is my God. 2. A possession of him: God doth not only show himself unto us, but he doth communicate himself unto us in his holiness, mercy, truth, grace, and goodness; hence it is said, “We have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Herein God gives himself to be wholly ours, consider God essentially or personally. Consider Jehovah Elohim, all is ours. God, in his essence and glorious attributes, communicates himself to us for good; and God, personally considered, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they all enter into covenant with us.

[1.] The Father enters into covenant with us. He promiseth to be a Father to us: hence saith the Lord, “Israel is my Son, my first-born.”

[2.] The Son is in covenant with us, and speaks to us in this language; “Thou art mine; I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, and therefore thou art mine.” This is Christ’s covenant with us; he brings us back to his Father, from whose presence we were banished, and sets us before his face for ever. He promiseth to restore us to the adoption of sons; and not only to the title, but to the inheritance of sons, that we might be where he is.

[3.] The Holy Ghost makes a covenant with us. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness.” “This is the covenant that I will make with them; I will put my law into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” I know the Father is implied in this, yet here is the proper work of the Holy Ghost. What the Father hath purposed, and the Son hath purchased for us, that the Holy Ghost effects in us. He applies the blood of Christ for the remission of sins; he writes the law in our hearts; he comforts us in our sadness; he supports us in our faintings and guides us in our wanderings. Now in that he effects these things for us, and in our behalf, he is said to make a covenant with us. Thus Elohim, God personally considered, Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost, are in covenant with us.

(4.) Let us see the fruit of this in reference to Israel: --which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. This was God's promise long before to Abraham: "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years: And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards they shall come out with great substance." See here, Israel must be strangers in the land of Egypt, and serve the Egyptians four hundred years; but then he will bring them out of the land of Egypt, and out of their servile bondage. Why, this argues that God is Jehovah. Now he has performed what he had foretold and this argues that God in Christ is our Redeemer; for what was this redemption from Egypt, but a type of our freedom from sin, death, and hell?

6. What is the condition of this covenant on our part? The condition of this covenant is faith in Jesus, which is implied in the promise, "I will be thy God," or "I am the Lord thy God"; and commanded in the precept built upon it; thou shalt have me to be thy God, or, thou shalt have no other gods before me. But where is faith in Jesus Christ mentioned, either in promise or precept? I answer. If it be not expressed, it is very plainly intended. God is not the God of Israel, but in and

through the Mediator; neither can Israel take God to be their God, but by faith in the Messiah. But to go further; What is the meaning of this first commandment in the affirmative part, but to have one God in Christ to be our God by faith? It is true there is no mention made of Christ or faith; but that is nothing. There is no mention of love, and yet our Saviour discovers it there; when the lawyer tempted Christ, -- “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” You know Christ’s answer. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment,” Matt. xxii. 36, 37, 38. Now as our Saviour discovers love there, so in like manner is faith and Christ there, the necessary consequents.

But you may object. What say we to obedience? Is not that rather the condition of this covenant in the law? The law is considered either more strictly, as it is a rule of righteousness, setting forth life upon no other terms but perfect obedience, or more largely, as that whole doctrine delivered on mount Sinai, with the preface and promises adjoined: in the former sense it is a covenant of works, but in the latter it is a covenant of grace. And yet I dare not say, that as the law is a covenant of grace, it doth exclude obedience. In some sort, obedience, as well as faith, may be said to be a condition of the covenant of grace. I shall give you my thoughts in this distinction: obedience to all God’s commands, is either considered as a cause of

life, or as a qualification. In the former sense, it cannot be a condition of the covenant of grace; but in the latter, it may. If by condition we understand whatsoever is required on our part, as precedent, concomitant, or subsequent, to the covenant of grace, repentance, faith, and obedience are all conditions: but if by condition we understand whatsoever is required on our part as the cause of the good promised, though only instrumental, why then faith is the only condition. Faith and obedience are opposed in the matter of justification and salvation; not that they cannot stand together, (for they are inseparably united,) but because they cannot meet together in one court, as the cause of justification or salvation. Now, when we speak of the condition of the covenant of grace, we intend such a condition as is among the number of true causes. Indeed, in the covenant of works obedience is required as the cause of life; but in the covenant of grace, though obedience must accompany faith, yet only faith is the cause of life contained in the covenant.

7. Of this covenant, Moses was a typical, but Christ the spiritual. Mediator. There is a great deal of difference betwixt Moses and Christ, as, 1. Moses only received the law, and delivered it to the people; but Christ, our true Moses, fulfilled it. 2. Moses broke the tables, to show how we in our nature had broken the law; but

Christ, our true Moses, repairs it. 3. Moses had the law only writ in tables of stone; but Christ writes it in the tables of our hearts. 4. Moses was mere man; but Christ is God as well as man. 5. Moses was only a servant in God's house; but Christ is a son, yea, Christ is Lord of his own house, the church. 6. Moses' meditation was of this use, to show what was the true manner of worshipping God; but he did not inspire power to follow it: he could not reconcile men to God, as of himself; and therefore it appeared that there was need of another reconciler, *viz*, the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. What do we find of Christ, and of his death, in this manifestation of the covenant? I answer,

(1.) In delivering the law, we find something of Christ. Some of the learned are of opinion, that Christ the Son of God did in the shape of a man, deliver the law.

(2.) In the law itself, as it is a covenant of grace, we find something of Christ: in the preface he proclaims himself to be our God; and in the first commandment we are bound to take this God to be our God; and in the second, he gives us a double motive to obey; "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God; I shew mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." And in the fifth

commandment he gives a promise of long life in Canaan, which is either to be looked at as a type of heaven, or literally, for a prosperous condition here on earth; but, howsoever, it is by virtue of the covenant, and as a testimony of God's love. Now all these promises are made in Christ. God is not our God, but in and through Jesus Christ. God will not shew mercy unto thousands, nor unto one of all the thousands of his saints, but as they are in Jesus Christ. God will not give us long life here, or eternity hereafter, but in, for, and through, the Lord Jesus Christ. What if Moses writ not down the word Christ, yet certainly Moses writ of Christ: his words imply Christ, as Christ himself told the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for Moses wrote of me." Surely Christ was, if not the only subject, yet the only scope, of all the writings of Moses; and therefore in the law itself, you see, we find something of Christ.

(3.) In the exposition of the law, as Moses gives it here and there, we find something of Christ. Yea, if we observe it, Moses brought something more to the expression of Christ, and of the covenant of grace, than ever was before. In the first promise it was revealed, that Christ should be the seed of the woman; in the second manifestation of the promise, it was revealed that Christ should be of the seed of Abraham; but in Moses' writings, and Moses' time, we learn more expressly that Christ was to be incarnate, and to have his conversation amongst men. The promise

runs thus: “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them; I am the Lord their God.”

Again, Moses, writing of Christ, “The Lord thy God,” saith he, “will raise up unto thee a prophet from thee midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.” Was not this a plain expression: Peter, in his sermon to the Jews, preached Jesus Christ; and he tells the Jews, that this Jesus Christ was preached unto them before. When before? Even in Moses’ time; and for proof he cites this very text, “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.”

(4.) In the confirmation of the law, we find something of Christ. It was confirmed by seals and sacrifices. What were all these but a type of Christ? In the former expression of the covenant we found the seal of circumcision, but now it pleased God to add unto the former another seal for confirmation of their faith, namely, the passover. And was not this a type of Christ, the immaculate Lamb of God, “which taketh away the sins of the world”? Again, in this manifestation Moses brought in the priesthood as a settled ordinance, to offer sacrifices for the people; and was not this a type of Christ our true and unchangeable high priest? No question, the death

and resurrection of Christ, the priesthood and kingdom of Christ, were prefigured by the sacrifices, the brazen serpent, the priesthood of Aaron, and the kingdom of Israel. And I cannot but think that the godly spiritual Jews understood this very well; and that these did not rest in sacrifices or sacraments, but that by faith they did really enjoy Christ in them.

(5.) In the intention of God's giving the law, we find something of Christ. The very end of God in promulging the law, was, that upon the sense of our impossibility to keep it, and of our danger to break it, we should desire earnestly, and seek out diligently for Jesus Christ. To this purpose, saith the apostle, "The law is our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." A schoolmaster, you know, doth not only correct, but also teach: so the law doth not only curse if the work be not done, but it shows where power and help is to be had, that is, from the Lord Jesus Christ. If this be so, how much to blame are they that, under pretence of free grace and Christ, cry down the law? Rather let us cry it up; and this is the way to set up free grace and Christ. Surely, he that discovers his defects by the perfect rule of the law, and whose soul is humbled because of those defects, must needs prize Christ, desire Christ, advance Christ in his thoughts, above all the men in the world.

And thus far of the covenant of promise, as it was manifested from Moses to David.

Sect. V. -- Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to David.

The next breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to David; and in this manifestation, appears yet more of Christ. The expression of it is chiefly in these words: Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.

For the right understanding of this, we shall examine these particulars: --

1. Who is the author of this covenant?
2. To whom is the covenant made?
3. What is this, that the covenant is said to be made?
4. How is the covenant ordered?

5. Wherein is the covenant sure?

6. Whether is Christ more clearly manifested in this breaking forth of the covenant, than in any of the former?

1. Who is the author of this covenant? David says, “He hath made it”: He, *i.e.* God; “The rock of Israel, the everlasting rock; the rock of their salvation,” Psal. viii. 2. “The rock of their refuge,” Psal. xciv. 22. “Their rock, and their Redeemer,” Psal. xix. 14. The Psalmist is frequent in this style to show that God is the mighty, stable, and immutable defence of all the faithful, who fly unto him, and will trust in him. He is such a rock as will not fail his creatures. Man is unstable; but he is God, and not man, who is the author of this covenant.

2. To whom is the covenant made? Why, saith David, “He hath made with me an everlasting covenant”; *i.e.* either with Christ the antitype, or else with David himself, the type of Christ. Some are wholly for a covenant betwixt God and Christ, and they deny any such thing as a covenant betwixt God and man: but are not the testimonies express? “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant which the Lord hath made with you.” And, “I will make a new covenant with the

house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” Oh! take heed of such doctrines as tend unto licentiousness; the covenant God makes with us binds us faster to God, and if there be no covenant betwixt God and us, it opens a gap to the looseness of our spirits; for how should we be charged with unfaithfulness unto God, if we have not all entered into a covenant with God?

3. What is this, that the covenant is said to be made? This exhibits to us the freeness of God’s entering into covenant with us. When God makes a covenant, then he gives grace unto all that he takes into covenant with him. “The Lord set his love upon you,” said Moses to Israel, “to take you into covenant with him; not because ye were more in number than other people, but because he loved you, and chose your fathers.”

4. How is the covenant said to be ordered? The word ordered sets out to us a marshalling, and fit laying of things together, in opposition to disorder and confusion. As we see in an army, every one is set in rank and file; so everything in this covenant is so ranked, disposed, and ordered, that it stands at best advantage to receive and repel the enemy.

(1.) It is well ordered in respect of the root out of which it grew. This was the infinite wisdom and mercy of God. 1. It was founded in wisdom. The covenant of grace was a result of council; it was no rash act, but a deliberate act with infinite wisdom. God being the sovereign of all his creatures, and seeing mankind in a perishing condition, determined within himself deliberately to make such a covenant of peace. 2. It was founded in mercy; *i.e.* in the goodness of God flowing out to one in misery.

(2.) It is well ordered, in respect of the method. First, God begins; then we come on: -- First, God on his part gives grace; and then we, on our parts, act faith and obedience. God hath ever the first work: as, first, “I will be your God,” and then “ye shall be my people”: first, “I will take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh”; and then “you shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities, and for your abominations”: first, “I will sprinkle water upon you,” and then “ye shall be clean from all your filthiness”: first, “I will put my Spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes”: and then “ye shall keep my judgments, and do them”: first, “I will pour out my Spirit of grace and supplication upon you,” and then “you shall mourn as a man mourneth for his only son”: first, “I will do all,” and then ye shall do something. A troubled spirit is apt to cry out, Alas! I can do nothing: I can as well dissolve a rock, as make my heart of stone a heart of flesh! Mark how the covenant

stands well ordered like an army: “I will do all,” saith God, and then thou shalt do something: “I will strengthen and quicken you,” and then “ye shall serve me,” saith the Lord.

(3.) It is well ordered, in respect of the end and aim, to which all the parts of the covenant are referred. The end of the covenant is the praise of the glory of his grace: the parts of the covenant are the promise and the stipulation; the promise is either principal, and that is God and Christ; or secondary, and that is justification, sanctification, and glorification: and the stipulation on our parts are faith and obedience; we must believe in him that justifies the ungodly, and walk before him in all well-pleasing. Observe now the main design of the covenant, and see but how all the streams run towards that ocean. God gives himself to the praise of the glory of his grace. God gives Christ to the praise of the glory of his grace. God gives pardon, sanctification and salvation, to the praise of the glory of his grace; and we believe, we obey, to the praise of the glory of his grace; and good reason, for all is of grace, and therefore all must tend to the praise of the glory of his grace. It is of grace that God hath given himself, Christ, pardon, sanctification, and salvation, to any soul. It is of grace that we believe; by grace ye are saved through faith, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Oh! the sweet and comely order of this covenant! All is of grace, and all tends to the praise of the glory of his grace;

and therefore it is called the covenant of grace. Many a soul is forced to cry, I cannot believe; I may as well reach heaven with a finger, as lay hold on Christ by the hand of faith: but mark how the covenant stands, like a well-marshalled army, to repel this doubt; if thou canst not believe, God will enable thee to believe. To you it is given to believe. God will not only promise good things, but helps us by his Spirit to perform the conditions. He works our hearts to believe in God, and to believe in Christ. All is of grace, that all may tend to the praise of the glory of his grace.

5. Wherein is the covenant sure? I answer. It is sure in the performance and accomplishment of it. Hence the promises of the covenant are called “the sure mercies of David”; not because they are sure unto David alone, but because they are sure unto all the seed of David, that are in covenant with God, as David was. The promises of God’s covenant are not yea and nay, various and uncertain; but they are yea and amen, sure to be fulfilled. Hence the stability of God’s covenant is compared to the firmness and immoveableness of the mighty mountains; nay, “Mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, by a miracle; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.” Sooner shall the rocks be removed, the

fire cease to burn, the sun be turned into darkness, and the very heavens be confounded with the earth, than the promise of God shall fail.

6. Christ is more clearly manifested in this breaking forth of the covenant, than in any of the former. For here we see,

(1.) That he was God and man, in one person; David's son, and yet David's Lord.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

(2.) That he suffered for us: and in his sufferings how many particulars are discovered! As, first, his cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

Secondly, the Jews' taunts. "He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he delight in him." Thirdly, the very manner of his death. "They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me: they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

(3.) That he rose again for us. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

(4.) That he ascended up into heaven. “Thou hast ascended up on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men.”

(5.) That he must be King over us, and over his enemies. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

(6.) That he must be Priest, as well as King; and Sacrifice, as well as Priest. “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech.” “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows”: (*i.e.* above all Christians, who are thy fellows, consorts, and partners, in the anointing:) “sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not have; but mine ear hast thou bored: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O God.” Mine ears hast thou bored, or digged open. The Septuagint, to make the sense plainer, say, “But a body hast thou fitted me,” or “prepared for me”: meaning, that his body was ordained and fitted to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world, when other legal

sacrifices were received as unprofitable. See how clearly Christ is revealed. It was never thus before.

And thus far of the covenant of promise as it was manifested from David till the Captivity.

Sect. VI. -- Of the Covenant of Promise, as manifested to Israel about the time of the Captivity,

The great breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to Israel about the time of their captivity. By reason of that captivity of Babylon, Israel was almost clean destroyed; and therefore, then it was high time that the Lord should appear like a sun after a stormy rain, and give them some clearer light of Christ. He doth so, especially in these words: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will

be their God, and they shall be my people; 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 to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” In this expression of the covenant, we shall examine these particulars:

1. Why it is called a new covenant?
2. Wherein the expression of this covenant doth excel the former, which God made with their fathers?
3. How doth God put the law into our inward parts?
4. What is it to have the law written in our hearts?
5. How are we taught of God, so as not to need (comparatively) any other kind of teaching?
6. What is the universality of this knowledge, in that “all shall know me, saith the Lord”?

1. Why is it called a new covenant? I answer, it is called new, in contradiction to the covenant of promise before Christ came. The very same words are repeated in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth, and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.” The, new covenant is usually understood in the latter sense; it is new, because diverse from that which God made with the fathers before Christ; it hath a new worship, new adoration, a new form of the church, new witnesses, new tables, new ordinances: and these never to be disannulled, never to wax old, as the apostle speaks.

2. Wherein doth this covenant excel the former, which God made with their fathers? I answer, --

(1.) It excels in the benefits and graces of the Spirit. We find, that under this covenant they were more plentifully bestowed upon the church than formerly.

(2.) It excels in the discovery of the Mediator, in and through whom this covenant was made. In the former expression we discovered much, yet in none of them was

so plainly revealed the time of his coming, the place of his birth, his name, the passages of his nativity, his humiliation and kingdom, as we find in this.--

[1.] Concerning the time of his coming. – “Seventy weeks shall be determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.”

[2.] Concerning the place of his birth. – “But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

[3.] Concerning his name. – “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. -- In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is

his name whereby he shall be called. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. --

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and thou, O virgin, shalt call his name Immanuel.”

[4.] Concerning the passages of his nativity. -- That he should be born of a virgin, Isa. vii. 14. That at his birth all the infants round about Bethlehem should be slain, Jcr, xxxi. 15. That John the Baptist should be his forerunner, to prepare his way, Mai. iii. 1. That he should flee into Egypt, and be recalled thence again, Hos, xi. 1. I might add many particulars of this kind.

[5.] Concerning his humiliation. – “Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted: but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. -- He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. -- He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. -- It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief. -- Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with

the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” One would think this were rather a history than a prophecy of Christ’s sufferings.

[6.] Concerning his kingdom. – “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Behold a King, behold thy King; behold thy King cometh and he cometh unto thee. -- 1. He is a King, and therefore able. 2. He is thy King, and therefore willing.

Wonderful love, that he would come, but more wonderful was the manner of his coming: he that before made man a soul after the image of God, then made himself a body after the image of man. And thus we see how this covenant excels the former in every of these respects.

3. How doth God put the law in our inward parts? I answer, God puts the law into our inward parts, by enlivening a man with the graces of his holy Spirit, suitable to his commandment. First, There is the law of God without us, as we see it or read it in scriptures; but when it is put within us, then God hath wrought an inward disposition in our minds, that answers to that law without us: For example; This is the law without, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with

all thy soul, and with all thy strength.” To answer which there is a promise, “I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.” Now, when this promise is fulfilled, when God hath put love in our hearts, then is the law put into our inward parts.

4. What is it to have the law written in our hearts? This writing contains the former, and is something more. It is said to be written, that there might be something within answerable to the law without; it was written without, and so it was written within. This writing is the very same with copying or transcribing. The writing within is every way answerable to the writing without. Oh! what a mercy is this, that the same God who writ the law with his own finger in the tables of stone, should also write the same law with the finger of his Spirit in the tables of our hearts! As you see in a seal, when you have put the seal on the wax, and you take it off again, you find on the wax the same impression that was on the seal: so it is in the hearts of the faithful; when the Spirit hath once softened them, then he writes the law, *i.e.* he stamps an inward aptness, and an inward disposition, on the heart, answering to every particular of the law.

5. How are we taught of God, so as not to need comparatively any other kind of teaching? I answer --

(1.) God teacheth inwardly. – “In the hidden part thou hast made me to know wisdom,” saith David: and again, “I thank the Lord that gave me counsel, my reins also instruct me in the night season.” The reins are the most inward part of the body, and the night-season the most private time: both express the intimacy of Divine teaching. “God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts.” Man’s light may shine into the head, but God’s light alone doth shine into the heart.

(2.) God teacheth clearly. Elihu offering himself instead of God to reason with Job, he tells him. “My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.” If ever the word come home to an heart, it comes with a convincing clearness. So the apostle, “Our gospel came unto you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much full assurance.” The word hath a treble emphasis -- assurance, full assurance, and much full assurance: Here is clear work.

(3.) God teacheth sweetly and comfortably. – “Thou hast taught me,” saith David; and then it follows, “how sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.” Luther said, “He would not live in paradise, if he must live

without the word; but with the word,” said he, “I could live in hell.” When Christ put his hand in by the hole of the door to teach the heart, her bowels were moved, and then her fingers dropt upon the handles of the lock sweet-smelling myrrh.

Cant. v. 5. The teachings of Christ left such a blessing upon the first motions of the spouse’s heart, that with the very touch of them she is refreshed; her fingers drop myrrh, and her bowels are moved, as the monuments of his gracious teachings.

Christians, these are the teachings of God! and in reference to this, we shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord. God’s teaching is another kind of teaching than we can have from the hands of men; there is no man in the world can teach us: and therefore, they whom God teacheth, need not any other kind of teaching, respectively or comparatively.

6. What is the universality of this knowledge? – “They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” The meaning is, that all that are in the covenant of grace shall be so taught of God, that they shall everyone know God inwardly, clearly, experimentally, sweetly, and savingly.

I have now propounded the object we are to look unto; that is, Jesus, as held forth in a way of promise or covenant; in that dark time from the creation till his first coming in the flesh: our next business is to direct you in the mystery of grace how you are to look to him in this respect.

CHAP. II.

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus, as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation from the Creation until his First Coming.

Looking comprehends knowing, considering, desiring, hoping, believing, loving, joying, calling on, conforming to, as you have heard; and accordingly, that we may practise, 1. We must know Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in the beginning, and from the beginning, of the world. Come, let us learn what he did for us in the morning of this world: he made it for us, and he made us more especially for his own glory; but presently after we were made, we sinned and marred the image wherein God made us. This was the saddest act that ever was; it was the undoing of man, and, without the mercy of God, the damning of all souls to all eternity. And, O my soul, know this for thyself, thou wast in the loins of Adam at

that same time, so that what he did, thou didst; thou wast partaker of his sins, and thou wast to partake with him in his punishment: but well mayest thou say, Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! at the very instant when all should have been damned, Christ intervened; a covenant of grace is made with man, and Christ is the foundation, in and through whom we must be reconciled unto God. Come, soul, and study this covenant of grace in reference to thyself. Had not this been, where hadst thou been, nay, where had all the world been, at this day? Surely it concerns thee to take notice of this great transaction. After man had fallen by sin, Christ is promised; and that all the saints might partake of Christ, a covenant of grace is entered; this, at the beginning of the world, was more dim; but the nearer to Christ's coming in the flesh, the more clearly it appeared. Howsoever, dimly or clearly, thus it pleased God in Christ to carry on the great work of our salvation at that time; *viz.* by a promise of Christ, and by a covenant in Christ. And for thy better knowledge of it, study the promise made to Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel. Study these several breakings out of the covenant of grace. It is worth thy pains; it is a mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints. Here lies the firm foundation of a Christian's comfort; if thou canst but assure thyself of thy part in this, thou art blessed for ever. Oh! how satisfying is it to know the faithful engagements of the Almighty God through that Son of his love, in a covenant of grace!

Sect. II. -- Of Considering Jesus in that respect.

We must consider Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in that dark time. It is not enough to study it and know it, but we must seriously meditate, ponder, and consider of it, till we bring it to some profitable issue. This is the consideration I mean, when we hold our thoughts to this or that spiritual subject, till we perceive success, and the work prosper in our hands. Now, to help us in this, --

I. Consider Jesus in the first promise made to man. “It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” When all men were under the guilt of sin, and in the power of Satan, and when thou, my soul, wert in as bad a case as any other; then to hear the sound of these glad tidings, then to hear of Jesus, a Saviour and Redeemer, sure this was welcome news. Come, draw the case nearer to thyself: thou wast in Adam’s loins; suppose thou hadst been in Adam’s stead; suppose thou hadst heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, suppose thou hadst heard him call, “Adam, where art thou?” Peter, Andrew, Thomas, where art thou? What hast thou

eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? Appear, and come to judgment; the law is irrevocable. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” There is nothing to be looked for but death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal. Oh! what a fearful condition is this, no sooner to come into the world, but presently to be turned over into hell! for one day to be a monarch of the world, and the very next to be a slave of Satan, and bound hand and foot in a darksome dungeon! for a few hours to live in Eden, to enjoy every tree in the garden, pleasant to the sight, and good for food, and then to enter into the confines of eternity, and ever to be tormented with the devil and his angels! It is no wonder if Adam hid himself from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. O my soul, in that case thou wouldst have cried to the rocks and to the mountains. Fall on me, and hide me from the face of him that sitteth on the throne. If God be angry, who may abide it? When the great day of his wrath is come, who shall be able to stand? And yet despair not, O my soul; for in the midst of wrath God is pleased to remember mercy. Even now, when all the world should have been damned, Jesus is proclaimed and promised; and he it is that must die, according to the commination, for he is our surety, and he it is that by death must overcome death and the devil. “It shall bruise thy head,” saith God to Satan; as if he had said. Come, Satan, thou hast taken captive ten thousands of souls: Adam and Eve are now ensnared, and in their loins all the men and women that ever shall

be: now is thy day of triumph, but thou shalt not carry it thus. Out of the seed of the woman shall spring a branch, “and he shall bruise thy head”; he shall break thy power, he shall tread thy dominion under foot, he shall lead thy captivity captive, he shall take away sin, he shall point out to men and angels the glory of heaven, and a new world of free grace. In this promise, O my soul, is wrapped up thy hope, thy heaven, thy salvation; and therefore consider it, look on all sides of it, view it over and over; it is a field that contains in the bowels of it a precious treasure; there is in it a Saviour, a Redeemer, a Deliverer from sin, death, and hell.

2. Consider Jesus in that promise made to Abraham: “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” In respect of this covenant, Abraham is called the father of the faithful: and they which are of the faith, are called the children of Abraham. And, O my soul! thou dost by faith draw it through Abraham, to whom this promise was made; for if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Consider what a mercy this is, that God should enter into a covenant with thee in the loins of Abraham. God made a promise of Christ, and inclusively a covenant of grace, in his comforting Adam; but he makes a covenant expressly under the name of covenant, with Abraham and his seed. Be amazed! What! that the great and

glorious God of heaven and earth should make himself a debtor to us! O my soul, think of it seriously: He is in heaven, and thou art on earth; he is the Creator, and thou art his creature. Ah! what art thou, or what is thy father's house, that thou shouldest be raised up hitherto! The very covenant is a wonder, as it relates to God and us. What is it but a compact, a binding of God and us. When Jehosaphat and Ahab were in covenant, see how Jehosaphat expresseth himself, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses"; so it is betwixt God and us. If once he gives us the covenant, then his strength is our strength, his power is our power, his armies are our armies, his attributes are our attributes, we have interest in all. There is an offensive and defensive league, as I may say, betwixt God and us; and if we put him in mind of it in all our straits, he cannot deny us. Thus runs the tenor of his covenant: "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." This is the general promise; I may call it the mother-promise, that carries all other promises in its womb. Consider, that it is God in Christ that is propounded to us in this phrase, "I will be a God to thee." Here is the greatest promise that ever was made. Christ, God, is more than grace, pardon, holiness, heaven; as the husband is more excellent than the marriage-robe, bracelets, rings. The well and fountain of life is of more excellency than the streams. Christ Jesus is far above a created beatitude which issueth from him, O my soul, is not this worthy of thy inmost consideration?

3. Consider Jesus in that promise made to Moses and the Israelites, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Much hath been said to this promise; but to contradict it, consider in the promise the sufficiency and propriety. First, here is sufficiency. It is a promise of infinite worth, an hid treasure, a rich possession, an overflowing blessing, which none can rightly value; it is no less than the great and mighty, and infinite God. If we had a promise of a hundred worlds, or of ten heavens, this is more than all: heaven indeed is beautiful, but God is more beautiful; for he is the God of heaven: and hence it is that the saints in heaven are not satisfied without their God. It is a sweet expression of Bernard, “As whatsoever we give unto thee, Lord, unless we give ourselves, cannot satisfy thee; so whatsoever thou givest unto us, Lord, unless thou givest thyself, it cannot satisfy us.” And hence it is, that as God doth make the saints his portion, so God is the portion and inheritance of his saints. Consider the greatness, the goodness, the all-sufficiency of this promise, “I am the Lord thy God”! No question but Moses had many other rich promises from God, but he could not be satisfied without God himself: “If thy presence be not with us, bring us not hence.” And no wonder; for without God all things are nothing; but in the want of all other things, God himself is instead of all: it is God’s sole prerogative to be an universal good. The things of this world can but help in this or that

particular thing; as bread against hunger, drink against thirst, clothes against cold and nakedness, house against wind and weather, riches against poverty, physic against sickness; but God is an all-sufficient good: he is all in all both to the inner and outward man. Are we guilty of sin? there is mercy in God to pardon us. Are we full of infirmities? there is grace in God to heal us. Are we strong in corruptions? there is power in God to subdue them in us. Are we disquieted in conscience? there is that Spirit in God, that is the Comforter, that can fill us with joy unspeakable and glorious. And for our outward man, all our welfare is laid up in God: "He is the God of our life," Psal. xlii. 1. "He is the strength of our life," Psal. xxvii. 1. "He is a quickening Spirit," 1 Cor. xv. 45. Which though it be in regard of the inner man, yet there it is spoken of the outward man, which the Lord shall quicken after death, and doth now keep alive by his mighty power; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being."

O my soul, that thou wouldst but meditate and consider this promise in all thy wants. When means fail, and the streams run no more. Oh! that thou wouldest then go to the fountain, where the waters run sweeter, and more sure! For as Joseph said to Pharaoh, -- "It is not in me, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace": so may silver and gold, and such things, say to thee, It is not in us; God shall give enough out of himself. Have God, and have all: want God, and there is no content in the

enjoyment of all. It was the apostle's case; as "having nothing, yet possessing all things." Surely he lived to God, and enjoyed God, and he was an all-sufficient good unto him. God may be enjoyed in any condition; in the meanest, as well as the greatest; in the poorest, as well as the richest. God will go into a wilderness, into a prison, with his people, and there he will make up all that they are cut short of. Thy discontents therefore arise not from want of inward means, but from want of inward fellowship with God: and if thou dost not find a sufficiency, it is because thou dost not enjoy him, who is thy all-sufficient good. Oh! stir up faith, and consider the covenant; think seriously on this promise – "I am God all-sufficient; I am the Lord thy God."

Here is the propriety of saints – "the Lord thy God." What is this, that God is thy God? Heaven and earth, angels and men, may stand astonished at it. What! that the great and mighty God, God almighty, and God all-sufficient, should be called thy God! It is observable what the apostle speaks, "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Would not a prince be ashamed to take a beggar, a base and adulterous woman, to be his wife? But we are worse than so, and God is better than so; sin hath made us worse than the worst of women; and God is better, holier, higher, than the best of princes; and yet God is not ashamed to own us, nor ashamed that we own him as our own – "I am thy God." It is as if the Lord should say. Use me,

and all my power, grace, mercy, kindness, as thine own. Go through all my attributes; consider my almighty power, consider my wisdom, understanding, goodness, truth, faithfulness; consider my patience, longsuffering, forbearance, all these are thine: as thus, -- my power is thine, to work all thy works for thee, and in thee, to make a passage for thee in all thy straits, to deliver thee out of six troubles, and out of seven: my wisdom is thine, to counsel thee in any difficult cases, to instruct thee in things that be obscure, to reveal to thee the mysteries of grace, and the wonderful things contained in my law: my justice is thine, to deliver thee when thou art oppressed, to defend thee in thy innocence, and to vindicate thee from the injuries of men. What needs more? O my soul, think of these, and all other God's attributes; say in thyself, All these are mine: nay more; think of God in Christ, (for otherwise what hast thou to do with God in a covenant of grace?) and say in thy heart, Jesus Christ is mine, my Saviour, my Redeemer, my Head, my elder Brother. His doings are mine, and his sufferings are mine; his life and death, his resurrection and ascension, his session and intercession, all are mine: nay more; If Christ be mine, why then all good things are mine in Christ; I say, in Christ, for they come not immediately, but through the hands of a Redeemer; and though he be a man who redeemed us, yet because he is God as well as man, there is more of God, and heaven, and free-love, in all our good things, than if we received them immediately from God. Ravens have their food, and devils have their being, from

God by creature-right; but we have all we have, from God in Christ, by covenant-right. This, surely this very promise, is the principal promise of the covenant; it is the very substance, soul, and life of all. Oh then! how careful shouldst thou be to improve the strength of thy mind, thoughts, and affections, on this only subject!

4. Consider Jesus in that promise made to David, “He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

(1.) An everlasting covenant. -- Christ hath built and prepared a kingdom, that shall never fade; a spiritual and a heavenly kingdom, which shall never cease. And as he hath prepared it, so if thou believest, he hath entered into a covenant with thy soul to bestow it on thee; it is an everlasting covenant, and he will give thee everlasting life.

(2.) It is ordered in all things. -- The covenant of grace is so marshalled and ordered, that it stands at best advantage to receive and repel all thy objections. Many an objection hast thou raised: how often have such thoughts been in thee; Oh! I am miserable, I shall not live, but die; my sins will damn me; I am lost for ever! And again, If God hath made with me a covenant, why then I have something to do on my part; (for this is the nature of the covenant, to bind on both parts;) but,

alas! I have failed, I can do nothing; I can as well dissolve a rock, as make my heart of stone a heart of flesh; I can as well reach heaven with a finger, as lay hold on Christ by the hand of faith! Have not such arguings as these been many a time in thy heart? Consider how the covenant is ordered in respect of the author of it, of the person's interest in it, of the parts of which it consists, and of the end and aim to which it refers: and in some of these, if not in all of these, thou wilt find thy objections answered.

(3.) It is sure. -- God is not fast and loose in his covenant. Heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of his word shall fail. Consider, O my soul, he both can and will perform his word: his power, his love, his faithfulness, all stand engaged. What sweet matter is here for a soul to dwell upon! What needs it go out to other objects, whilst it may find enough here? but, especially, what needs it to bestow itself upon vain things? Oh! that so much precious sand of our thoughts should run out after sin, and so little after grace, or after this covenant of grace!

5. Consider Jesus in that promise which God made with Israel and Judah: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: 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 to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.” Oh, what an error is it, that there is no inherent righteousness in the saints, but only in Christ! Is not this the ordinary scripture-phrase – “I will put my Spirit within you”: and, “the water that I shall give you, shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life”: and, “the anointing which you have received of him, abideth in you”: and, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” Observe how the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels; so that when the spirit went, they went; and when the spirit was lifted up, they were lifted up: even so is the Spirit of Christ, acting, guiding, framing, and disposing them to move and walk according to his laws: “The kingdom of heaven is within you,” saith Christ. And “I delight to do thy will, O God,” saith David, “yea, thy law is within my heart.” O my soul, if thou art in covenant with God, besides the indwelling of the Spirit, there is a spiritual principle of grace, which Christ by his Spirit hath put into thy heart, enabling thee to move thyself towards God. Oh! consider this inward principle; it is an excellent subject, worthy of thy consideration!

(1.) I will be their God, and they shall be my people. -- Consider God essentially, and personally -- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; God in himself, and God in his creatures. This very promise turns over heaven, earth, sea,

land, bread, clothes, sleep, the world, life and death, into free grace. No wonder if God set this promise in the midst of the covenant, as the heart in the midst of the body, to communicate life to all the rest. This promise hath an influence into all other promises; it is the great promise of the new covenant; it is as great as God is: though the heavens, and heaven of heavens, be not able to contain him, yet this promise contains him; God shuts up himself, as it were, in it: “I will be their God.”

(2.) They shall be my people, -- *i.e.* they shall be to me a peculiar people, Tit. ii.

14. The word hath this emphasis in it, that God looks upon all other things as accidents in comparison, and his substance is his people; they are his very portion: for “The Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” They are his treasure, his peculiar treasure, above all people. “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure into me, and above all people: for all the earth is mine.” Observe, O my soul, all the earth is mine, that is, all people is my people; but I have a special interest in my covenanted people, they only are my portion, my peculiar treasure. The saints are those that God hath set his heart upon; they are children of the high God; they are the spouse that are married to the lamb; they are nearer God in some respects than the very angels themselves, for the angels are not in a mystical union so married to Christ as God’s

people are. Oh, the happiness of saints! “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

(3.) 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 to the greatest, saith the Lord. -- Consider this, O poor soul! Thou complainest of thy weakness, thou knowest little or nothing: why, see here a glorious promise; if thou art but in covenant with God, thou shalt be taught of God, and then thou shalt know God far more clearly than the Jews of old; he will open to thee all his treasures of wisdom and knowledge; he will bestow on thee a greater measure of his Spirit, so that “out of thy belly shall flow rivers of living water.” We say, a good tutor may teach more in a day than another in a month. Now the promise runs thus, that all thy children shall be taught of God. Not that private instruction, or public ministry, must be excluded, we know these are appointed under the new testament, and are subordinate to the Spirit’s teaching; but that the teachings of God far surpass the teachings of men, and therefore the knowledge of God under the new testament shall far surpass that under the old. Herein appears the excellency of Christ’s prophetic office, -- he is such a prophet as enlightens every man within that comes into the world; he is such a prophet as baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; he is such a prophet as makes men’s hearts to burn within them when he

speaks unto them; he is such a prophet as bids his ministers, “Go, teach all nations, and I will be with you; and I will make you able ministers, not of the letter, but of the Spirit”; -- he is such a prophet as teacheth inwardly, clearly, experimentally, and sweetly: no man in the world can say this, or do this, but Jesus Christ, the great prophet of the church, whom God hath raised up, like unto Moses, yet far above Moses. O my soul, consider if thou art thus taught of God!

(4.) I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more. --

Consider of this! “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” Consider, O my soul; suppose thy condition thus: As thou livest under the laws of men, so for the transgression of those laws thou art called to account: the judge weighs, and gives just judgment, he dooms thee to the axe, or rack, or wheel; and because of the aggravation of thy crime, he commands thee to be tortured leisurely, that bones, sinews, joints, might be pained for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years; that so much of thy flesh should be cut off every day; that such and such a bone should be broken, such and such a day; and that by art the flesh should be restored, and the bone cured again, that for so many years thou mightest be kept every day dying, and yet never die; that all this while thou must have no sleep, nor ease, nor food, nor clothing: that whips of iron, scourges of scorpions, that racks, wheels, caldrons full of melted lead, should be prepared,

instruments of thy continual torments; in this case, suppose a mighty prince, by an act of free and special grace, should deliver thee from this pain and torture, and not only so, but should give thee a life in perfect health, should put thee into a paradise of pleasures, where all the honour, love, and service, of a world of men and angels, should await thee, and where thou shouldst be elevated to the top of all imaginable happiness, above Solomon in the highest royalty, or Adam in his first innocence; were not this mercy? Wouldst thou not think it the highest act of grace and love that any creature could extend to his fellow-creature? And yet all this is nothing but a shadow of grace, in comparison of the love and rich grace of God in the justification of a sinner. If thou hast a right to this promise, “I will forgive thy iniquity and remember thy sin no more,” thou art delivered from eternal death, and thou art entitled to an eternal kingdom. Oh! know thy blessedness aright; consider how infinitely thou art engaged to God, and Christ, and mercy, and free-grace! This promise sounds forth nothing but grace and blessing; grace from God, and blessing on us: it is grace, because nothing but grace and mercy can forgive; it is grace, because God, if he will, hath power in his hand to revenge; he doth not pass by sin as men do offences, when they dissemble forgiveness; they may forgive, because they have not power to avenge: it is otherwise with God – “To me belongs vengeance,” saith God: he is able to destroy, and yet he chooseth to forgive. This is his name, -- strong, and gracious.

O my soul, thou art apt to say, Will the Lord forgive my sins? what reason hath God to look on me, to pardon me, to pluck me as a firebrand out of the fire of hell? why should God forgive me? But now consider, if thy heart be humbled, the Lord will do it.

(1.) Because he delighteth in mercy: it is a pleasure to God to forgive sins. Never did we take more pleasure, nor so much pleasure, in committing sin, as he doth in pardoning sin. He is the Father of mercies; he delights in mercy, as a father in his children; it doth him good to see the fruits of his own mercy, in taking away the sins of his own people.

(2.) Because it is his nature and inclination to pardon sin. This appears,

[1.] In the proclaiming of his name: “The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.”

[2.] In his gracious invitations: “Come unto me,” saith Christ: if sin burden you, I will ease you.

[3.] In his patience, and waiting for repentance. He waits to this very end, that he might be gracious, and that he may have mercy,

[4.] Because it is his promise to pardon sin: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” This promise of pardon is one of the great blessings of the covenant of grace. You hear the words, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.”

Now come, consider, O my soul, of every particular in this gracious covenant, and be serious in thy consideration! Surely there is too much expense in thy spirit upon vain, and transitory, and worldly things. Alas! thou hast but a short time to live; and the strength of thy mind is the most precious thing thou hast. O then let thy inmost thoughts and deep affections be acted and exercised on this subject. If God and Jesus, and all thy good, be included here, why should not thy whole soul be intent on this? why shouldst thou spend it on the creature? why shouldst thou be so subject to carnal griefs and fears? Surely all these are fitter to be fixed on God in Christ, on Jesus in a covenant of grace.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect.

We must desire Jesus, carrying on the great work of man's salvation before his coming in the flesh. It is not enough to know and consider, but we must desire. This is the order of God's work: no sooner hath his Spirit clearly revealed the goodness of the promise that we come to know, but the soul considers of it, views it in all its excellencies, weighs it in the balance of its best and deepest meditation. This done, the affections begin to stir, and the soul begins thus to reason: Oh! happy I, that I see the goodness of this gracious promise; but miserable I, if I come to see this, and never have a share in it! O! why not I, Lord? why not my sins pardoned? why not my corruptions subdued? why not the law written in my heart, and put into my inward parts? why may not I say, My Lord, my God! Or, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine"? Why not this covenant established between God and me? Now, my soul thirsts after this as a thirsty land, my affections hunger after Jesus. Oh! I would fain be in covenant with God; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire! 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Come then, my soul, and whet thy desires in every one of these respects: as, 1. desire thy interest in the covenant: 2. desire thy improvement of the covenant: 3. desire the continuance of thy covenant state: 4. desire Jesus, the great business, or the all in all, in a covenant of grace.

1. Desire thy interest in the covenant. Say in thyself: Is the world willing to receive me to his grace? Was that his voice in the streets, “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn ye at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you.” Was that his proclamation, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, -- incline your ear and to come unto me, -- and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David”? And are these the promises offered in the covenant, “I will put my law into their inward parts, and I will write it in your hearts; and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people”? Oh, the blessed condition of those people that are in covenant with God! “Blessed art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee a people saved of the Lord! Happy is the people that are in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.” -- But ah, what can I say! No sin like unto my sin, no misery like unto my misery. Alas, I die for hunger, whilst those that are in my Father’s house have bread enough. Oh, that I were in their condition! Never did David long more for the waters of the well of Bethlehem, than my soul, now touched with the sense of sin, doth desire to be at peace with God, and in covenant with him. Oh! I thirst, I pant, I gasp after him, I long for communion and peace with him; “with my soul do I desire thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me do I seek thee early.”

2. Desire the improvement of the covenant: It may be, God hath given thee an interest in it; but, alas! thy hold is so weak that thou scarce knowest the meaning of it; the Lord may answer, but yet he speaks darkly, as some time he spoke to the woman, “Go thy way, and sin no more.” It is a middle kind of expression, neither assuring her that her sin was pardoned, nor yet putting her out of hope that it might be pardoned. So it may be, God hath given thee some little ease, but he hath not spoken full peace. Go on then, and desire more confirmation; say in thine heart, O Lord, thou hast begun to show grace unto thy servant; but oh! manifest to me all thy goodness: thou hast given me a drop, and I feel it so sweet that now I thirst, and long to enjoy the fountain: thou hast given me a taste, but my desire is not thereby diminished, but enlarged; and good reason, for what are these drops, and tastes, but only the first-fruits and earnest of the Spirit. Oh! then, what are those harvests of joy? What are those treasures of wisdom and free grace hid in God? I have indeed beheld “a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, of wines on the lees well refined”: but oh! what a famine is yet in my spirit! – “O Lord, I have longed for thy salvation. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!”

3. Desire after continuance of the covenant-state. Many a soul cannot deny but that the Lord hath showed mercy on him, but he fears that he shall not hold out. He

feels within such a power of corruption, such strong temptations, that now he doubts, O what will become of my poor soul? what will be the issue of this? Come now, and desire perseverance. When Peter was ravished on the mount, “It is good being here,” says he, “let us build three tabernacles”: his desire was to have continued there forever. O come with these pantings and breathings after God; put forth thy desires in these or the like expressions: O Lord, thou hast said, I will betroth thee unto me forever: then, Lord, I desire the accomplishment. O fulfill what thou hast said! It would break my heart if ever the covenant should be broken betwixt me and thee. My desire is towards thee; and the more I enjoy thee, the more I desire and pant after thee. My desires are like thyself, infinite, eternal, everlasting desires.

4. Desire Jesus, the great business, or the all in all, in a covenant of grace. The most proper object of desire, especially to fallen man, is Jesus Christ. Hence it is that a poor sinner, under the sense of sin, cries out with the vehemency of desire, “Christ and none but Christ; give me Christ, or I die, I am undone, I am lost forever.” But what is Christ, or Jesus, to a covenant of grace? I answer, he is the great business, he is the all in all.

(1.) Christ is the messenger of this covenant: “The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.” Christ travels with tidings between parties of the covenant:

[1.] He reports of God to us, he commends his Father unto us. Ministers cannot speak of Christ, and of his Father, as he can do himself. O my soul, to excite thy desires, come and hear Christ speak of Christ, and of his Father, and of heaven; for he saw all.

[2.] He reports of us to God; he commends us to his Father. “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.” Happy souls, of whom Christ is telling good tidings in heaven; for he is the Angel of the covenant.

(2.) He is the witness of the covenant; he saw and heard all. “Behold I have given him for a witness to the people”; and he is called, “The faithful Witness; the Amen; the faithful and true witness.” The covenant saith, “The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost”: “Amen,” saith Christ, “I can witness that to be true.” The covenant saith, “Christ died, and rose again for sinners”: “Amen,” saith Christ, “I was dead, and behold I live for evermore. Amen.” There is not anything

said in the covenant, but Christ is a witness to it; and therefore we read in the very end of the Bible, this subscription, as I may call it, in relation to Christ, “He which testifieth of these things saith: Surely I come quickly; Amen.”

(3.) Christ is the surety of the covenant. “Inasmuch as not without an oath he was made a priest, by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” The covenant of works had a promise; but because it was to be broken, and done away, it had no oath of God, as this hath. O doubting soul, thou that sayest thy salvation is not sure, think on this scripture; thou hast the oath of God for it; it is a sworn article of the covenant, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.” And to this end Christ is a surety.

[1.] Surety for God: he undertakes that God shall fulfill his part of the covenant; “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” “And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

[2.] Surety for us: and to this purpose he hath paid a ransom for us, and giveth a new heart to us.

(4.) Christ is the mediator of the covenant. The apostle calls him, “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” He hath something of God, as being true God, and something of man, as sharing with us of the nature of man: hence he is mediator by office, and layeth his hands on both parties, as a days-man doth; and in this respect he is a friend, a reconciler, and a servant. 1. A friend to both parties: he hath God’s heart for man, to be gracious; and he hath man’s heart for God, to satisfy justice. 2. A reconciler of both parties: he brings down God to a treaty of peace, and he brings up man by a ransom paid; so that he may say unto both, “Father, come down to my brethren, my kindred and flesh; and, thou my sister and spouse, come up to my Father, and thy Father, to my God and thy God.” 3. He is a servant to both parties: “Behold my servant,” saith God, “my righteous servant”: yea, and our servant. “He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

(5.) Christ is the testator of the covenant. He died to this very end, that he might confirm the covenant. “Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator: for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth.” Christ then must die, and Christ’s blood must be shed, to seal the covenant of grace. It is not every blood, but Christ’s

blood, that must seal the everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20, and his blood being shed, he is then rightly called the testator of the covenant.

O what fuel is here to set our desires on flame! Come, soul, and bend thy desires towards Christ, as the sunflower towards the sun, the iron to the loadstone; yea, the nearer thou drawest towards Christ, the more do thou desire Christ. “He that thirsts, let him thirst more,” saith Bernard, “and he that desires, let him desire yet more abundantly.” Is there not cause? O what excellencies hast thou found in Christ! Poor soul! thou hast undone thyself by sin, there’s but a step betwixt thee and damnation; but, to save thy soul, Christ comes leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills: he enters into a covenant with God; he is the messenger of the covenant, the witness of the covenant, the surety of the covenant, the mediator of the covenant, the testator of the covenant, the great business, the all in all. If David could say, “My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to thy judgments at all times”; how mayest thou say, “My soul breaks for the longings that it hath to thy mercies, (and my Jesus,) at all times.” Oh! I gasp for grace, as the thirsty land for drops of rain. I thirst, I faint, I languish, I long for, an hearty draught of the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Oh! that I could see Jesus flying through the midst of heaven, with the covenant in his hand. Oh! I long for that angel of the covenant; I long to see such another vision as

John did, when he said, “And I saw another angel in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth.” What! is that covenant in the hand of Christ? And is my name written in that roll? Say, Lord, is my name written on the heart of Christ? Oh! if I had the glory of all the world; if I had ten thousand worlds, and ten thousand lives; I would lay them all down, to have this poor trembling soul of mine assured of this. Oh! my thirst is insatiable, my bowels are hot within me; my desire after Jesus is greedy as the grave, the coals thereof are as coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect.

Hope is a certain confidence that the desired good will come. All the question is, whether those promises contained in the covenant of grace belong unto me? and what are the grounds on which my hope is built? If the grounds be weak, then hope is doubtful, or presumptuous; but if the grounds be right, then hope is right, and I may cast anchor, and build upon it.

In the disquisition of these grounds, we shall only search into those qualifications which the scripture tells us they are qualified with, with whom the Lord enters into

a covenant of grace: and these we shall reduce -- 1. To the condition of the covenant. 2. To the promise of the covenant.

I. If thou art in a covenant with God, then hath God wrought in thee that condition of the covenant, a true and lively faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." The promise of life contained in the covenant is made only to believers. This is so sure a way of trial, that the apostle himself directs us thereunto: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." But how shall I examine? Why, thus:

(1.) True faith will carry thee out of thyself unto Christ: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." A faithful man hath not his life in himself, but in Christ Jesus; he hath his spiritual being in the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ; he is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit; he seeth the Father in the Son, and the Son within himself, and also the Father within himself through the Son. "Know ye not that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates?" "Ye shall know me," saith Christ, "that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you."

(2.) True faith will carry thee beyond the world. A believer looks on Christ overcoming the world through him: -- this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

(3.) True faith is ever accompanied with true love. If once by faith thou apprehendest Christ's love to thee, thou canst not but love Christ, who loved thee, and gave himself for thee: -- We love him, because he first loved us.

(4.) True faith purifies the heart, and purgeth out sin. When God discovers this, that he will heal backsliding, and love freely, and turn away his anger, then Ephraim shall say, "What have I any more to do with idols?" If ever Christ reveal himself as the justification, he will be sure to present himself as the pattern of our sanctification. The knowledge of God's goodness will make us in love with holiness.

(5.) Above all, observe the rise. True faith is ever bottomed upon the sense and pain of a lost condition. This is faith's method -- be condemned, to be saved; be sick, and be healed. Faith is a flower of Christ's own planting, but it grows in no soul, but only on the margin of the lake of fire and brimstone; in regard there's none so fit for Christ and heaven, as those who are self-sick, and self-condemned

to hell. They that be whole, need not a physician, saith Christ, but they that are sick. I know Satan argues thus: Thou art not worthy of Christ, and therefore what hast thou to do with Christ? But faith concludes otherwise: I am not worthy of Christ, I am out of measure sinful, I tremble at it, and I am sensible of it, and therefore ought I, and therefore must I, come to Christ? This arguing is gospel-logic, and the right method of a true and saving faith; for what is faith, but the act of a sinner humbled, weary, laden, poor, and self-condemned? Oh! take heed of their doctrine, who make faith the act of some vile person never humbled, but applying, with an immediate touch, his hot, boiling, and smoking lusts, to the bleeding, blessed wounds and death of Jesus Christ!

2. If thou art in covenant with God, then hath God fulfilled in some part the promises of this covenant to thy soul.

(1.) Then hath God put the law into thy inward parts, and writ it in thy heart. Look, as face in the glass answers face, so does the conformity of thy heart to the law of God: thou obeyest God's will, and delightest in that obedience; thou sayest with David, "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

(2.) Thou art by covenant as one of the people of God. Christ hath thy soul, thy body, thy affections; thou art Christ's by marriage; thou hast passed thyself over unto him to be his spouse, his crown, his servant, his child, forever.

Are these, O my soul, the grounds of thy hopes; a lively faith in Jesus? an accomplishment in some measure of the promises of the covenant? Why, these are the fuel of hope. If this be thy case, act thy hope strongly on Christ, and on the covenant of grace. Oh! hope in Jesus. Draw on thy hope yet more and more. Be not content only with an hope of expectation, but bring it on to an hope of confidence, or assurance thou canst not fail, if thou hangest thy hope on Jesus.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect.

We must believe in Jesus carrying on this great work of our salvation in a way of covenant. Consider, O thou soul, to this end, these following passages:

1. Consider the gracious nature of God. That which undoes broken hearts, and trembling souls, is misconceivings of God. We have many times low thoughts of God's goodness, but we have large thoughts of his power and wrath. Now, to rectify these misapprehensions, consider his name, and therein his nature: "The

Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sins.”

2. Consider the gracious nature of Jesus Christ. Our thoughts of God are necessarily more strange than of Jesus Christ, because of our infinite distance from the Godhead; but in Christ, God is come down into our nature, and so infinite goodness and mercy is incarnate. Art thou afraid, O my soul, at his name Jah, and Jehovah? Oh! remember his name is Emmanuel; the lion is here disrobed of his garment of terror: see thy God disrobed of his terrible majesty; see thy God is a man, and thy Judge is a brother. Oh, that name Jesus! that name that sounds healing for every wound, settlement for every distraction, comfort for every sorrow. But here's the misery; souls in distress had rather be poring on hell than heaven. O my soul, how canst thou more contradict the nature of Christ, than to think him a destroyer of men? But wherein appears the gracious nature of Christ? I answer, 1. In his being incarnate. How could Jesus have manifested more willingness to save, than that the Godhead should condescend to assume our nature? 2. In his tender dealing with all sorts of sinners. He professed that he came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He wept over Jerusalem, saying, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I

have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? but ye would not. And when his disciples would have had fire come down from heaven to consume those that refused him, he reproved them, and told them, they knew not of what spirits they were. 3. In his care of his own; not caring what he suffered, so they might be saved. Alas, alas; that the Lord Jesus should pass through a life of misery, to a death more miserable, to manifest openly to the world the abundance of his love, and yet that my soul should suspect him of cruelty, or unwillingness to show mercy! Ah, my soul, believe; never cry out, my sins, my sins! there is a gracious nature in Jesus Christ to pardon all.

3. Consider of those tenders and offers of Christ, those entreaties and beseechings to accept of Christ, which are made in the gospel. What is the gospel? or what is the sum of all the gospel, but this! O take Christ, and life in Christ, that thou mayst be saved. What mean these free offers? “Ho every one that thirsteth, come to the waters; and whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely”; and, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God is the first suitor and solicitor; he first prays the soul to take Christ. Hark at the door! who is it that knocks there? who is it that calls now, even now? “Open unto me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the

drops of the night.” See him through the windows. This can be none but Christ; his sweet language of sister, love, and dove, bespeaks him Christ; his suffering language, that his head is filled with dew, and his locks with drops of the night, bespeaks him Christ. But hearken the motion he makes to thy soul: Soul! consider what price I have given to save thee. This my body was crucified, my hands and feet nailed, my heart pierced, and through anguish I was forced to cry, my soul is heavy, heavy unto death! and now what remains for thee but only to believe? See all things ready on my part, justification, sanctification, salvation. I will be thy God, and thou shalt be of the number of my people. I offer now myself and merits, and benefits flowing therefrom, and I entreat thee to accept of this offer. Oh! take Christ, and life and salvation in Christ. What, is this the voice of my Beloved? are these the entreaties of Jesus? and, O my soul, wilt thou not believe? wilt thou not accept of this gracious offer of Christ! Oh! consider who it is that proclaimeth, inviteth, beseecheth. If a poor man should offer thee mountains of gold, thou mightest doubt of performance, because he is not of that power; if a covetous rich man should offer thee thousands of silver, thou mightest doubt of performance, because it is contrary to his nature: but Christ is neither poor, nor covetous; as he is able, so his name is gracious, and his nature is to be faithful in performance, his covenant is sealed with his blood, and confirmed by his oath, that all shall have pardon that will but come in, and believe. Oh! then let these words of Christ,

whose lips are dropping down myrrh, prevail with my soul. Say amen to his offer; I believe. Lord help my unbelief.

4. Consider those commands of Christ, which, notwithstanding all thy excuses or pretences, he fastens on thee to believe. “And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” Surely this command should entirely outweigh all countermands of flesh and blood, of Satan, nature, reason, sense, and all the world. Why, this command is thy very ground and warrant, against which the very gates of hell can never prevail. When Abraham had a command to kill his only son with his own hand, though it was matter of as great grief as could possibly pierce his heart, yet he would readily submit to it; how much more shouldst thou obey, when God commands no more, but that thou shouldst believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ? There is no evil in this command; no, it comprehends in it all good imaginable. Have Christ, and thou hast with him the excellency and variety of all blessings both of heaven and earth; have Christ, and thou hast with him a discharge of all those endless and easeless torments of hell; have Christ, and thou hast with him the glorious Deity itself, to be enjoyed through him to all eternity. O then, believe in Jesus! Suffer not the devil’s cavils, and the groundless exceptions of thine own heart, to prevail with thee against the direct commandment of Almighty God.

5. Consider the messages of Christ, which he daily sends by the hands of his gospel ministers. “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God.” What a wonder is here! would not an earthly prince disdain to send to his rebellious slaves for reconciliation? It is otherwise with Christ; he is content to put up at our hands all indignities and affronts; he is glad to sue to us first, and to send his ambassadors day after day, beseeching us to be reconciled unto him. O incomprehensible depth of unspeakable mercy and encouragement to come to Christ! Wilt thou take Christ to thy bridegroom, and forsake all others? This is the message which God hath bid me to deliver to thee: the Lord Jesus expects an answer from thee; and I should be glad to return a fit answer to him that sent me. Say then, wilt thou have Christ for thy husband? wilt thou enter into covenant with him? wilt thou surrender up thy soul to thy God? wilt thou rely on Christ, and apply Christ’s merits particularly to thyself? wilt thou believe? for that is it I mean by taking, receiving, and marrying of Christ. O happy if I could but join Christ and thy soul together this day! O happy thou, if thou wouldst this day be persuaded by a poor ambassador of Christ! Blame me not, if I am an importunate messenger. If ever I hear from thee, let me hear some good news, that I may return it to heaven, and give God the glory. Come, say on; art thou willing to have Christ? wouldst thou have thy name

enrolled in the covenant of grace? shall God be thy God, and Christ thy Christ? wilt thou have the person of Christ, and all those privileges flowing from the blood of Christ? sure thou art willing, art thou not? Stay then; thou must take Christ on these terms; thou must believe on him; thou must take him as thy Saviour and Lord; thou must take him, and forsake all others for him. This is the true faith, the condition of the covenant. Oh! believe in Jesus, and the covenant is established, and all doubts removed.

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect.

6. We must love Jesus, as carrying on this great work of our salvation. Go on then, O my soul, put fire to the earth, blow thy little spark, set before thee God's love, and thou canst not but love.

In God's love consider, 1. The time. 2. The properties. 3. The effects of it.

1. For the time. -- 1. He loved thee before the world was made. Hast thou not heard, and wilt thou ever forget it -- were not those ancient loves from all eternity? -- 2. He loved thee in the very beginning of the world. Was not the promise expressed to Adam intended for thee? As thou sinnedst in his loins, so didst thou in

his loins receive the promise. "It shall bruise thy head." And not long after, when God established his covenant with Abraham and his seed, wast thou not one of that seed of Abraham? 3. He loves thee now more especially, not only with a love of benevolence, as before, but with a love of complacency: not only hath he struck covenant with Christ, with Adam, with Abraham, in thy behalf, but particularly and personally with thyself. And Oh! what love is this? If a woman lately conceiving, love her future fruit; how much more doth she love it when it is born and embraced in her arms? So, if God loved thee before thou hadst a being, yea, before the world, or any creature in it, had a being; how much more now? Oh the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of this immeasurable love! O my soul, I cannot express the love of God in Christ to thee. I do but draw the picture of the sun with a coal, when I endeavor to express God's love in Christ.

2. For the properties of this love. -- 1. God's love to thee is a free love. "I will love them freely," saith God. And, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, and choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, -- but because the Lord loved you." There can be no other reason why the Lord loved thee, but because he loved thee. 2. God's love to thee is the love of all relations. Look, what a friend's love is to a friend, or what a father's love is towards a child, or what an husband's

love is towards a wife, such is God's love to thee: thou art his friend, his son, his daughter, his spouse; and God is thy all in all.

3. For the effects of his love. -- 1. God so loves thee, as that he hath entered a covenant with thee. Oh, what a love is this! Tell me, O my soul, is there not an infinite disparity betwixt God and thee? He is God above, and thou art a worm below: he is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, and thou art less than the least of all the mercies of God. O wonder at such a condescension! that such a potter, and such a former of things, should come on terms of bargaining with such clay as is guilty before him! Had we the tongues of men and angels, we could never express it.

God so loves thee, as that in the covenant he gives thee all his promises. Indeed, what is the covenant but a heap of promises? As a cluster of stars makes a constellation, so a mass of promises concurreth in the covenant of grace. Wherever Christ is, clusters of divine promises grow out of him, as the rays and beams are from the sun. As God hath given thee his Son, so he hath given thee himself, and in that God hath given thee his Son and himself; this is a greater degree of love.

Christians! stand amazed. Oh, what love is this to the children of men! Oh, that we should live to have our ears filled with this sound from heaven! "I will be a God to

thee and to thy seed after thee; I am the Lord thy God, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” O my soul, where hast thou been? Rouse up, and set before thee all these passages of God’s love in Christ: are not these strong attractives to gain thy love? Canst thou choose to love the Lord thy God? Shall not all this love of God in Christ to thee constrain thy love? God in Christ is the very element of love. Every element will to its proper place. Now God is love, and whither should thy love be carried, but to this ocean or sea of love? “Come, my beloved,” said the spouse to Christ, “let us go up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vines flourish, whether the tender grapes appear; there will I give thee my loves.” The flourishing of the vine, and the appearing of the tender grapes, are the fruits of the graces of God in the assemblies of his saints. When thou comest to the word, prayer, meditation, be sure of this, to give Christ thy love.

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect.

1. We must joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation. I know our joy here is but in part; such is the excellency of spiritual joy, that it is reserved for heaven. God will not permit it to be pure and perfect here below; and yet such as it is, though mingled with cares and pains, it is a blessed duty; it is the light of our

souls; and were it quite taken away, our lives would be nothing but horror and confusion.

O my soul, exercise this joy. Is there not cause? Come, see, and own thy blessedness. Take notice of the great things the Lord hath done for thee. -- 1. He hath made a covenant with thee of temporal mercies. Thou hast all thou hast by freeholding of covenant-grace. Thy bread is by covenant, thy sleep is by covenant, thy safety from sword is by the covenant, the very tilling of thy land is by a covenant of grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 34. O how sweet is this! Every crumb is from Christ, and by virtue of a covenant of grace.

2. He hath made a covenant with thee of spiritual mercies; even a covenant of peace, and grace, and blessing, and life for evermore. God is become thy God. He is all things to thee; he hath forgiven thy sins, he hath given thee his Spirit, to lead thee, to sanctify thee, to uphold thee in that state wherein thou standest; and at last he will bring thee to a full enjoyment of himself in glory. Oh! lift up thy head, strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees; serve the Lord with gladness, considering the day of thy salvation draweth nigh. Write it in letters of gold, that thy God is in covenant with thee, to love thee, to bless thee, and to save thee. Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and receive thee to himself, and then

thou shalt fully know what it is to have a God to be thy God. If a man in covenant with God looks on him, he saith, This is my Father; if on Christ, This is my elder Brother; if on angels, These are my keepers; if on heaven, This is my house; if on the signs of heaven, fire, meteors, thunder, These are but the effects of my Father's power; if on prosperity, God hath yet better things for me in store; if on adversity, Jesus Christ hath suffered much more for me than this; if on the devil, death, and hell, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" Come, poor soul, is it not thus with thee? What! art thou in covenant with God, or art thou not? If yet thou doubtest, review thy grounds of hope, and leave not there, until thou comest up to assurance. But if thou art persuaded of thy interest, Oh! then rejoice therein. Is it not a gospel-duty to rejoice in the Lord, and again to rejoice! The Lord is delighted in thy delights; he would fain have it thy constant frame and daily business to live in joy, and to be always delighting thyself in him. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," saith David, "and all that is within me, bless his holy name." So, rejoice in the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, rejoice in the name of God. This is true joy, when the soul unites itself to the good possessed in all its parts. And was there ever such an object of true joy as this? Harken, as if heaven opened, and the voice came from God in heaven: "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. I am the Lord thy God; and I will be thy God" What! doth not thine heart leap in thy bosom at this sound? John the Baptist leaped in his mother's

womb for joy, at the sound of Mary's voice; and doth not thy soul spring within thee at this voice of God? O wonder! some can delight themselves in sin; and is not God better than sin? If there be in thee any rejoicing faculty, now awake, and stir it up. It is the Lord thy God whom thou art to rejoice in; it is he who is the top of heaven's joy, their exceeding joy: and it is he who is thy God, as well as their God. Enough, enough! or if this be not enough, hear thy duty, as the Lord commands thee: "Rejoice in the Lord," Phil. iii. 1. "Be glad, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God," Joel ii. 23. "Rejoice in the Lord, all ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright," Psalm xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psal. xcvi. 12. Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name, be joyful in thee, Psalm v. 11.

Sect. VIII. -- Of Calling on Jesus in that respect.

We must call on Jesus, or on God the Father in and through Jesus, in reference to this gracious covenant. Now this calling on God contains prayer and praise.

1. We must pray. We must use arguments of faith, challenging God, -- "turn thou me, and I shall be turned." Why? "For thou art the Lord my God." This covenant is

the ground on which all prayers must be bottomed. The covenant, we know, contains all the promises; and what is prayer but promises turned into petitions? Thus prayed the prophet Jeremiah, “Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory. Remember, break not thy covenant with us.” Why? “Art not thou the Lord our God?” And thus prayed the prophet Isaiah: “Be not wroth very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, we beseech thee!” And why so? “We are thy people.” Be thy soul in trouble for sin and corruption; yet go to God, and plead his promise and covenant: say, as Jehoshaphat, “Lord, I know not what to do, only mine eyes are unto thee; Oh! do thou subdue mine iniquities.” Be thy soul troubled for want of strength to do this or that duty; yet go to God and Christ, and say, “Lord, thou knowest I have no strength in myself; I am a barren wilderness; but thou hast entered into a covenant with me, that thou wilt put thy law into my inward parts, thou wilt cause me to keep thy judgments, and do them,” Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Here is the way; in every want, or strait, or necessity, fly to God and Christ, saying, “Thou art my Father, and we are thy people; O break not thy covenant with us.”

2. We must praise. -- (1.) If we would have the blessing, let us seek it with a purpose to have grace exalted: thus Moses sought pardon to this very end, that God’s mercy might appear. “If thou wilt pardon their sin, thy mercy shall appear,

and we shall be thankful unto thee for it”; so the words are made out by expositors, which in the text are either passionately or modestly suspended. These are prevailing requests with God, when we plead for the glorifying of his own grace. Father, glorify thy name, said Christ; and presently there comes a voice out of the cloud, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.

(3.) If we have the blessing already, then be sure to ascribe glory unto him that hath made good his promise -unto us. “Who is a God like unto thee, who passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage?” Who shall make the praise of his grace to ring through the world, that heaven and earth may wonder at the grace that hath been showed us. “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.” See how the prophet mentions the kindnesses, the loving-kindnesses, the multitude of his loving-kindnesses, the goodness, and the great goodness, of God: he could hardly get off it; he would have God and grace to have all the glory. O, my soul! hath God entered thee into a covenant of grace? Why, then, “bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

We must conform to Jesus in reference to this covenant of grace. We are changed, by beholding, into the same image. If we look unto Jesus in this respect, this look will have such an influence upon us, that we shall conform to Jesus. But wherein consists this conformity? I answer, in these particulars:

1. God in Christ offers a covenant of grace to us: so we, through Christ, should embrace this gracious offer. His offers have appeared from first to last; as, 1. To Adam. 2. To Abraham. 3. To Moses. 4. To David. 5. To Israel, and to Judah. Take notice of it in that great promise of the covenant, "I will be thy God." So God is first with us, he is the first mover, he begins with us before we begin with him: "I will bring them," saith God, "into the bond of the covenant." Now in this let us conform. Doth he offer? let us embrace the offer. Doth he lead the way? let us follow him step by step in that very way. Let us not prescribe unto God, let us not presume to appoint the conditions of the covenant. But come, take God and Christ upon his own terms; submit to that way of the covenant, and to those conditions of peace, which the Lord prescribeth.

2. God in Christ keeps covenant with us; so we, through Christ, should be careful to keep covenant with God. But we must keep it. The Lord never will, never hath, broken covenant on his part: but, alas! we, on our parts, have broken the first covenant of works. Let us take heed we break not the second: for then there remains not any more place for any more covenants. As the Lord keeps covenant with us; so let us keep covenant with him; and therein is the blessing. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, -- to such as keep his covenant.”

Sundry acts of faith are required to this keeping of covenant:

(1.) Faith in keeping the covenant, hath always an eye to the rule and command of God. As in things to be believed, faith looks on the promise; so in things to be practiced, faith looks on the command. Faith will present no strange fire before the Lord, it knows that God will accept of nothing but what is according to his own will.

(2.) As faith takes direction from the rule; so in keeping of the covenant, it directs us to the right end, that is, to the glory of God. We are of him, and live in him; and by faith we must live to him and for him. “For none of us liveth to himself, and no

man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's."

(3.) Faith in keeping the covenant shields the soul against all hindrances that it meets with. Sometimes we are tempted by the baits and allurements of the world. All these will I give thee, saith the world, if thou wilt be mine; but then faith overcomes the world, by setting before us better things than these. Sometimes we are tempted by crosses, afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings for the name of Christ; but then faith makes us conquerors through Christ that loved us, by setting before us the end of our faith and patience.

(4.) Faith encourageth the soul, that the Lord will have a gracious respect unto its keeping covenant. "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." Surely this is no small encouragement to well-doing. What would not a servant do, if he knew his lord would take it in good part? Now faith assures the soul, there is not one prayer, one holy desire, or one good thought, or word which is spoken or done to the glory of God, but God takes notice of it, and accepts it in good part.

Oh my soul! art thou acquainted with these acts of faith, enabling thee in some good measure to keep covenant with God? Then is there a sweet conformity betwixt thee and Jesus.

3. God in Christ hath highly honoured us, as we are his people; so we through Christ should honour him highly, as he is our God. This is the main end of the covenant. Oh my soul! be like to God, bear the image and resemblance of God thy Father, in this respect: he hath humbled himself to advance thee; then humble thyself to advance him, and endeavor every way to exalt his name.

We are willing to be in covenant with God, that we may set up ourselves, that we may sit upon thrones, and possess a kingdom! but we must think especially of setting up the Lord upon his throne. “Ascribe greatness to our God,” saith Moses, make it a name and a praise unto him, that he hath vouchsafed to make us his people, and to take us into covenant with himself. Honour him as he is God; but honour him more abundantly, as he is our God. Who should honour him, if his people do not? The world knows him not; the world will not seek after God; -- “God is not in all their thoughts.” And shall God have no honour? shall he that stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and formed man upon it, have no glory? Oh yes! The Lord himself answers, “This people have

I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.” Surely, God will have praise from his own people, whom he hath taken unto himself. He will be glorified in all that come near him.

But, how should we honour God? I answer, -- We must lie under the authority of every word of God, and conform ourselves to the examples of God; that is, we must labor to become followers of God, and imitate his virtues. It is a part of that honour which children owe to their parents, to obey their commands, and to imitate their example. We cannot honour God more, than when we are humbled at his feet to receive his word, than when we renounce the manners of the world, to become his followers as dear children. Oh! think of this; for when we conform indeed, then we are holy as he is holy, pure as he is pure; and then, how should this but tend to the honour and glory of our good God?

Thus far we have looked on Jesus as our Jesus in that dark time before his coming in the flesh. Our next work is to look on Jesus as carrying on the great work of man’s salvation in his first coming or incarnation.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS IN HIS BIRTH

BOOK III

CHAP. 1

Sect. I. -- Of the tidings of Christ

In this period, as in the former, we shall first lay down the object; and, secondly, direct you how to look unto it.

The object is Jesus, carrying on the work of man's salvation, in his first coming in the flesh, until his coming again. But because in this long period we have many transactions, which we cannot with conveniency dispatch together; we shall therefore break it into smaller pieces, and present this object, Jesus Christ -- 1. In his birth; 2. In his life; 3. In his death; 4. In his resurrection; 5. In his ascension, session at God's right hand, and mission of his Holy Spirit; 6. In his intercession for his saints; in which business he will be employed till his second coming to judgment.

1. First, For the transactions of Jesus in his birth. Some things we must propound before, and some things after his birth; so that we shall continue this period till the time of John's baptism, or the exercise of his ministry upon earth. Now in all the transactions of this time, we shall especially handle these: 1. The tidings of Christ; 2. The conception of Christ; 3. The duplicity of natures in Christ; 4. The wonderful union, notwithstanding that distinction; 5. The birth of Christ; 6. Some consequents after his birth, whilst yet a child of twelve years old.

The first passage in relation to his birth, is, the tidings of Christ: this appears, Luke i. 26-28, &c. "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God," &c. I shall a little insist on some of these words.

1. The messenger is an angel. Man was too mean to carry the news of the conception of God. Never any business was conceived in heaven, that did so much concern the earth, as the conception of the God of heaven in a womb of earth; no less, therefore, than an angel was worthy to bear these tidings; and never angel received a greater honour, than of this embassy.

2. This angel salutes the Virgin; "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." Many men and women have been, and

are, the spiritual temples of God; but never was any the material temple of God, but only Mary; and therefore, blessed art thou amongst women: and yet we cannot say that she was so blessed in bearing Christ, as she was in believing in Christ; her bearing was more miraculous, but her believing was more beneficial to her soul.

3. This virgin is troubled at this salute. She might well be troubled; for 1. If it had been but a man that had come in so suddenly, when she expected none; or so secretly, when she had no other company; or so strongly, the doors being probably shut; she had cause to be troubled: how much more, when the glory of the angel heightened the astonishment? 2. Her sex was more subject to fear: if Zachary was amazed with the sight of this angel, how much more the Virgin! But the angel comforts her; “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God.”

4. Here is the foundation of her comfort, and our happiness; “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.” Never was mortal creature thus honoured, that her womb should yield that flesh, which was personally united to the godhead; that she should bear him that upholds the world. There is one wonder in the conception, another in the fruit; both are marvelous, but the latter is more mysterious, and fuller of admiration: the fruit of the womb is Jesus, a Saviour, the Son of the Highest, a King; God shall give him a

throne, and he shall reign for ever; for “of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Here was a Son, and such a Son as the world never had before; and here was the ground of Mary’s joy: how could she but rejoice, to hear what her Son should be before he was? Surely, never was any mother so glad of her son born, as this virgin was of her son before he was conceived.

The ground of this joy lay more especially in that name of Jesus. Here, Christians, is the object that you are to look unto. The first title that the angel gives our Saviour, is, Jesus Saviour. Oh come! let us dwell a little here. Without Jesus we had never known God our friend! and without Jesus, God had never known us for any other than his enemies. This name Jesus is better to us than all the titles of God. Indeed, there is goodness and greatness in the name Jehovah; but we merited so little good, and demerited so much evil, that in it alone there had been small comfort for us; but in the name of Jesus there is comfort, and with the name of Jesus there is comfort in the name of God. In old times, God was known by his names of power, and of majesty; but his name of mercy was reserved till now, when God did purpose to pour out the whole treasure of his mercy, by the mediation of his Son. And as this name is exalted above all names; so are we to exalt his mercy above all his works. Oh, it is a useful name! In all depths, distresses, miseries, perplexities, we beseech God by the name of Jesus, to make

good his own name, -- not to bear it for nought; but as he is a Saviour, to save us: and this is our comfort, that God will never so remember our sins, as to forget his own blessed name; and especially this name Jesus. It is the highest, the dearest, the sweetest name to us of all the names of God.

The reason of this name was given by the angel to Joseph: "Thou shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But why from their sins? We seem rather willing to be saved from poverty, ignominy, prison, death, hell. Sin is a thing that troubles but few: alas! sin, if we understand it, is the very worst of evils; there is no poverty but sin, there is no shame but sin; there is no prison, but that prison is a paradise without sin; there is no death that has any sting in it, but for sin; "the sting of death is sin"; take out the sting, and you may put the serpent in your bosom; nay, I'll say more, there would be no hell, were it not for sin: sin first kindled the fire of hell, sin fuels it; take away sin, and that tormenting flame goes out. Had it not been for sin, the devil had no business in the world; were it not for sin, he could never hurt a soul.

What abundance of benefits are here in one word, "He shall save his people from their sins"! There is no evil incident to man, but it ceaseth to be evil when sin is gone. If Jesus takes away sin, he doth bless our very blessings, and sanctify our

afflictions: he fetcheth peace out of trouble, riches out of poverty, honour out of contempt, liberty out of bondage: he pulls out the sting of death, puts out the fire of hell: as all evils are wrapt up in sin; so he that saves us from sin, saves us from all evils whatsoever.

This is that Jesus, the Son of God's love, the author of our salvation, in whom alone God is well pleased; and whom the angel published before he was conceived: "Thou shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus."

Sect. II. -- Of the Conception of Christ

The conception of Christ, was the conclusion of the angel's message. No sooner had the Virgin said, "Be it to me according to thy word"; but according to that word it was: immediately the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, and forms our Saviour in her womb. Now! brethren, now was the time of life. Well may we say, Now was it that the day broke up, that the sun arose, that darkness vanished, that wrath gave place to favour and salvation: now was it, that free grace came down from heaven, thousands of angels waiting on her; the very clouds part, as it were, to give her way; the earth springs to welcome her; the floods clap their hands for joy; the heavenly hosts sing as she goes along, "Glory to God in the highest, peace

upon earth, good will towards man”: truth and righteousness go before her, peace and prosperity follow after her, pity and mercy wait on either hand; and when she first sets her foot on the earth, she cries, “A Jesus! a Saviour! -- Hear, ye sons of men! -- The Lord hath sent me down to bring you news of Jesus! -- Grace and peace be unto you: I will live with you in this world, and you shall live with me in the world to come.” Here was blessed news: this is gospel, pure gospel; this is glad tidings: free grace proclaims Jesus; and Jesus is made up as it were all of free grace. What eternal thanks do we owe to the eternal God! How may we say with the angels, Glory to God for Jesus Christ!

But in this conception of Christ are so many wonders, that ere we begin to speak them, we may stand amazed: “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh.” Say, is it not a wonder, a mystery, a great mystery, that the Son of God should be made of a woman, even made of that woman which was made by himself? Is it not a wonder, that her womb then, and that the heavens now, should contain him, “whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain!” -- Concerning this conception of Christ, I shall speak but a little: what man can conceive much of this? Our greatest light we borrow from the angel, who describes it thus: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.”

Out of these words, observe, 1. The agent; 2. The effect.

1. The agent or efficient cause of Christ's conception, is the Holy Ghost. This agrees with that speech of the angel to Joseph: "That which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost." This conception of Christ was by the operation, or virtue of the Holy Ghost; or by the energetical command and ordination of the Holy Ghost, whereby that part of the Virgin's blood, or seed whereof the body of Christ was to be framed, was so cleansed and sanctified, that in it there should be neither spot nor stain of original pollution.

2. The effect was the framing of Christ's manhood, in which we may observe the matter and manner. 1. For the matter: observe we the matter of the body, and of the soul, of Christ. (1.) The matter of the body of Christ was the very flesh and blood of the Virgin: "he was made of a woman," saith the apostle, *i.e.* of the flesh and blood, and substance of the woman; and, "he was made of the seed of David," saith the apostle, "according to flesh"; otherwise he could not have been the Son of David according to the flesh. (2.) The soul of Christ was not derived from the soul of the Virgin, but it was made as the souls of other men be, *i.e.* of nothing, by the power of God; and so infused into the body by the hand of God.

2. For the manner of forming Christ's human nature, it was miraculous. The angel ascribes two actions to the Holy Ghost in this great work: the one, to come upon the Virgin; the other, to overshadow her: by the first is signified the extraordinary work of the Holy Ghost in fashioning the human nature of Christ.

The second action ascribed to the Holy Ghost, is, overshadowing of the Virgin: this teacheth us that we should not search overmuch into this great mystery. Alas! it is too high for us; if the course of ordinary generation be a secret, how past all comprehension is this extraordinary operation! "I know the Word was made flesh," saith Chrysostom; "but how he was made, I know not."

Sect. III. -- Of the Duplicity of Natures in Christ

The duplicity of natures in Christ appears, in that he was truly God and truly man. "To us a child is born," saith the prophet; there is a nature human: "and he shall be called the mighty God"; there is a nature divine. "God sent his Son," saith the apostle, therefore truly God; and that Son "made of a woman," therefore truly man.

That Christ is true God, both apparent scriptures, and unanswerable reasons drawn from scriptures, evince.

1. The scriptures call him God. “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.” – “And unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever.” – “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God!” – “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,” – “And hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” – “And we know that the Son of God is come. This is the true God, and eternal life.” – “And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh.”

2. Unanswerable reasons drawn from scriptures, prove him God: thus it appears --

(1.) From those incommunicable properties of the Deity which are ascribed unto him: He is eternal as God, Rev. i. 17. He is infinite as God, Matt, xxviii. 20. He is omniscient as God, Matt. ix. 4. He is omnipotent as God; “He that cometh from above is above all” – “He is able to subdue all things unto himself”--“He hath the keys of hell and death.”

(2.) From those acts ascribed to him, which are only agreeable to the divine nature; as, to hear the prayers of the people, John xiv. 14. To judge the quick and the dead, John v. 22. And thus he creates as God, John i. 4. He commands as God, Matt. viii. 26. He forgives as God, Matt. ix. 6. He sanctifies as God, John i. 12. He glorifies as God, John x. 21.

(3.) From all those acknowledgments given to him by the saints, which are only proper unto God; and thus he is believed on as God, John iii. 18. He is loved as God, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. He is obeyed as God, Matt. xvii. 5. He is prayed to as God, Acts vii. 59. He is praised as God, Rev. v. 13. He is adored as God, Heb. i. 6. Phil. ii. 10. Surely all these are strong demonstrations, that Christ Jesus is God. But why was it requisite that our Saviour should be God? I answer,

1. Because none can save souls, nor satisfy for sin, but God alone. “There is none,” saith the Psalmist, “that can by any means redeem his brother, or give a ransom for him,” – “But God will redeem my soul from the power of hell.” 2. Because the satisfaction which is made for sin, must be infinitely meritorious: and infinite wrath cannot be appeased, but by an infinite merit; and hence our Saviour must needs be God, to the end that his obedience and sufferings might be of infinite worth. 3. Because the burden of God’s wrath cannot be endured by a finite

creature: Christ therefore must be God, that he might abide the burden by his divine power. 4. Because the enemies of our salvation were too strong for us: how could any creature overcome Satan, death, hell, damnation? Ah! this required the power of God; there's none but God that could destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

2. As Christ is God, so he is true man. He was born as man, and bred as man, and fed as man, and slept as man, and wept as man, and sorrowed as man, and suffered as man, and died as man.

But more particularly, (1.) Christ had a human body: "Wherefore when he came into the world he said, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared."

(2.) Christ had an human reasonable soul: "My soul is heavy unto death," saith Christ; and again, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." "Surely," saith Nazianzen, "either he had a soul, or he will never save a soul."

(3.) Christ had all the properties that belong either to the soul or body of a man: nay, more than so, Christ had all the infirmities of our nature, sin only excepted: I

say the infirmities of our nature, as cold, and heat, and hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and weakness, and pain.

But why was it requisite that our Saviour should be man? I answer, 1. Because our Saviour must suffer and die for our sins, which the godhead could not do. 2.

Because our Saviour must perform obedience to the law. 3. Because our Saviour must satisfy the justice of God in the same nature wherein it was offended. 4.

“Because by this means we might have free access to the throne of grace, and might find help in our necessities, having such an High-priest as was in all things tempted like unto us,” Heb. iv. 15.

A real distinction of these two natures is evident: 1. In regard of essence; the godhead cannot be the manhood, nor can the manhood be the godhead. 2. In regard of properties, the godhead is most wise, just, omnipotent, yea, wisdom, justice, omnipotence itself; and so is not the manhood, neither can it be. 3. They have distinct wills: “Not my will but thy will be done, O Father,” plainly differencing the will of a creature from the will of a Creator. 4. The very actions in the work of redemption are inseparable, and yet distinguishable: “I lay down my life, and take it up again.” To lay it down was the action of man, not of God; and to take it up, was the action of God, not of man: in these respects we say each nature remains in

itself entire, without any conversion, commixtion, or confusion: there is no conversion of one into the other, as when he changed the water into wine; no composition of both, no abolition of either, no confusion at all. -- It is easy to observe this real distinction of his two natures from first to last: as, 1. He was conceived as others, and so he was man; but he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, as never man was, and so he is God. 2. He was born as others, and so he was man; but he was born of a virgin, as never man was, and this speaks him as God. 3. He was crucified, died, and was buried, and so he was man; but he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and from thence shall come at last to judge the quick and the dead, and so he is God.

Sect. IV. -- Of the Union of the two Natures of Christ in one and the same Person

The union of two natures of Christ, in one and the self-same person, is that great wonder, which now we must speak of as we are able. But, alas! how should we speak of this union, and not be confounded in ourselves? It is a great mystery, a secret, a wonder. Many wonders have been since the beginning of the world; but all the wonders that ever were must give place to this. Neither the creation of all things out of nothing, nor the restoration of all things into their perfect being; I mean, neither the first work, nor the last work, of God in this world (though most

admirable) may be compared with this. This union of the two natures of Christ in one person, is the highest pitch of God's wisdom, goodness, power, and glory.

In the explication of this union, that which I shall insist on, as the most necessary for our understanding, is, I. The union itself. II. The effects or benefits of it.

I. For the union itself we shall discuss, 1. Wherein this union consists. 2. The scriptural texts that confirm this union. 3. The person assuming; and the nature assumed: and of these as briefly as I may.

This union consists in that dependence of the human nature on the Word, and in that communicating of the person or substance of the Word, with the human nature that is assumed; so that it is such an union that both natures make one person of Christ.

2. For the scriptural texts that confirm this union: among many I shall only cite these:

When Christ asked his apostles, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" –

"Simon Peter answered, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now if but

one Christ, then surely but one person: and if the Son of man be the Son of the living God, then surely there are two natures in that one person. Observe how the Son of man and the Son of God, very man and very God, concentre in Christ; as the soul and the body make but one man, so the Son of man and the Son of God made but one Christ: thou art Christ, saith Peter, the Son of the living God.

So Paul, speaking of Jesus the Son of God, tells us, “that he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God, according to the spirit.” First, “made of the seed of David”; of the substance of the Virgin, who was David’s posterity. Secondly, “declared to be the Son of God”: the word in the original signifies a declaration by a solemn sentence or definitive judgment. “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son.” That which I point at: he is the son of David, in respect of his manhood; and he is the Son of God, in respect of his godhead; here be the two natures; but in the words before, these two natures make but one Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: and in the very words themselves he is declared to be the Son of God; he doth not say Sons, as of two; but his Son Jesus Christ, first before, and then after; to show unto us, that as before his making, so after his making, he is still but one Son, or one person of the two distinct natures subsisting.

To the same purpose is that text; “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily”; by the union of the divine nature with the human in the unity of his person, the godhead dwelleth in Christ as the soul in the body: “it dwelleth in him bodily”; not seemingly, but really; not figuratively, and in a shadow, as he dwelleth in the temple; not by power and efficacy, as he dwells in all the creatures; not by grace, as in his people; nor by glory, as in the saints above; but essentially, substantially, personally, the human nature being assumed into union with the person of the Word. Observe the passages: he in whom that fullness dwells is the person; that fullness, which doth so dwell in him, is the nature: now there dwells in him not only the fullness of the godhead, but the fullness of the manhood also; for we believe him to be both perfect God, begotten of the substance of his Father before all worlds; and perfect man, made of the substance of his mother in this world: only he, in whom the fullness of the godhead dwelleth, is one; and he in whom the fullness of the manhood dwelleth, is another; but he in whom the fullness of both these natures dwelleth, is one and the same Immanuel, and consequently one and the same person; in him, *i.e.* in his person, dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead, and all the fullness of the manhood: “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.”

3. For the person assuming, and the nature assumed: (1.) The person assuming, was a divine person: it was not the divine nature that assumed an human person, but the divine person that assumed an human nature; and of the three divine persons, it was neither the first nor the third, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost, that did assume this nature; but it was the Son, the middle person.

(2.) The nature assumed was the seed of Abraham; “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Elsewhere the apostle calls it “the seed of David”; he is made the seed of David according to the flesh: and, elsewhere, he is called the seed of the woman: “I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed”; “and when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.” No question she was the material principle of which that precious flesh was made, and the Holy Ghost, the agent and efficient; that blessed womb of hers was the bridechamber, wherein the Holy Ghost did knit that indissoluble knot betwixt our human nature and his deity: the Son of God assuming into the unity of his person, that which before he was not, even our human nature. Oh! with what astonishment may we behold our dust and ashes assumed into the unity of God’s own person!

These are the deep things of God, and indeed so exceedingly mystical, that they can never be perfectly declared by any man. Bernard compares this ineffable mystery of the union of the two natures, with that incomprehensible mystery of the trinity in unity. In the Trinity are three persons and one nature; in Christ are two natures and one person; that of the Trinity is indeed the greatest, and this of the incarnation is like unto it; they both far exceed man's capacity; "for his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."

II. For the effects and benefits of this union; they are either in respect of Christ, or in respect of Christians.

1st. Those in respect of Christ, are, 1. An exemption of all sin. 2. A collation of all graces. 3. A communication of all the properties.

1. We find that although Christ appeared as a sinner, and that he was numbered among the wicked, or with the transgressors, Isa. liii. 12, yet in truth he did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. ii. 22. The apostle tells us, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: he assumed the nature of man, yet by reason of this pure conception, and of this union, he was conceived,

and born, and lived without sin; he took upon him the seed of man, but not the sin of man, save only by imputation.

2. The graces collated unto the humanity of Christ by reason of his union, are very many: I shall instance in some:

(1.) That the manhood is a peculiar temple for the deity of Christ to dwell in: it is the place wherein the godhead shows itself more manifestly and more gloriously than in any other creature: it is true, that by his providence he shows himself in all his creatures, and by his grace in his saints; but he is most gloriously, eternally, according to the fullness of his deity, in the humanity of Jesus Christ: “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.” Some are of opinion, that as now in this life, no man cometh unto God but by Christ: so hereafter, in the next life, no man shall see God, but in the face of Jesus Christ.

(2.) That the manhood of Christ, according to its measure, is a partner with the godhead in the work of redemption and mediation: as he is Immanuel in respect of his person, so he is Immanuel in respect of his office. He must needs be man as well as God, that he might be able to send this comfortable message to the sons of

men; “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”

(3.) That the manhood of Christ, together with the godhead, is adored and worshipped with divine honour: not that we worship the manhood alone, as merely a creature; but that we adore the person of Christ, which consisteth of the manhood and of the godhead.

(4.) That the manhood hath an extraordinary measure of habitual graces poured into it. In this he excels the very angels, for to them was given grace only by measure; but to the humanity of Christ was given grace without measure; even so much as a creature is any ways capable of. Never was there any but Christ, whose graces were no way stinted, and was absolutely full of grace. Divines tell us of a double grace in Christ; the one of union, and that is infinite; the other of unction, (which is all one with grace habitual,) and that is in a sort infinite; for howsoever it be but a finite and created thing, yet in the nature of grace, it hath no limitation, no bounds, but includeth in itself whatsoever any way pertains to grace. The reason of this unlimited grace bestowed on the nature of man in Christ, was, for that grace was given to it as to the universal cause, whence it was derived unto all others. He is the fountain of grace, and of his fullness we receive grace for grace.

3. For the communication of the properties. It is a kind of speech peculiar to the scriptures, when the properties of either nature of Christ considered singly are attributed to the person of Christ. Thus we may say, that God was born of a virgin, and that God suffered, and God was crucified; not simply in respect of his godhead, but in respect of his person, or in respect of the human nature which God united to himself. And thus we may say, that the man Christ is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, yet not in respect of his manhood, but in respect of the person which is God and man; or in respect of the divine nature of the man Christ Jesus: for here, man signifies the whole person of Christ, and not the human nature: but on the contrary, we may not say, that the godhead of Christ was born of a virgin, or suffered, or was crucified; nor may we say, that the manhood of Christ is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent; because the godhead and manhood are such words, as note to us the two natures of Christ, the one divine, and the other human, and not the person of Christ.

2d. The effects or benefits of this hypostatical union, in respect of Christians, are their spiritual union and communion with God and Christ.

1. There is a spiritual union of Christians with God in Christ. Oh, the wonder of these two blessed unions! first, of the personal union; secondly, of the spiritual or mystical union. In the personal union, it pleased God to assume and unite our human nature to the deity; in this spiritual union, it pleased God to unite the person of every believer to the person of the Son of God. This union is mystical, and yet our very persons, natures, bodies, souls, are in a spiritual way conjoined to the body and soul of Christ; so that we are members of the body of Christ, and of the flesh of Christ, and of the bones of Christ; and as this conjunction is immediately made with his human nature, so thereby we are also united to the divine nature; yea, the person of the believer is united to the glorious person of the Son of God.

Now, concerning this union, for our better understanding, observe these three things.

(1.) It is a most real union: it is not a mere notional union, that consists only in the understanding; it is not an imaginary thing, that hath no other being but only in the brain; no, it is a true, real union. In natural unions, I confess, there may be more evidence, but there cannot be more truth.

(2.) It is a very near union. You will say, how near? If an angel were to speak to you, he cannot satisfy you in this; only as far as our understanding can reach it, and the creatures can serve to illustrate these things, take it thus: whatsoever by way of comparison can be alleged concerning the combination of any one thing with another, that, and much more, may be said of our union with Jesus Christ. See how near the father and the child are, how near the husband and the wife are; see what union is between the branches and the vine, the members and the head; nay, one thing more, see what the soul is to the body: such is Christ and so near is Christ, and nearer, to the person of every true believer. “I live, yet not I,” saith Paul, “but Christ liveth in me.” As if he had said, As the soul is to the body of a natural man, so is Jesus Christ to my soul and body.

(3.) It is a total union; that is, whole Christ is united to the whole believer, soul and body. If thou art united to Christ, thou hast all Christ; thou art one with him in his nature, in his name; thou hast the same image, grace, and spirit in thee, as he hath; the same precious promises, the same access to God by prayer as he; thou hast the same love of the Father; all that he did or suffered, thou hast a share in it; thou hast his life and death; all is thine. So, on thy part, he hath thee wholly, thy nature, thy sins, the punishment of thy sins, thy wrath, thy curse, thy shame; yea, thy wit, and wealth, and strength, all that thou art, or hast, or canst do possibly for him. It is a

total union: “My beloved is mine, and I am his”: whole Christ is mine, and all that I am, have, or can do, is his.

2. There is a spiritual communion with God in Christ. Both these are the effects of Christ’s personal union: first, union to his person, and then communion with his benefits. Union, in proper speaking, is not unto any of the benefits flowing to us from Christ; we are not united to forgiveness of sin, holiness, peace of conscience, but unto the person of the Son of God himself: and then, secondly, comes this communication of all the benefits arising from this union to the Lord Jesus -- that as Christ was priest, prophet, and king; so we also by him are, after a sort, priests, prophets, and kings; for being made one with him, we are thereby possessed of all things that are his.

Sect. V.--Of the Birth of Christ

The birth of Christ now follows. A thing so wonderful, that it was given for a sign unto believers seven hundred and forty years before it was accomplished:

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and hear a son.” But come a little nearer; let us go to Bethlehem, as the shepherds said, and see this thing which is come to pass! If we step but one step into his lodging,

heaven's wonder is before our eyes: now look upon Jesus! look on him as in fullness of time he carried on the great work of our salvation. Here you may read the meaning of Adam's covenant, Abraham's promise, Moses' revelation, David's succession; these were but veils, but now shall we draw aside the curtains. Come, take a view of the truth itself. What a strange birth is this! Look on the babe, there is no cradle to rock him, no nurse to lull him, no linens to swaddle him, scarce a little food to nourish him. Look on the mother; there's no midwives' help, no downy pillows, no linen hangings, scarce a little straw where she is brought a-bed. Look on Joseph, his supposed father; he rather begs than gives a blessing; poor carpenter! that makes them a chamber of an ox-stall. Mary must bear a Son; an angel tells her, the Holy Ghost overshadows her; the days are accomplished, and she is delivered.

No sooner was Christ born, but righteousness looked down from heaven; she cast her eye upon earth, and seeing truth freshly spring there, she looked and looked again: certainly it was a sight to draw all the eyes of heaven to it. It is said of the angels, that they "desired" to look into these things. They looked wishfully at them, as if they would look through them. No question but righteousness looked as narrowly and piercingly as the angels. Some observe, that the Hebrew word, "she looked down," signifies, that she beat out a window, so desirous was righteousness

to behold the sight of Christ born, that she beats out a window in heaven. Before this time, she would not so much as look down towards the earth: righteousness had no prospect, no window open, this way. But now the case is altered: no sooner doth our vine bud upon the earth, but she is willing to condescend, and so willing, that she breaks a window through the walls of heaven to look down: and no marvel; for what could righteousness desire to see and satisfy herself in, that was not to be seen in Jesus Christ? He was all-righteous, there was not the least spot of sin in him: his birth was clean, his life was holy, and his death was innocent. Both his soul and body were without all sin; both his spirit and his mouth were without all guile: whatsoever satisfaction righteousness would have, she might have it in him. "Lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the balance," and there is nothing in Jesus but straightness for the line, and full weight for the balance.

For the meeting and agreement of all God's attributes as the effect of this, the verse before tells us, that "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." -- Many means were made before Christ's time for this blessed meeting; but it would not be: "Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldest not"; these means were not prevalent enough to cause it. Where stuck it? you will say: surely it was not long of mercy, she was easy to be entreated: she looked up to heaven, but righteousness would not look down; and indeed here was the business:

righteousness must and will have satisfaction; either some satisfaction for sin must be given to God, or she will never meet more; better that all the men in the world were damned, than that the righteousness of God should be unrighteous. But our Saviour is born; and this birth occasions a gracious meeting of the attributes: such an attractive is this birth, that all meet there; indeed they cannot but meet in him, Christ is mercy, and Christ is truth, and Christ is righteousness, and Christ is peace.

1. Christ is mercy. Thus Zacharias prophesied; that through the tender mercy of our God the day-spring (or branch) from on high hath visited us: and God, the Father of Christ, is called the Father of mercies; as if mercy were his Son, who had no other Son but his dearly beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased.

2. Christ is truth. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”; that truth, in whom is accomplished whatsoever was prefigured of the Messiah. And this is his name, “The Lord, The Lord God, abundant in goodness and truth.” – “He is a God of truth,” said Moses; -- “plenteous in mercy and truth,” said David; -- “full of grace and truth,” said John. He is truth by name, and truth by nature, and truth by office.

3. Christ is righteousness. “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.”

4. Christ is peace. “This is his name whereby he is called; Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” And according to his type, Melchisedec, as he was King of righteousness, so also he was King of Salem, which is King of peace. Thus Christ is mercy, and Christ is truth, and Christ is righteousness, and Christ is peace. Now where should all these meet, but in him who is them all? Surely there they meet, and at the meeting they all ran first and kissed the Son; and that done, truth ran to mercy, and embraced her; and righteousness to peace, and kissed her: they that had so long been parted, now they meet, and are made friends again. O the blessed effects of this birth of Christ! It is Christ that reconciled them, and reconciled us to them. He reconciled all things, saith the apostle, “whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Now is heaven at peace with itself, and heaven and earth at peace one with another; and that which glues all, and makes the peace, is this birth of Christ.

Sect. VI. -- Of some Consequents of Christ’s Birth

Some consequents of the birth of Christ may be touched, till he was a child of twelve years old.

I. When he was but eight days old, he was circumcised, and named Jesus. In this early humiliation he plainly discovered the riches of his grace: now he sheds his blood in drops, and thereby gives an earnest of those rivers which he afterwards poured out for the cleansing of our nature, and extinguishing the wrath of God; and for a further discovery of his grace, at this time his name is given him, which was Jesus. This is the name which we should engrave on our hearts, rest our faith on, and place our help in, and love with the overflowings of charity, joy, and adoration; above all things, we had need of Jesus, a Saviour for our souls, both from our sins, and from The everlasting destruction which sin will otherwise bring upon our souls. Hence this name Jesus, and this sign circumcision, are joined together; for by the effusion of his blood he was to be our Jesus, our Saviour: “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” no salvation. Circumcision was the seal, and now was it that our Jesus was under God’s great seal to take his office: “Him hath God the Father sealed,” John vi. 27. It is his office and his very profession to save, that all may repair unto him to that end: “Come unto me, all ye that are weary”; “and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

2. When he was forty days old, “he was brought to Jerusalem, and presented to the Lord; as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.” O wonder! there was no impurity in the Son of God, and yet he is first circumcised; and then he is brought, and offered to the Lord. He that came to be sin for us, would in our persons be legally unclean, that by satisfying the law, he might take away our uncleanness. He that was above the law, would come under the law, that he might free us from the law. We are all born sinners; but O the unspeakable mercies of our Jesus, that provides a remedy as early as our sin: first, he is conceived; and then he is born, to sanctify our conceptions and our births: and after his birth, he is first circumcised, and then he is presented to the Lord; that by two holy acts, that which was naturally unholy might be hallowed unto God. Christ hath not left our very infancy without redress, but by himself thus offered he cleanseth us presently from our filthiness. Now is Christ brought in his mother’s arms to his own house, the temple; and as man, he is presented to himself as God. You will say. What is this to me, or to my soul? O yes! Jerusalem is now everywhere; there is no church-assembly, no Christian heart, which is not a temple of the living God; and there is no temple of God, wherein Christ is not presented to his Father. Thus we have the benefit of Christ’s fulfilling the law of righteousness: “God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the

law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

3. When he was yet under one year old, as some, or about two, as others, he fled into Egypt. As there was no room for him in Bethlehem, so now there is no room for him in all Judea. No sooner he came to his own, but he must fly from them: what a wonder is this! Could not Christ have quit himself from Herod a thousand ways? What could an arm of flesh have done against the God of spirits? but hereby he taught us to bear the yoke even in our youth: thus would he suffer, that he might sanctify to us our earthly afflictions. What a change is here! Israel, the first-born of God, flies out of Egypt into Judea, and Christ, the first-born of all creatures, flies out of Judea into Egypt. Now is Egypt become the sanctuary, and Judea the inquisition-house, of the Son of God. Surely he that is everywhere the same, knows how to make all places alike to his. He knows how to preserve Daniel in the lion’s den, the three children in the fiery furnace, Jonah in the whale’s belly, and Christ in the midst of Egypt.

4. When he was now five years old, say some, an angel appears again in a dream to Joseph, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and return again into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.”

Herod, that took away the lives of all the infants in or about Bethlehem, is now himself dead, and gone to his own place. O the wonderful dispensation of Christ in concealing himself from men! All this while he carries himself as an infant; “take the young child and his mother.” He suppressed the manifestation and exercise of that godhead whereto the infant nature was conjoined: as the birth of Christ, so the infancy of Christ was exceedingly humble. O how should we magnify him, or deject ourselves for him, who himself became thus humble for our sakes!

5. When he was twelve years old, he, with his parents, goes up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast. This pious act of his younger years intends to lead our first years into timely devotion: but I shall not insist on that; I would rather observe him “sitting in the midst of the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions.” He who, as God, gave them all the wisdom they had, doth now, as the Son of man, hearken to the wisdom he had given them; and when he had heard, then he asks; and after that, no doubt he answers: his very questions were instructions; for I cannot think that he meant so much to learn, as to teach those doctors of Israel. Surely these rabbins had never heard the voice of such a tutor; they could not but see the very wisdom of God in this child; and therefore saith the text, “they all wonder,” or they were all astonished at his understanding and answers: their eyes saw nothing but a child, but their ears heard the wonderful things of God’s law.

But why did ye not, O ye Jewish teachers, remember now the star and the sages, the angels and the shepherds? why did ye not now bethink yourselves of Herod, and of his inquiry, and of your answer, that in Bethlehem of Judea Christ should be born? You cited the prophets, and why did you not mind that prophecy now, that unto us a child is born, and “unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?” Fruitless is the wonder that endeth not in faith. No light is sufficient, where the eyes are held through unbelief and prejudice.

6. After this, from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of his age, we read nothing of the acts of Christ, but that he went down with his parents unto Nazareth, and was subject to them. As he went up to Jerusalem to worship God, so he goes down to Nazareth to attend his particular calling. This is the meaning of those words, “and he was subject to them.” Christ’s subjection to his parents extends to the profession and exercise of his life. Certainly Christ was not all that time, from twelve to thirty years, idle: as he was educated by his parents, so of his reputed father he learnt to be a carpenter; this, I take it, is plain in these words, “Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?”

Oh, the poverty, humility, severity, of Jesus! It appears at this time especially, in his laboring, working, hewing of wood, or the like. Here's a sharp reproof to all those who spend their time in idleness, or without a particular calling. What! are they wiser than Christ? Our Jesus would not by any means thus spend his time.

But concerning this time of his youth, because in scripture there is so deep a silence, I shall therefore pass it by.

Thus far have I propounded the object we are to look unto; it is Jesus, in his first coming, or incarnation, whilst yet a child of twelve years old. Our next work is to direct you in the art or mystery, how we are to look unto him in this respect.

CHAP. II

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Birth

What looking comprehends, you have heard before: and that we may have an inward experimental look on him whom our souls pant after, let us practice all these particulars.

1. Let us know Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his incarnation. Let us learn what he did for us when he came amongst us. There is not one passage in his first appearing, but it is of mighty concernment unto us. Is it possible that the great God of heaven and earth should so infinitely condescend, but on some great design? And what design could there be but only his glory and the creatures' good? O my soul! if thou hast any interest in Christ, all this concerns thee: the Lord Jesus, in these very transactions, had an eye to thee; he was incarnate for thee, he was conceived and born for thee. Look not on the bare history of things, for that is unprofitable; the main duty is eyeing the end, the meaning of Christ, and especially as it relates to thyself. Alas! what comfort were it to a poor prisoner, if he should hear that the king, of his mere grace, visited all the prisoners in this or that dungeon, and that he made a jail-delivery, and set all free, but never came near the place where he lies bound in irons? or suppose he gives a visit to that very man, and offers him grace and pardon, if he will but accept of it; and, because of his waywardness, persuades, entreats, commands him to come out and take his liberty; and yet if he will not regard or apply it to himself, what comfort can he have? what

benefit can he receive? Dear soul, this is thy case, if thou art not in Christ; if thou hast not heard the offer, and embraced and closed with it, then what is Christ's incarnation, conception, nativity, unto thee? Come, learn, not merely as a scholar, to gain some notional knowledge; but as a Christian, as one that feels virtue coming out of Christ in every of these respects. Study closely this great transaction in reference to thyself. I know not how it happens; this subject either savours not with some Christians, or it is seldom thought of by the most. O God forbid we should throw out of doors such a blessed necessary truth! If rightly applied, it is a Christian's joy: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people; for unto you is born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Sure the birth of Christ is of mighty concernment unto thee; "unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." There is not any piece of this transaction but it is of special use. How many break their brains, and waste their spirits, in studying arts and sciences, things in comparison of no value? Whereas Paul determined not to know any thing but Jesus Christ. To know Jesus Christ in every point, whether in birth, or life, or death, is saving knowledge. O stand not upon cost, whether pains or study, tears or prayers, peace or wealth, goods or name, life or liberty; sell all for this pearl. Christ is of that worth that thou canst never over-buy him, though thou gavest thyself and all the world for him. The study of Christ is the study of studies; the knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of everything that is necessary,

either for this world, or for the world to come. O study Christ in every of the aforesaid respects.

Sect. II. -- Considering Jesus in that respect

Let us consider Jesus carrying on this great work of our salvation, at his first coming or incarnation. It is not enough to study and know these great mysteries; but, according to the measure of knowledge we have, we must muse, meditate, ponder, and consider them. This consideration brings Christ closer to the soul. Consideration fastens Christ more strongly to the soul, and, as it were, rivets the soul to Jesus Christ. A soul that truly considers and meditates of Christ, thinks and talks of nothing else but Christ: it takes hold, and will not let him go. I will keep to thee (saith the soul in meditation) for thou art my life. Thus, O my soul, consider thou of Christ, and of what he did for thee when he was incarnate! and that thou mayest not confound thyself in thy meditations, consider apart these particulars.

1. Consider Jesus in his forerunner, and the blessed tidings of his coming in the flesh. Now the long-looked for time drew near, a glorious angel is sent from heaven, and he comes with an olive-branch of peace; first he presents himself to

Zachary, and then to Mary; to her he imparts the message on which God sent him into this world: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus." Till now, human nature was less than that of angels; but by the incarnation of the Word, it was to be exalted above the cherubim. What blessed tidings was this message! The decree of old must now be accomplished, and an angel proclaims it upon earth. "Hear, O ye sons of Adam, this concerns you as much as the Virgin: were ye not all undone in the loins of your first father? was not my soul and thy soul in danger of hell-fire? was not this our condition, that after a little life upon earth, we should have been thrown into eternal torments, where had been nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth? And now that God and Christ should bid an angel tell the news – 'Ye shall not die: Lo, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,' and he shall be your Jesus: he shall save you from this hell, and death, and sin; he shall deliver your souls, he shall save to the utmost: his name is Jesus, and he shall not bear his name for nought: believe in him, and ye shall live with him in glory." O blessed news! Men may talk what they will of this and that news, but none is so welcome to one ready to perish, as to hear of a Saviour. Tell a man in his sickness of one that will make him well again; tell a man in captivity, of one that will set him free; tell a man in prison, condemned to die, of one with a pardon that will save his life; and every one of these will say, this is the best news that ever was heard. Oh! then, if it be good tidings to hear of a

saviour, where it is only a matter of loss of life, or of this earth; how much more when it comes to the loss of heaven, to the danger of hell; when our souls are at stake, and likely to be damned forever! what glad tidings would that be, to hear of one that could save our souls from that destroyer! Is not such a Saviour worth the hearkening after? were not the birth of such a one good news? O my soul, ponder on these words, as if an angel, seeing thee stand on the brim of hell, should speak to thee, even to thy soul.

2. Consider Jesus in his conception. No sooner is the news heard, but Christ is conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin's womb: this conception is worthy our consideration. What! that the great God of heaven should condescend so far as to take our nature upon him, and to take it in the same way, and after the same manner, as we do? We must not be too curious, to inquire after the manner of the Holy Ghost's operation. This is work for our hearts, and not merely for our heads. Humble faith, and not curious inquisition, shall find the sweetness of this mystery. It was David's complaint, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." O my soul, this was thy case in thy very first being, and hadst thou died in that condition, the word is express, that "nothing undefiled nor unclean should enter into the kingdom of glory." But here's the remedy, thy sinful conception is sanctified by Christ's holy conception: the holiness of thy Jesus

serves to hide thy original pollutions from the eye of God. Oh! consider this conception thus, till thou bringest it near and close to thy soul, till thou feelest some sweetness and power coming and flowing from Jesus in the womb.

3. Consider the duplicity of natures in Jesus Christ: the Word made flesh. No sooner was he conceived, than he was God-man; he was perfectly framed, and instantly united to the eternal Word: “God sent his Son,” there is the nature divine; “made of a woman,” there is the nature human. Certainly great is this mystery, that the Word is made flesh; that the Son of God is made of a woman; that a star gives light to the sun; that a branch doth bear the vine; that a creature gives being to the Creator!

Admire, O my soul, at this! but withal consider, that all this was for us and our salvation: he was man, that he might die for us; and he was God, that his death might be sufficient to save us. Had he been man alone, not God, he might have suffered, but he could never have satisfied for sin; he could not have been Jesus, a Saviour of souls: had he been God alone, not man, he had not been akin to our nature offending; and so he could not have satisfied the justice of God in the same nature wherein it was offended; neither could he, as God alone, have died for sin; and the decree was, that our Redeemer must die for sin; “for without shedding of

blood, there is no remission”; and no shedding of blood could possibly befall the godhead of Christ. O my soul, consider this in relation to thyself: he is God-man, that he might suffer and satisfy for thy sins; he is God-man, that he might be able and fit to finish the work of thy salvation. As God he is able, and as man he is fit, to discharge the office of Mediator: as God, he is able to bear the punishment of sin; and as man, he is fit to suffer for sin. Oh the wisdom of God in this! man’s nature can suffer death, but not overcome it; the divine nature can overcome death and all things, but he cannot suffer it: and hence there is a duplicity of natures in Jesus Christ. O muse on this; it is worthy thy serious consideration.

4. Consider the real distinction of these two natures in Christ. As the unapproachable light of the godhead was put into human flesh, so these two natures remained entire, without any conversion or confusion. They were not as wine and water, that become one by mixing; there is no such blending the divine and human nature: they were not as snow and water, that become one by dissolving of the snow into water; there is no such changing of the human nature into the divine, or of the divine into the human. Look, as at the first moment of his conception he was God and man, so these two natures continued distinct in substance, properties, and actions. Consider this, O my soul, in reference to thyself: by this means thou hast free access unto the throne of grace; and as thou hast free

access, so thou mayest boldly draw near. His deity indeed confounds, but his humanity comforts feeble souls: his divine nature amazeth, but his human nature encourageth us to come unto him. Even after his resurrection, he was pleased to send this comfortable message to the sons of men; “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” Now, as long as he is not ashamed to call us brethren, God is not ashamed to be called our God. Oh, the sweet fruit that we may gather off this tree, the real distinctions of two natures in Christ! As long as Christ is man as well as God, we have a motive strong enough to appease his Father, and to turn his favourable countenance towards us. Here is our happiness, that there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

5. Consider the union of the two natures of Christ in one and the same person. As he was the branch of the Lord, and the fruit of the earth, so these two natures were tied with such a knot as sin, hell, and the grave were never able to disunite: yea, though in the death of Christ there was a separation of the soul from the body, yet in that separation the hypostatical union remained unshaken. In this meditation thou hast great cause, O my soul, to admire and adore! Wonderful things are spoken of thee, O Christ! He is God, so as neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were made flesh; and he is man, in the nature of man. This is a mystery that no

angel is able to comprehend. We have not another example of such an union. If thou wilt consider this great mystery of godliness any further, review what hath been said in the object propounded, where this union is set forth more largely and particularly: but especially consider the blessed effects of this union in reference to thyself. As our nature in the person of Christ is united to the godhead, so our persons in and by this union of Christ are brought nigh to God. Hence it is that God doth set his sanctuary and tabernacle among us, and that he dwells with us; and, which is more, that he makes us houses and habitations, wherein he himself is pleased to dwell by his holy Spirit. By reason of this hypostatical union of Christ, the Spirit of Christ is given to us in the very moment of our regeneration. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: and hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” As the members of the body, howsoever distinct amongst themselves, and all differing from the head, yet by reason of one soul informing both the head and members, all make one man; so all believers in Christ, howsoever distinct persons amongst themselves, and all distinct from the person of Christ, and especially from the godhead, which is incommunicable, yet by one and the same Spirit abiding in Christ and in all his members, they become one. “There is one body, and one Spirit”: -- “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” O my soul, consider this; and in considering, believe thy part in this; and

the rather because the means of this union on thy part is a true and lively faith.

Faith is the first effect and instrument of the Spirit of Christ, disposing and enabling thy soul to cleave unto Christ; “and for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” – “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.”

6. Consider the birth of Christ, who in his divine generation was the Son of God; in his human generation was born in a stable, for the saving of the children of men. Suppose the Holy Ghost came upon thee, to form and fashion thee in Jesus Christ, (thus Paul bespeaks the Galatians; “My little children, of whom I travel in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”) would not this affect? would not the whole soul be taken up with this? Come, receive Christ into thy soul; or if that work be done, if Christ be formed in thee, O cherish him! (I speak of the spiritual birth,) O keep him in thy heart! Let him there bud, and blossom, and bear fruit; let him fill thy soul with his divine graces: O that thou couldst say it feelingly, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” O that this were the issue of thy meditation on Christ’s birth! even whilst thou art going with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and there findest thy Saviour lying in a cratch, that thou wouldst bring him thence, and make thy heart to be his cradle! I would not give a farthing for a meditation merely on

the history of Christ's birth: either draw virtue from him within, or thy meditation will be fruitless.

7. Consider those few consequents after Christ's birth; every action of Christ is our instruction. Here are many particulars, but none in vain. Christ is considered under much variety of notions, but he is still sweet under all. Is it possible, O my soul, that thou shouldst tire thyself in the contemplation of Jesus Christ? If one flower yield thee not pleasure or delight, go to a second, a third. For a while observe the circumcision of Jesus Christ, and gather some honey out of that flower. Christ had never been circumcised, but that the same might be done to our souls that was done to his body. O that the same Christ would do that in us that was done to him for us!

Again, observe Christ's presentation in the temple. This was the law of those that first opened the womb. Now Christ was the first-born of Mary, and indeed the first-born of all creatures; and he was consecrated unto God, that by him we might be consecrated and made holy, and that by him we might be accepted when we are offered unto the Lord.

Again, observe Christ's flight into Egypt: though the infancy is usually most quiet, yet here life and toil began together; and see how speedily this comes after Christ's

dedication unto God. Alas! we are no sooner born again, than we are persecuted. If the church travail, and bring forth a male, she is in danger of the dragon's streams.

Again, observe Christ's return into Judea; he was "not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; with them alone he was personally to converse in his ministry, in which respect he was called a minister of the circumcision. And where should he be trained, and show himself, but amongst them to whom God had sent him? The gospel first began there, and, as a preparation to it, Christ now in his childhood returns thither.

Again, observe Christ disputing with the doctors in the temple. See how early his divine graces put forth themselves; "In him were hid," saith the apostle, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge": all the treasures were hid in him, and yet some of those treasures appeared very early; his wisdom in his very infancy is admired at, nor is it without our profit, for of God he is made wisdom unto us.

Again, observe how he spent the remainder of his youth. In all his examples he meant our instruction; he went down with his parents, and was subject to them: he was not idle bred, but serves his generation in the poor way of a carpenter. It is every way good for a man to bear God's yoke, even from his infancy. Christ is

inured betimes to the hardships of life, and the strict observation of the law, both of God and nature.

See, O my soul, what a world of matter is before thee: here is the annunciation of Jesus, the conception of Jesus, the duplicity of natures in Jesus, the real distinction, the wonderful union, the nativity of Jesus, together with some consequents after it. Go over these with frequent thoughts; give not over till thou feelest thy heart warm. True meditation is as the bellows of the soul, that doth kindle and inflame holy affections; and by renewed thoughts, as by renewed and stronger blasts, it doth renew and increase the flame.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect

Let us desire Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation at his first coming or incarnation. It is not enough to know and consider, but we must desire. Now, what is desire, but a certain motion of the appetite, by which the soul darts itself towards the absent good, purposely to draw near, and to unite itself thereunto? The incarnation of Christ, according to the letter, was the desire of all nations. O how they that lived before Christ, desired this coming of Christ! Abraham desired to see that day, two thousand years and more before it came. It was the expectation of all

the patriarchs: O when will that day come! And surely the incarnation of Christ in the fruit or application, is, or should be, the desire of all Christians. There is virtue in Jesus Christ, in every passage of Christ, in his conception, incarnation, in his birth, and in those consequents after his birth. Now, to make these ours, that we may have our share and interest in them, we must here begin. O my soul, do thou desire, do thou seek to possess thyself of Christ! Set thy desire (as the needle point) aright, and all the rest will follow: never will union be with the absent good, but the soul, by desire, must first dart itself towards it. True it is, millions of souls stand at a distance from Christ; and why? they have no desire towards him: but, O that my soul, and thy soul, whosoever thou art that readest, would desire! O that we could desire and long after him until we languish, and be compelled to cry out with the spouse, “Comfort me, for I am sick of love.”

Is there not good reason for it? what is there in Christ that is not desirable? View over all those excellencies of his conception; of his two natures really distinguished, and yet wonderfully united; of his birth; of those few consequents after his birth: but above all, see the fruit of all; he was conceived, that our conceptions might be sanctified; he was the Son of man, that he might suffer for us; and the Son of God, that he might satisfy divine justice; he was God and man in one person, that we might be one with him, “members of his body, of his flesh, and

of his bones.” He was born of the Virgin, that there might be a spiritual birth of Christ in our virgin-hearts. Are not these desirable things? Never tell me of thy present enjoyments; for never was Christ so enjoyed in this life, but thou hast cause to desire more of Christ. It is worth thy observation, that spiritual desires after Christ do neither load nor cloy the heart, but rather open and enlarge it for more and more. Who was better acquainted with God than Moses? and yet who was more importunate to know him better? “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” And who was more acquainted with Christ than Paul? and yet who was more importunate to be with him nearer? “I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.” Further and further, union with Christy and communion with Christ, are most desirable things, and are not these the fruits of his incarnation, the effects of his personal union? More and more peace, and love, and reconciliation, betwixt God and us, are desirable things: and are not these the fruits of Christ’s birth? was it not then that “righteousness looked down from heaven? that mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other?” An higher degree of holiness, likeness to God and Christ, are desirable things: and are not these the fruits of circumcision, and presentation to the Lord, the effects of all those consequents that follow after his birth? Come, stir up thy desires: true desires are not wavering, but resolute and full of quickness. Observe how the nature of true desire in scripture, is set forth by the most strong similitudes of hunger and thirst;

and those not common neither, but by the panting of a tired hart after the rivers of water, and by the gaping of dry ground after seasonable showers. O then! how is it that the passages of thy desires are so narrow, and almost shut up? Nay, how is it that thy vessels are so full of contrary qualities, that there is scarce any room in thy soul for Christ? Will not the desires of the patriarchs witness against thee? how cried they after Christ's coming in the flesh? "Bow the heavens, O Lord, and come down," Psal. cxliv. 5. "Oh, that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down," Isa. xlv. 1. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and bring forth salvation," Isa. xlv. 8. Is it possible that their desires should be more vehement after Christ than ours? They lived on the dark side of the cloud, but we on the bright side; the veil was upon their hearts, which veil is done away in Christ. They saw Christ afar off, and their sight was very dim; "but we all with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of the Lord." One would think, the less anything is known, the less it should be desired. O my soul, either thou art more ignorant of Christ than the patriarchs of old, or thy heart is more out of frame than theirs: suspect the latter, and blame thy heart, it may be thy sluggish nature hath laid thy desires asleep. If an hungry man will sleep, his hunger will sleep with him: but, oh! stir up and awake thy desires. Present before them that glorious object, the incarnation of Jesus Christ: it is an object which the very angels desire to look into; and art not thou more concerned

in it than the angels? Is not the fruit of the incarnation thine, more especially thine?

Come then, stir up those motions of thy appetite, by which the soul darts itself towards the absent good. Draw nearer and nearer, till thou comest to union and enjoyment; cry after Christ, “Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?”

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

Let us hope in Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation at his first coming. Only here remember, I speak not of every hope, but only of such an hope as is grounded on some certainty and knowledge. This is the main question, whether Christ’s incarnation belongs unto me? The prophet tells us, that “unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” But how may I hope that this child is born to me? and that this Son is given to me? what ground for that? Out of these words of the prophet I shall draw a double evidence, which may be instead of all: our first evidence from the former words, “unto us a child is born”; our second evidence from the latter words, “unto us a Son is given.”

1. From the former words, I lay down this position, “unto us a child is born,” if we are new-born. The surest way to know our interest in the birth of Christ, is to know

Christ born in us, or “formed in us,” as the apostle speaks. The new-birth is the effect of Christ’s birth, and a sure sign that Christ is born in us. Say then, O my soul, art thou born anew? is there in thee a new nature, a new principle? is the image of God and of Christ in thy soul? so the apostle styles it, the bearing of “the image of the heavenly”; then was Christ incarnate for thee. Come then, look to it, my soul; what is thy principle within? Consider not so much the outward actions, the outward duties, of religion, as that root from whence they grow, that principle from whence they come: are they fixed ones, settled ones, by way of life, in thee? Clocks have their motions, but they are not motions of life, because they have no principles of life within. Is there life within? Then art thou born again, yea, even unto thee a child is born. This is one evidence.

2. From the latter words I lay down this position, “unto us a Son is given,” if we are God’s sons. The best way to know our interest in the Son of God, is to know ourselves to be God’s sons by grace, as Christ was God’s Son by nature. --

Christians, to whom Christ is given, are co-heirs with Christ; only Christ is the first-born, and hath the pre-eminence in all things. Our sonship is an effect of Christ’s Sonship, and a sure sign that unto us a son is given. Say then, O my soul, art thou a son of God? dost thou resemble God according to thy capacity, “being holy, even as he is holy”? Why then, Christ was incarnate for thee, he was given to

thee. If thy sonship be not clear enough, thou by these following rules mayest try it further: --

(1.) The sons of God fear God: “If I be a Father, where is mine honour?” saith God; “if I be a master, where is my fear?” If I be a son of God, there will be an holy fear and trembling upon me in all my approaches unto God. I know there is a servile fear, and that is unworthy and unbeseeming a son of God; but there is a filial fear, and that is an excellent check and bridle to all our wantonness. What son will not fear the frowns of his loving father? I dare not do this, (he will say,) my father will be offended. Agreeable to this is the apostle’s advice, “If ye call on the Father, pass your sojourning here in fear.”

(2.) The sons of God love God, and obey God out of a principle of love. Suppose there were no heaven to bestow upon a regenerate person, yet would he obey God out of a principle of love? Not that it is unlawful for the child of God to have an eye unto the recompense of reward: Moses’s reason of esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, was, for that he had respect unto the recompense of reward. He had respect; in the original, he had a fixed intent eye: there was in him a love of the reward, and yet withal a love of God; and therefore his love of the reward was not mercenary: but this, I say, though there

were no reward at all, a child of God hath such a principle of love within him, that for love's sake he would obey his God. He is led by the Spirit, and therefore he obeys: now the Spirit that leads him is a spirit of love, and as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

(3.) The sons of God imitate God in his love and goodness to all men. Our Saviour amplifies this excellent property of God: "he causeth his sun to shine on the good and the bad." And thence he concludeth, "be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Goodness to bad men, is as it were the perfection of all. Oh! my soul, canst thou imitate God in this? Consider how thy Father bears it, though the wicked provoke him day by day, yet for all that he doth not quickly revenge. God seeth all; and for all that, he doth not make the earth presently to gape and devour us: he puts not out the glorious light of the sun, he doth not dissolve the work of creation, he doth not for man's sin presently blast everything into dust: what an excellent pattern is this for thee to write after! Canst thou forgive thy enemies? do well to them that do evil to thee? This is a sure sign of grace and sonship. It is storied of some heathens, who beating a Christian almost to death, asked him, "What great matter did Christ ever do for him?" "Even this," said the Christian, "that I can forgive you, though you use me thus." Here was a child of God indeed! It is a sweet resemblance of our Father, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to "love

our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good unto them that hate us, to pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us.” Oh! my soul, look to this, consult this ground of hope; if this law be written in thy heart, write it down amongst the evidences that thou art God’s son, yea, that even unto thee a Son is given.

To review the grounds: -- What! is a child born to me? and a Son given to me? What! am I new born? am I indeed God’s son or daughter? Do I upon search find in my soul new desires, new comforts, new contentments? Are my words, my works, and affections, and conversation, new? Is there in me a new nature, a new principle? Hath the Spirit given me a new power, a seed of spiritual life, which I had not before? Do I upon search find that I fear God, and love God, and imitate God in his love and goodness towards all men? Can I really forgive an enemy, and according to my ability do good unto them that do evil unto me? Why should I not then confidently and comfortably hope, that I have my interest in the birth of Christ, in the blessed incarnation and conception of Jesus Christ? Away, all despair and dejection. If these be my grounds of hope, it is mine to hold up my head, and heart, and hands, and all with cheerfulness and confidence, and to say with the spouse, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.”

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

Let us believe in Jesus, carrying on the great work of our great salvation at his first coming or incarnation. I know many staggerings are oft in Christians, “What! is it likely that Christ should be incarnate for me? that God should do such a thing, for such a sinful abominable wretch as I am?” Ah! poor soul, put thy property in Christ’s incarnation out of dispute, that thou mayest be able to say, “As God was manifest in the flesh, and I may not doubt it; so God is manifest in me, and I dare not deny it.”

To help the soul in this, I shall, 1. propose the hinderances of faith. 2. The helps of faith in this respect. 3. The manner how to act our faith. 4. The encouragements to bring on the soul to believe its part in the blessed incarnation of Jesus Christ.

For the first, there are but three things that can hinder faith;

(1.) The exceeding unworthiness of the soul; and to this purpose are those complaints, What! Christ incarnate for me? for such a dead dog as I am? I am less than the least of all God’s mercies; I am fitter for hell and devils, than for union and communion with God and Christ; I dare not, I cannot believe.”

(2.) The infinite exactness of divine justice, which must be satisfied. A soul deeply considering of this, startles, and cries, Oh! what will become of my soul? One of the least sins that I stand guilty of, deserves death, and eternal wrath: the wages of sin is death; and I cannot satisfy. Though I have trespassed many millions of talents, I have not one mite to pay. Oh! then how should I believe? What thoughts can I entertain of God's mercy and love to me? God's law condemns me, my own conscience accuseth me, and justice will have its due.

(3.) The want of a mediator, or some suitable person which may stand between the sinner and God. If on my part there be unworthiness, and on God's part severe justice; and withal I see no mediator, which I may go unto, before I deal with the infinite glory of God himself; how should I but despair, and cry out. Oh wretched man that I am! Oh that I never had been! I cannot believe; there is no room for faith in this case.

2. The helps of faith, in this sad condition, are these:

(1.) A consideration that God is pleased to overlook the unworthiness of his poor creatures. This we see plain in the very act of his incarnation; himself disdains not to be as his poor creatures, to wear their flesh, to take upon him human nature; and in all things to become like unto man, sin only excepted.

(2.) A consideration that God satisfies justice, by setting up Christ, who is justice itself. Now was it that mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other; now was it that free grace and merit, that fullness and nothingness, were made one; now was it that truth ran to mercy, and embraced her; and righteousness to peace, and kissed her; in Christ they met, yea, in him was the infinite exactness of God's justice satisfied.

(3.) A consideration that God hath set up Christ as a Mediator; that he was incarnate in order to reconciliation, and salvation of souls; and but for the accomplishment of this design, Christ had never been incarnate. The very end of his uniting flesh unto him, was in order to the reconciliation of us poor souls. Alas! we had sinned, and by sin deserved everlasting damnation; but to save us, and to satisfy himself, God takes our nature and joins it to his Son, and calls that Christ a Saviour. This is the gospel notion of Christ; for what is Christ but God himself in our nature, transacting our peace? In this Christ is fullness, and righteousness, and love, and bowels to receive the first acts of our faith; and to have immediate union and communion with us. Indeed we pitch our faith immediately on God himself; yet at last we come to him, and our faith lives in God, as one faith, before it is aware, through the intervention of that person, which is God himself, only called

by another name -- the Lord Jesus Christ: and these are the helps of faith, in reference to our unworthiness, God's justice, and the want of a Mediator betwixt God and us.

3. The manner how to act our faith on Christ incarnate, is this:

(1.) Faith must directly go to Christ. We find indeed some particular promises of this and that grace; but the promises are not given without Christ: no, first Christ, and then all other things. "Incline your ears, and come unto me": Come unto Christ, and then "I will make an everlasting covenant," (which contains all the promises) "even the sure mercies of David." As in marriage, the woman first consents to have the man, and then all the benefits that follow; so the soul by faith first pitcheth upon Christ, and then on the privileges that flow from Christ. Say, dost thou want any temporal blessing; suppose it be the payment of debts, thy daily bread, health; look through the scripture for promises of these things, and let thy faith act thus, "If God hath given me Christ, the greatest blessing, then certainly he will give me all these things, so far as they may be for my good. In the twenty-third Psalm we find a bundle of promises; but he begins, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want." The believing patriarchs through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, did wonders in the world; but what did they chiefly look to in this their faith?

Surely to the promise to come, and to that better thing, Christ himself: and therefore the apostle concludes, “having such a cloud of witnesses, that thus lived and died by faith, let us look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

(2.) Faith must directly go to Christ as God in our flesh. Some think it a carnal apprehension of Jesus Christ, to know him as in flesh: I confess, to know him only so; to consider Jesus no other way but as having flesh, is no better than a carnal apprehension; but to consider Christ as God in flesh, and to consider that flesh as acted by God, and filled with God, is a true and spiritual apprehension of Jesus Christ; and hither is faith to be directed immediately. Suppose a case of danger by some enemies, and I find a promise of protection from my enemies; I look on that: but in the first place thus I argue. If the Lord hath given me Christ, (God in the flesh) to save me from, hell, then much more will he save me from these fleshly enemies.

(3.) Faith must go and lie at the feet of Christ; faith must fasten itself on this God in our flesh. Some go to Christ, and look on Jesus with loose and transient glances, they have but coarse and common apprehensions of Jesus Christ. Oh! but we should come to Christ with solemn and serious spirits; we should look on Jesus piercingly, till we see him as God is in him, and as such a person thus and thus

qualified from heaven; we should labor to apprehend what is the riches of this glorious mystery of Christ's incarnation; we should dive into the depths of his glorious actings; we should study this mystery above all other studies. Nothing is more pleasant, and nothing is more deep. That one person should be God and man; that blessedness should be made a curse; that heaven should be let down into hell; that the God of the world should shut himself up, as it were, in a body; that the invisible God should be made visible to sense; that God should make our nature, which had sinned against him, to be the great ordinance of reconciling us unto himself; that God should take our flesh, and dwell in it with all his fullness, and make that flesh more glorious than the angels, and advance that flesh into oneness with himself, and through that flesh open all his rich discoveries of love and free grace unto the sons of men; that this God-man should be our Saviour, Redeemer, Reconciler, Father, Friend; Oh what mysteries are these! No wonder if when Christ was born, the apostles cry, "We saw his glory, as of the only begotten Son of God"; noting, that at the first sight of him, so much glory sparkled from him as could appear from none, but a God walking up and down the world. Oh! my soul, let not such a treasury be unlooked into. Set faith on work with a redoubled strength. Surely we live not like men under this great design, if our eye of faith be not firmly and steadfastly set on this. Oh, that we were but acquainted with these

lively discoveries! how blessedly might we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

(4.) Faith must look principally to the end of Christ, as God coming in the flesh.

Now what was the design of Christ in this? The apostle answers, Rom. viii. 3,

“God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh,” *i.e.*

God the Father sent into the world his only begotten Son, to abolish in the first

place original sin. Mark these two words: *he condemned sin in the flesh*. The first

word *condemned*, is, by a metonymy, put for that which follows condemnation,

namely, for the abolishing of sin; as condemned persons use to be cut off and to be

taken out of the world, that they may be no more; so Christ hath condemned or

abolished this sin. By the second word, *in the flesh*, is meant the human nature

which Christ assumed. He abolished sin altogether in his own nature: and that flesh

of his being perfectly holy, and the holiness of it being imputed unto us, it takes

away our guilt in respect of the impureness of our nature also. Christ had not the

least spot of original sin; and if we are Christ's, then is the sin in some measure

taken out of their hearts. But howsoever the filth of this sin may remain in part, yet

the guilt is removed: in this respect the purity of Christ's human nature is no less

reckoned to us for the curing of our defiled nature, than the sufferings of Christ are

to us, for the remission of our actual sins. O my soul, look to this end of Christ as

God in the flesh. If thou consider him as made of flesh and blood, think withal, that his meaning was to condemn sin in our flesh. There flows from the holiness of Christ's nature such a power as countermands the power of our original sin, and acquits and discharges from the condemnation of the same sin. Not only the death and life, but also the conception and birth, of Christ, hath its influence in our justification.

4. The encouragements to bring our souls to believe on Christ incarnate, we may draw --

(1.) From the excellency of this object. This incarnation of Christ is the foundation of all other actings of God for us; it is the very hinge on which all turn; it is the cabinet wherein all the designs of God do lie, redemption, justification, glorification, all are wrapt up in it; it is the highest pitch of the declaration of God's wisdom, goodness, power, and glory. Oh, what a sweet object of faith is this! I know there are some other things in Christ, which are most proper for some acts of faith; as, Christ dying is most proper for the pardon of actual sin; and Christ rising from the dead, is most proper for the evidencing of our justification; but the strongest and purest acts of faith are those which take in Christ as such a person, laid out in all this glory. Christ's incarnation is more general than Christ's passion

or Christ's resurrection, and, as some would have it, includes all. Christ's incarnation holds forth Christ in his fullness, and so is the complete subject of our faith.

Come, poor soul, thy eyes are running to and fro the world, to find comfort and happiness on earth: O cast thy eyes back, and see heaven and earth in one object! Look fixedly on Christ incarnate! There is more in this than in all the variety of this world, or of that world to come. Here is an object of faith, and love, and joy, and delight; here is a compendium of all glories.

(2.) From the suitableness of this object. Christ incarnate is most suitable for our faith to act upon. We are indeed to believe on God, but we cannot come to God but in and through Christ. Alas! God is offended, and therefore we cannot find ground immediately to go to God. Hence you heard, that faith must directly go to Christ as God in our flesh. O the infinite condescension of God in Christ! God takes up our nature, and joins it to himself as one person, and lays that before our faith; so that here is God, and God suited to the particular state of the sinner. Now with what boldness may our souls draw nigh to God! Why art thou strange, poor soul? Why standest thou afar off, as if it were death to draw nigh? Of whom art thou afraid? Is God come down amongst men, and canst thou not see him, lest thou die and

perish? Oh, look once more, and be not discouraged! See, God is not come down in fire. God is not descended in the armour of justice and everlasting burnings; no, he is clothed with the garments of flesh, he desires to converse with thee after thy own form, he is come down to beseech thee to see with thine own eyes thy eternal happiness. Oh, the wonder of heaven! It is the cry of some poor souls, O that I might see God! Lo here God is come down in the likeness of man, he walks in our own shape amongst us. It is the cry of others, O that I might have my heart united to God! Why, he is come down on this very purpose, and hath united our nature unto himself. Surely God hath left all the world without excuse: O that ever there should be an heart of unbelief, after these sensible demonstrations of divine glory and love! Why wilt thou now stand off? Tell me, what wouldst thou have God do more? Can he manifest himself in a more suitable way to thy condition? Is there anything below flesh, wherein the great God can humble himself for thy good? Come, think of another and a better way, or else for ever believe. Methinks it is sad to see believers shy in their approaches to God, or doubtful of their acceptance with God, when God himself stoops first, and is so in love with our acquaintance, that he will be of the same nature that we are. Oh! let not such a rock of strength be slighted, but every day entertain precious thoughts of Christ being incarnate: inure thy heart to believing on this Jesus, as he carries on the great work of thy salvation at his first coming.

(3.) From the offers of this blessed object to our souls. As Christ is come in our nature to satisfy, so he comes in the gospel freely and fully to offer the terms of love; therein are set out the most alluring expressions that possibly can be; therein is set out, that this incarnation of Christ was God's own acting, out of his own love, and grace, and glory; therein is set out the birth, and life, and death of Christ; and this he could not do but he must be incarnate: God takes our flesh, and he useth that as an instrument whereby to act; he was flesh to suffer, as he was spirit to satisfy, for our sins. Methinks I might challenge unbelief, and bid it come forth; let it appear, if it dare, before this consideration: what, is not God incarnate, enough to satisfy thy conscience? Come nigh, hear the voice of Christ inviting: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden" with sin. And, Oh! let these rich and glorious openings of the heart of Christ overcome thy heart. What if God should have done no more than this! Had he only looked down from heaven, and hearing sinners cry out, O woe, woe unto us forever! we have broken God's law, incurred the penalty, damned our own souls; O who should deliver us? Who will save us from the wrath to come? In this case, if God hearing sinners thus crying out; had he, I say, only looked down and told them, I will pardon your sins; I made the law, and will dispense with it; fear not, I have the keys of life and death: what soul would not have been raised up, even from the bottom of hell at this very voice? I

know a poor soul would have scrupled at this, and have said. What then should become of infinite justice? But, to remove all controversies, God hath not only spoken from heaven, but he himself is come down from heaven to speak unto us. O see this miracle of mercy! God is come down in flesh, he is come down as a price; he himself will pay himself according to all the demands of his justice; and all this done, now he offers and tenders himself to thy soul.

O my soul, why shouldst thou fear to cast thyself upon thy God? I know thy objection of vileness: notwithstanding all thy vileness, God himself offers himself to lead thee by the hand, and to remove all doubts; God himself hath put a price sufficient in the hands of justice; or if yet thou fearest to come to God, why come then to thy own flesh; go to Christ, as having thy own nature; it is he that calls thee. What can be said more to draw on thy trembling heart! If God himself, and God so fitted and qualified, as I may say, will not allure, must not men die and perish in unbelief? What! O my soul, is God come down so low to thee? and dost thou now stand questioning whether thou shouldst go or come to him? What is this but to say, All that God is, or does, or says, is too little to persuade me to faith? I cannot tell; but one would think that unbelief should be strangled, quite slain, upon this consideration. All this, O my soul, thou hearest in the gospel: there is Christ incarnate set forth to the life; there is Christ suing thy love, and offering himself as

thy beloved in thy own nature; there it is written, that God is come down in flesh, with an olive branch of eternal peace in his hand, and bids you all be witness he is not come to destroy, but to save. Oh that this encouragement might be of force to improve Christ's glorious design to the supplying of all thy wants, and to the making up of all thy losses! Believe, Oh, believe thy part in Christ incarnate.

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation at his first coming or incarnation. O my soul, canst thou possibly light on any object more attractive than the incarnation of Jesus Christ? If love be the loadstone of love, what an attractive is this before thee! Methinks the very sight of Christ incarnate is enough to ravish thee with the apprehension of his infinite goodness. See how he calls out, or, as it were, draws out the soul to union, vision, and participation of his glory! O come and yield thyself up unto him: give him thyself, and conform all thy affections and actions to his will. O love him, not with a divided, but with all thy heart.

But to excite this love, I shall only propound the object, which will be argument enough. Love causeth love: now as God's first love to man was in making man like

himself, so his second great love was in making himself like to man. Stay then a while upon this love; for I take it, this is the greater love of the two. The evangelist expresseth it thus, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”; he gave him to be incarnate, to be made flesh, and to suffer death; but the extension of his love lies in that expression, *he so loved*. So! how? why, so fully, so freely, as no tongue can tell, no heart can think.

It is usually said, that it is a greater love of God to save a soul, than to make a world; and I think it was a greater love of God to take our nature, than simply to save our souls: for a king to dispense with the law, and by his own prerogative to save a murderer from the gallows, is not such an act of love and mercy as to take the murderer’s clothes, and to wear them as his richest livery? Why, God in taking our nature, hath done thus, and more than thus: he would not save us by his mere prerogative, but he takes our clothes, our flesh, and in that flesh he personates us, and in that flesh he will die for us, that we might not die, but live through him for evermore. Surely this was love, that God will be no more God, as it were, simply, but he will take up another nature, rather than the brightness of his glory shall undo our souls.

It will not be amiss (whilst I am endeavoring to draw a line of God's love in Christ from first to last in saving souls) that here we look back a little, and summarily contract the passages of love from that eternity before all worlds unto this present.

1. God had an eternal design to discover his infinite love to some besides himself. Oh, the wonder of this! Was there any necessity of such a discovery? Though God was one, and in that respect alone, yet God was not solitary; in that eternity within his own essence there were three divine Persons, and betwixt them there was a blessed communication of love. Though in that eternity there was no creature to whom these three persons could communicate their love; yet was there a glorious communication and breaking out of love from one to another. Before there was a world, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost did infinitely glorify themselves, John xvii.

5. What need then was there of the discovery of God's love to any one besides himself? only thus was the pleasure of God; "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Such was the love of God, that it would not contain itself within that infinite ocean of himself, but it would needs have rivers and channels, into which it might run and overflow.

2. God, in prosecution of his design, creates a world of creatures; some rational, and only capable of love; others irrational, and serviceable to that one creature,

which he makes the top of the whole creation; then it was that he set one man, Adam, as a common person, to represent the rest; to him he gives abundance of glorious qualifications, and him he sets over all the work of his hands. If we should view the excellency of this creature, either in the outward or inner man, who would not wonder? His body had its excellency, which made the psalmist say, “I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,” Psalm cxxxix. 14. It is a speech borrowed from those who work arras-work: the body of man is a piece of curious tapestry, consisting of skin, bones, muscles, sinews, and the like. What a goodly thing the body of man was before the fall, may be guessed from the excellent gifts found in the bodies of some men since the fall. If all these were but joined in one, as certainly they were in Adam, what a rare body would such a one be? But what was this body in comparison of that soul? The soul was it that was especially made after the image of God: the soul was it that was tempered in the same mortar with the heavenly spirits: the soul was God’s sparkle, a beam of his divine glory, a ray or emanation of God himself: as man was the principal part of the creation, so the soul was the principal part of man. Here was it that God’s love and glory were centred. Here was it that God’s love fixed itself in a special manner, whence flowed that communion of God with Adam, and that familiarity of Adam with God.

3. Within a while, this man, the object of God's love, fell away from God, and as he fell, so all that were in him, even the whole world, fell together with him; and hereupon God's face was hid. Not a sight of him but in flaming fire, ready to seize on the sons of men. And yet God's love would not thus leave the object: he had yet a further reach of love, and out of this dark cloud he lets fall some glimpses of another discovery: these glimpses were sweet; but, alas! they were so dark that very few could make any comfortable application of them; but by degrees God hints it out more, he points it out by types and shadows, he makes some model of it by outward ceremonies, and yet so dark, that in four thousand years men were but guessing and hoping through promises for a manifestation of God's love. This is the meaning of the apostle, who tells us of the mystery that was hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints. This love of God was hid in the breast of God from the sons of men for an age, so that they knew not what to make of this great design: I speak of the generality of men; for in respect of some particulars, the Lord made his love clear to them; and still the nearer to Christ, the clearer and clearer was the covenant of grace.

4. At last, God fully opens himself; in the fullness of time, God takes the flesh of those poor sinners which he had so loved, and joins it to himself, and calls it Christ, a Saviour. Now was it that God descended, and lay in the womb of a virgin;

now was it that he is born as we are born; now was it that he joined our flesh so nigh to himself, as that there is a communication of properties betwixt them both; that being attributed to God which is proper to flesh, as to be born, to suffer and that being attributed to flesh which is proper to God, as to create, to redeem. Who can choose but wonder, that God should be made flesh, and dwell amongst us? that flesh should infinitely provoke God, and yet God, in the same flesh, should be infinitely pleased? that God should veil himself, and darken his glory with our flesh, and yet unveil at the same time the deepest and darkest of his designs in a comfortable way to our souls? O my soul! how shouldst thou contain thyself within thyself? how shouldst thou but leap out of thyself, if I may so speak, as one that is lost in the admiration of this love? Surely God never manifested himself in such a strain of love as this before.

Well, hitherto we have followed the passages of his love, and now we see it at full-sea. If anything will beget our love to God, surely Christ incarnate will do it. Come then, O my soul, I cannot but call on thee to love thy Jesus; and to provoke thy love, fix thy eye on this lovely object. Draw yet a little nearer; consider what an heart of love is in this design: God is in thy own nature, to take upon him all the miseries of thy nature.

Oh! my heart, art thou yet cold in thy love to Jesus Christ? Canst thou love him but a little, who hath loved thee so much? How should I then but complain of thee to Christ! and for thy sake beg hard of God: O thou sweet Jesus, that clothest thyself with the clouds as with a garment, and now clothest thyself with the nature of a man; Oh! that nothing but thyself might be dear unto me, because it so pleased thee to vilify thyself for my sake.

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation for us at his incarnation. If it be so, that by our desire, and hope, and faith, and love, we have reached the object which our souls pant after, how should we but joy and delight therein? The end of our motion is to attain quiet and rest; now what is joy, but a sweet and delightful tranquillity of mind, resting in the fruition of good? What! hast thou in some measure attained the fruition of Christ, as God incarnate, in thy soul? It is then time to joy in Jesus; it is then time to keep a sabbath of thy thoughts, and to be quiet and calm in thy spirit. But you will say, how should this be before we come to heaven? I answer, there is not indeed perfection of joy whilst we are here, because there is no perfection of union on this side heaven; but so far as union is, our joy must be. Examine the grounds of thy hope, and the actings of

thy faith, and if thou art but satisfied in them, then lead up thy joy; here is matter for it to work upon: if thou canst rejoice in anything, rejoice in the Lord; and again I say, rejoice.

Is there not cause? What is the meaning of the gospel of Christ? What is gospel, but good spell, or good tidings? And wherein lies the good tidings, according to its eminency? Is it not in the glorious incarnation of the Son of God? “Behold, I bring you a gospel,” so it is in the original; or, “behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” The birth of Christ is the comfort of comforts, and the sweetest balm that ever was. O my soul, what ails thee? Why art thou cast down and disquieted within me? Is it because thou art a sinner? Why, unto thee is born a Saviour; his name is Saviour, and therefore Saviour, because he will save his people from their sins. Come then, and bring out thy sins, and weigh them to the utmost aggravation, and take in every circumstance both of law and gospel, and set but this in the other scale, that unto thee is born a Saviour; surely all thy iniquities will seem lighter than vanity, yea, they will be as nothing in comparison thereof: “My soul doth magnify the Lord,” said Mary, “and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.” Her soul and her spirit within her rejoiced at this birth of Christ.

There is cause that every soul and every spirit should rejoice, that hath any interest in this birth of Christ. O my soul, how shouldst thou but rejoice, if thou wilt consider these particulars:

1. God himself is come down into the world. Because it was impossible for thee to come to him, he is come to thee. This consideration made the prophet cry out. “Rejoice greatly, O thou daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee”: he is called a King, and therefore he is able; and he is thy King, and therefore he is willing: but in that thy King cometh unto thee, here is the marvelous love of God in Christ. Kings do not usually come to wait upon their subjects; it is well if poor subjects may come to them. Oh! but see the great King of heaven and earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, stooping, and bowing the heavens, come down to thee! Surely this is good tidings of great joy, and therefore rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

2. God is come down in flesh. He hath laid aside, as it were, his own glory, whilst he converseth with thee. When God manifested himself on mount Sinai, he came down in thunder and lightning; and if now he had appeared in thunder and lightning, if now he had been guarded with an innumerable company of angels, all having their swords of justice drawn, well might poor souls have trembled, and

have run into corners; for who could ever be able to endure his coming in this way? But God is come down in flesh, he hath made his appearance as a man, as one of us, and there is not in this regard the least distance betwixt him and us; surely this is fuel for joy to feed upon. O why should God come down so suitably, so lowly, as in our nature, if he would have thy poor soul to be afraid of him? Doth not this very design intend consolation to thy soul? O gather up thy spirit, anoint thy heart with the oil of gladness. See, God himself is come down in flesh to live amongst us! he professeth he will have no other life but amongst the sons of men. See what a sweet way of familiarity and intercourse is made betwixt God and us.

3. God hath taken on him our nature, that his godhead may flow out in all manner of sweetness upon our hearts. If God had come down in flesh, only to have been seen of us, it had been a wonderful condescension: “If I have found favour in thy eyes,” said Moses, “shew me the way that I may know thee”: but to come down in flesh, not only to be seen, but to dispatch the great business of our soul’s salvation, here is comfort indeed: with what joy should we draw water out of this well of salvation.

O my soul, thou art daily busy in eyeing this and that; but above all know, that the fullness of God lies in Christ incarnate, to be emptied upon thee. This was the meaning of Christ's taking upon him flesh, that through his flesh he might convey to thee whatsoever is in himself as God. As for instance, God in himself is good, and gracious, and powerful, and all-sufficient, and merciful, and what not? Now by his being in flesh, he conveys all this to thee. Observe this for thy eternal comfort; God in and through the flesh makes all his attributes and glory serviceable to thy soul.

4. This discovering Christ incarnate is the first opening of all God's heart and glory unto the sons of men: and from this we may raise a world of comfort; for if God begins so gloriously, how will he end? If God be so full of love, as to come down in flesh now in this world, Oh what matter of hope is laid up before us, of what God will be to us in that world to come? If the glory of God be let out to our souls so fully at first, what glorious openings of all the glory of God will be let out to our souls at last? Christians! what do you think will God do with us, or bring us unto, when we shall be with him in heaven! You see now he is manifested in flesh, and he hath laid out a world of glory in that: but the apostle tells us of another manifestation, for we "shall see him as he is"; he shall at last be manifest in

himself: “Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know even as we are known.”

O my soul, weigh all these passages, and make an application of them to thyself; and then tell me if yet thou hast not matter enough to raise up thy heart, and fill it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When the wise men saw but the star of Christ, they rejoiced with an exceeding great joy; how much more when they saw Christ himself? “Your father Abraham,” said Christ to the Jews, “rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.” He saw it indeed but afar off, with the eyes of faith; they before Christ had the promise, but we see the performance: how then should we rejoice! How glad shouldst thou be, O my soul, at the sight of Christ’s incarnation? If the angels of God, yea, if the multitudes of angels, could sing for joy at his birth, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men”; how much more shouldst thou, whom it concerns more than the angels, join with them in concert, and sing for joy this joyful song, of good will towards men? Awake, awake, O my soul, awake, awake, utter a song! tell over these passages, that God is come down into the world; that God is come down in flesh; in order to thy reconciliation; that God is come down in the likeness of man, that he may bring thee up into the likeness of God; and that all these are but the first openings of the grace, and goodness, and glory, of God in Christ unto thy

soul: and Oh, what work will these make in thy soul, if the Spirit come in, who is the Comforter!

Sect. VIII. -- Of Calling on Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Birth

Let us call on Jesus, or on God the Father in and through Jesus. Now this calling on Jesus contains prayer and praise.

I. We must pray that all these transactions of Jesus at his first coming may be ours; and is not here encouragement for our prayers? This very point of Christ's incarnation opens a door of rich entrance into the presence of God: we may call it a blessed portal into heaven. This is that "new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." With what boldness may we now enter into the holiest, and draw near unto the throne of grace! Why, Christ is incarnate, God is come down in the flesh; though his deity may confound us, if we should immediately and solely apply ourselves unto it, yet his humanity comforts our faint and feeble souls. God in his humility animates our souls to come unto him, and to seek of him whatsoever is needful for us. Go then to Christ; away, away, O my soul, to Jesus, or to God the Father in and through Jesus, and desire that the fruit, the benefit, of his conception, birth, and of the wonderful union of the

two natures of Christ, may be all thine. What! dost thou hope in Jesus, and believe thy part in this incarnation of Christ? Why then, pray in hope, and pray in faith. What is prayer but the stream and river of faith, an issue of the desire of that which I joyfully believe? “Thou, O Lord God of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.”

2. We must praise. This was the special duty practised by all saints and angels at Christ’s birth; “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,” said Zachary, “for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” – And, “Glory to God in the highest,” said the heavenly host: only one angel had before brought the news. “Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”; but immediately after there were many to sing praises; not only six cherubims, as Isaiah saw; not only four and twenty elders, as John saw; but a multitude of angels, like armies, that by their hallelujahs gave glory to God. O my soul, do thou keep concert with those angels: O sing praises! sing praises. Never was the like case since the first creation; never was the wisdom, truth, justice, mercy, and goodness of God so manifest before. I shall never forget that last speech of a dying saint, “Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!” O my soul, living and dying, let this be thought on; What!

Christ incarnate for me? Why “bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

Let us conform to Jesus, in reference to this great transaction of his incarnation. Looking to Jesus is the cause of this; the sight of God will make us like to God, and the sight of Christ will make us like to Christ; for as a looking-glass cannot be exposed to the sun, but it will shine like the same, so God receives none to contemplate his face, but he transforms them into his own likeness; and Christ hath none that dive into these depths of his glorious incarnation, but they carry along with them sweet impressions of an abiding and transforming nature. Come then, let us once more look on Jesus in his incarnation, that we may conform to Jesus in that respect.

But wherein lies this conformity to Jesus? I answer, in these and the like particulars:

1. Christ was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost; so must Christ be conceived in us by the same Holy Ghost. To this purpose is the seed of the word cast in, and

principles of grace are by the Holy Ghost infused; “he hath begotten us by the word,” saith the apostle, James i. 18. God hath appointed no other means to convey supernatural life, but after this manner. Where no preaching is, there is a worse judgment than that of Egypt, where there was one dead in every family. By the word and spirit the seeds of all grace are sown in the heart, and the heart closing with it, Christ is conceived in the heart.

2. Christ was sanctified in the Virgin’s womb; so must we be sanctified in ourselves: “Be ye holy as I am holy.” Souls regenerate must be sanctified: “Everyman,” saith the apostle, “that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” I know our hearts are, as it were, seas of corruptions, yet we must daily cleanse them. Christ could not have been a Saviour for us, unless first he had been sanctified; neither can we be fit members unto him, unless we be purged from our sins, and sanctified by his Spirit. To this purpose is that of the apostle; “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” In the Old Testament they did kill beasts, presenting them unto the Lord; now we are to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts; all our inordinate passions, all our evil affections of anger, love, joy, hatred, are to be crucified, and all that is ours must be given up to God: there must be no love in us but of God, and in reference to God; no joy in us, but in God, and

in reference to God; no fear in us, but of God, and in reference to God; and thus of all other the like passions. O that we would look to Jesus, and be like unto Jesus in this thing! if there be any honour, any happiness, it is in this: we are not fit for any holy duty, or any religious approach unto God, without sanctification; “This is the will of God,” saith the apostle, “even your sanctification.” All the commands of God tend to this; and for the comfort of us Christians, we have, under the gospel, promises of sanctification to be in a larger measure made out unto us: “In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord”; -- yea, “every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord.” Every vessel under Christ and the gospel must have written upon it “Holiness to the Lord”: thus our spiritual services, figured by the ancient ceremonial services of the Jewish dispensation, are set out by a larger measure of holiness than was in former times.

3. Christ the Son of man, is by nature the son of God; so we, poor sons of men, must, by grace, become the sons of God, even of the same God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: “For this end God sent his own Son, made of a woman, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” -- “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” This intimates, that what relation Christ hath unto the Father by nature, we should have the same by grace: by nature, “he is the only begotten Son of the Father”; -- “and as many as received

him,” saith the apostle John, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

4. Christ the Son of God was yet the son of man: there was in him a duplicity of natures really distinguished; and in this respect the greatest majesty, and the greatest humility, that ever was, are found in Christ: so we, though sons of God, must remember ourselves to be but sons of men: and our privileges are not so high, but our poor conditions, frailties, infirmities, sins, may make us low. Who was higher than the son of God? and who was lower than the son of man? As he is God, he is in the bosom of his Father; as he is man, he is in the womb of his mother: as he is God, his throne is in heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity; as he is man, he is circumcised in a manger. Well, “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself”: he that thought it no robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself to become man. We should have found it no robbery to be equal with devils, and are we too proud to learn of God? What an intolerable disproportion is this, to behold an humbled God, and a proud man! Shall the son of God be thus humbled for us, and shall not we be humbled for ourselves? I say, for ourselves,

that deserve to be cast down among the lowest worms. What are we in our best condition on earth? Had we the best natures, purest conversations, happiest endowments, pride overthrows all; it thrust Nebuchadnezzar out of Babel, proud Saul out of his kingdom, proud Lucifer out of heaven. Poor man! how ill it becomes thee to be proud, when God himself is become thus humble! “Learn of me,” saith Christ, “for I am meek and lowly in spirit, and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

5. The two natures of Christ, though really distinguished, yet were inseparably joined; so must our natures, though at great distance from God, be inseparably joined to Christ, and thereby to God. “I pray,” saith Christ, “that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” That union of Christ’s two natures, we call an hypostatical union; and this union of Christ with us, we call a mystical and spiritual union; yet though it be mystical and spiritual, this hinders not but that it is a true, real union, whereby the believer is united to the Son of God. O what a privilege is this; a poor believer, be he never so mean a man or miserable in the eye of the world, yet is one with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father. “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Every saint is Christ’s fellow; there is a kind of proportion between Christ and his saints in everything; if we take a view of all Christ, what he is in his

person, in his glory, in his spirit, in his graces, in his Father's love, and in the access he hath to the Father, in all these we are, in a sort, fellows with Christ; only with this difference, that Christ hath the pre-eminence in all things: all comes from the Father, first to Christ; Christ by his union hath all good things without measure, but we by our union have them only in measure, as it pleaseth him to distribute. But herein if we resemble Christ, whether in his union with the Father, or in his union of the two natures in one person of a Mediator, if by looking on Christ, we come to this likeness, to be one with Christ, O what a privilege is this! Had we not good warrant for so high a challenge, it could be no less than a blasphemous arrogance to lay claim to the royal blood of heaven; but the Lord is pleased to dignify a poor worm, that every believer may truly say, I am one with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is one with me.

Nay, yet more, my sufferings are Christ's, Col. i. 24, and Christ's sufferings are mine, Rom. viii. 17. I am in Christ an heir of glory. O my Christ, my life, what am I, or what is my father's house, that thou shouldst come down into me? that thou shouldst be conceived in my poor sinful heart, that thou shouldst give my soul a new, a spiritual life, a life begun in grace, and ending in eternal glory! I shall not reckon up any more privileges of this union. Methinks I should not need. If I tell you of grace and glory, what can I more? Glory is the highest pitch, and Christ tells

you concerning it. “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.” Ah, my brethren, to be so like Christ, as to be one with Christ, it is near indeed! O let us conform to Christ in this: he is one with our nature in an hypostatical, personal union; let us be one with him in a spiritual, holy, and mystical union. If God be not in our persons as truly, though not as fully as in our nature, we have no particular comfort from this design of his personal, hypostatical, and wonderful union.

6. When Christ was born, all Jerusalem was troubled; so when this new birth is, we must look that much commotion and much division of heart will be. The devil could not be cast out of the possessed person, but he would tear and torment him. We cannot expect that Christ should expel Satan from the dominion he hath over us, but he will be sure to put us to great fear and terror. Besides, not only the evil spirit, but God’s Spirit is for a while a spirit of bondage. There are many pretenders to the grace of God in Christ, but they cannot abide to hear of any pains in this new birth. Oh, this is legal! But I pray thee tell me, dost thou know any woman bring forth in her sleep, or in a dream, without feeling any pain? And how then should the heart of man be thus changed and moulded without several pangs and troubles; “in sorrow shall thou bring forth children”: so it is, and must be, in our spiritual birth; there is usually (I will not say always, to such or such a degree) many pangs

and troubles, there is many a throb, and many a heartache, ere Christ can be formed in us.

7. Christ after his birth did and suffered many things in his childhood; so should we learn to bear God's yoke in our youth. O ye parents, do your duties, and in that respect imitate Joseph and Mary in their care of the holy child Jesus: and O ye children, do your duties, and imitate Jesus, the blesseddest pattern that ever was, that as you grow in stature, you also might grow in favour with God and man.

Thus far we have looked on Jesus, as our Jesus in his incarnation. Our next work is to look on Jesus carrying on the great work of man's salvation during his life, from John's baptism until his dying on the cross.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS IN HIS LIFE

BOOK IV

1 John i. 2, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it."

CHAP. I

Sect. I. -- Of the Beginning of the Gospel

In this piece, as in the former, we must first lay down the object, and then direct you how to look to it.

The object is Jesus carrying on the work of man's salvation during the time of his life. -- Now in all the transactions of this time, we shall observe them as they were carried on successively in those three years and a half of his ministerial office.

For the first year, the evangelist Mark begins thus: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God"; q. d. the beginning of that age of the world, which the prophets pointed out for the time of good things to come; or the beginning of the completion of that gospel, which, in respect of the promise, was from the beginning of the world.

That now was the beginning of the gospel, appears, in that baptism (which was only used among the Jews, for the admission of heathens to their church,) is now proposed to the Jews themselves; showing, that now they were to be transplanted

into a new profession; that the Gentiles and they were now to be knit into one church and body. Indeed the doctrine of John was of a different strain from the literal doctrine of the law, in the sense of the Jews; for that called all for works, “do this and live”: but John called for repentance, and for the renewing of the mind, and for belief in him that was coming after, disclaiming all righteousness by the works of the law.

Hence one observes that the evangelist Luke points out this year in a special manner; it was the “fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar; at which time,” said he, “Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, Philip was tetrarch of Iturea, Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas were high-priests. And then, even then, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.” See how exact the evangelist is, that so remarkable a year of the beginning of the gospel might be made known to all the world. I shall begin the first year of Christ’s life with the beginning of John’s preaching, which was six months current before the ministry of Christ.

Sect. II. -- Of the Preaching of John Baptist

Now was it that the gospel began to dawn; and John, like the morning star springing from the windows of the east, foretells the approach of the Sun of righteousness: now was it that he laid the first rough stone of the building in mortification, self-denial, and doing violence to our natural affections. I read not that ever John wrought a miracle, but good works convince more than miracles themselves. To this purpose, I suppose, John the Baptist spent his time in prayer, meditation, and colloquies with God, eating flies and wild honey in the wilderness, that he might be made a fit instrument of preparation of the gospel of Christ.

John's sermons were to those of Jesus as a preface to a discourse: --

His usual note was repentance, the axe to the root, the fan to the floor, the chaff to the fire. As his raiment was rough, so was his tongue; and thus must the way be made for Christ, in obstinate hearts. Plausibility, or pleasing of the flesh, is no fit preface to regeneration. If the heart of man had continued upright, Christ might have been entertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruptions, ere we can make room for grace. If the great way-maker do not cast down hills and raise up valleys in the bosoms of men, there is no passage for Christ; never will Christ come into that soul, where the herald of repentance, either in one motive or other, hath not been before him.

Shall we hear that sermon that John preached, in his own words? “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” These are the words when he first began to preach the gospel of Christ; and indeed we find Christ himself doth preach the same doctrine, in the same words: “Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

O how seasonable is this sermon to Christians! Hath not the kingdom of heaven approached unto us? Take the kingdom of heaven for the kingdom of glory, are we not near to the door of glory, to the confines of eternity? What is our life, but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and after it vanisheth away? We know not but ere the sun have run one round, our souls may be in that world of souls, and so either in heaven or hell. -- Or take the kingdom of heaven for the church of Christ, and what expectation have we now of the flourishing state of Christ’s church here upon earth? “Then shall the children of Israel and of Judah be gathered together, for great shall be the day of Jezreel,” Hos. i. 11. A time is at hand, that Israel and Judah shall be called together, that the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in; and what is this but the great day of Jezreel? Then what manner of persons ought we to be; how spiritual, how heavenly-minded! Arise, arise, shake off thy dust, for thy light is coming, and the glory of the Lord is rising upon thee. -- But I will not dwell

on this; my design is to consider of Jesus, and of the transactions of Jesus in reference to our souls' health: now, John's sermons were only a preparative to the manifestation of Jesus.

Sect. III. -- Of the Baptism of Jesus

He that formerly was circumcised, would now be baptized; he was circumcised to sanctify his church that was, and he was baptized to sanctify his church that should be; we find him in both testaments opening a way into heaven. This was the first appearing of Christ in reference to his ministerial office; he that lay hid in the counsel of God from all eternity, and he that lay hid in the womb of his mother for the space of forty weeks, and he that lay hid in Nazareth for the space of thirty years, now at last begins to show himself to the world: he comes from Galilee to Jordan, to John, to be baptized of him. Now was the full time come that Jesus took leave of his mother and his trade, to begin his Father's work, in order to the redemption of the world. -- For the clearer understanding of Christ's baptism, we shall examine these particulars:

1. What reason had Christ to be baptized?

2. How was it that John knew him to be Christ?

3. Why was it that the Holy Ghost descended on Jesus?

I. What reason had Christ to be baptized? We find John himself wondering at this;

“I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” Many reasons are

given for Christ’s baptism: (1.) That he might bear witness to the preaching and

baptism of John, and might reciprocally receive a testimony from John. (2.) That

by his own baptism, he might sanctify the water of baptism to his own church. (3.)

That he might fulfill all righteousness not only the moral, but the figurative,

ceremonial, and typical. Some think, that the ceremony which our Saviour looked

at in these words, was their washing of the priests in water, when they entered into

their function: “And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring to the door of the

tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.” And surely this

was the main reason of Christ’s being baptized, that by this baptism he might be

installed into his ministerial office.

2. How did John know him to be Christ? the Baptist speaks expressly, “I knew him

not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, On

whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Now, this descent of the Holy Ghost was not till after baptism; how then did he know him to be Christ?

It is not unlikely but John knew Christ at his first arrival by revelation. Thus Samuel knew Saul; and thus John might know Christ. That knowledge he had after baptism, was a further confirmation of that knowledge that he had before baptism, and that not so much for his own sake, as for the people’s; “I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.”

3. Why was it that the Holy Ghost descended on Jesus? I answer, For these reasons, 1. That John the Baptist might be satisfied; for this token was given John, when he first began to preach, That upon whom he should see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (2.) That Christ himself might be anointed or installed to his function: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” As Aaron and his sons were anointed with material oil, when they entered into their offices, so Christ was by the Spirit (as it were) anointed, that so he might receive this consecration and institution for the office that he was to enter on, *viz.* the preaching and ministry of the gospel.

4. Why in the form of a dove, rather than some other form? -- Perhaps,

(1.) To show Christ's innocency, purity, and love. (2.) To answer the figure in Noah's flood; for as a dove at that time brought tidings of the abating of the waters, so now it brings tidings of the abating of God's wrath, upon the preaching of the gospel.

Observe, the baptism we use, and the baptism of John, are in nature and substance one and the same. 1. John preached the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. They have therefore the same doctrine, and the same promise. 2. The baptism ministered by John pertained to the fulfilling of all righteousness. And Luke testifies, that the publicans and people being baptized of John, they justified God. But the Pharisees despised the counsel of God against themselves, and were not baptized. Only herein lies the difference, that John baptized in Christ that should die and rise again; but we baptize in the name of Christ that is dead, and risen again. It is a difference in respect of circumstance, but not of the substance: Oh, take heed of throwing away the baptism of water, upon the pretence of baptism only with fire! Christ, we see, hath joined them together, and let no man separate

them asunder: Christ himself was baptized with fire; and yet Christ himself was baptized with water.

Sect. IV. -- Of the Fasting and Temptation of Christ

No sooner is Christ come out of the water of baptism, but he enters into the fire of temptation. No sooner is the Holy Spirit descended upon his head, but he is led by the same Holy Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness. No sooner doth God say, “This is my Son”; but Satan puts it to the question, “If thou be the Son of God?”

All these are but Christ’s preparatives to his prophetic office. In the former, Christ was prepared by a solemn consecration; now he is further prepared by Satan’s temptation. In the same method as the evangelist lays it down, Matt. iv. 1-12, I shall proceed. “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.” In the whole, we may observe these several branches: First, the place where the temptation was, the wilderness; Secondly, the cause of Christ’s going into the wilderness, the Spirit’s leading; Thirdly, the end of the Spirit’s leading Christ into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil; Fourthly, the time and occasion of the devil’s onset, at the end of forty days’ fast, and when he was an hungered; Fifthly, the temptations themselves, which are in number, three; to which are added as many victories, which Christ had over the tempter; who

therefore “left him, and so the angels came and ministered unto him.” -- I shall begin first with the place where the temptation was; to wit, in the wilderness.

This wilderness was not that same wilderness, or not that same place of the wilderness, wherein John Baptist lived, Matt. iii. 1, for that wherein John Baptist lived, was a place inhabited. There was in that place cities and towns, and a number of people to whom John preached; but this wilderness was devoid of men, full of wild beasts. So saith Mark – “He was tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts.” As Adam, in his innocency, lived with wild beasts, and they hurt him not; so Christ, the second Adam, lives here in a wilderness with wild beasts, and has no hurt at all. He is Adam-like in his safety and security; above Adam in the resisting of temptation. Probably, during his forty days’ abode, Christ was continually exercised in prayer and fasting: but he knew he had the great work of redemption to promote; and therefore his conversation for this interval must be preparatory to it; in this respect, I know not but the wilderness might be an advantage to Christ’s design: in this solitary place he could not but breathe out more pure inspiration. Heaven usually is more open, and God usually is more familiar in his visits, to such places.

2. The cause of Christ's going into the wilderness, was, the Spirit's leading: "Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness." Christ was led by the good Spirit, to be tempted by the evil spirit: O wonder! that same Spirit which was one with the Father and the Son, that same Spirit whereby Christ was conceived, now drives him or leads him into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Christ himself would not go into the combat uncalled, unwarranted; how then should we poor weaklings presume upon any abilities of our own! Who dares grapple with the devil in his own strength? Oh, take heed! If we are to pray not to be led into temptation, much more are we to pray not to run into temptation before we are led: and yet for the comfort of God's people, if it be so that we are led -- if by divine permission, or by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are engaged in an action, or in a course of life, that is full of temptations -- let us look upon it as an issue of divine providence, in which we must glorify God.

3. The end of the Spirit's leading Christ into the wilderness, was either immediate, or remote. 1. The immediate end was, to be tempted of the devil: to this purpose was Christ brought thither, that Satan might tempt him. One would think it a very strange design, that the Son of God should be brought into a wilderness to be set on by all the devils in hell; but in this also, God had another remote end, *i.e.* his own glory and our good. 1. His own glory appeared in this; had not Satan tempted

Christ, how should Christ have overcome Satan? Herein was the power of Christ exceedingly manifested: the devil having the chain let loose, lets fly at Christ with all his might; and Christ both overcomes him, and triumphs over him. And herein were the graces of Christ exceedingly manifested: how was the faith, patience, humility, zeal, and valour of Christ set forth; which they could not have been, if he had always lain quietly in garrison, and never had come into the skirmish? (2.) As it was for his glory, so also for our good. Now we see what manner of adversary we have, how he fights, and how he is resisted, and how overcome; now we see, the dearer we are to God, the more obnoxious we are to temptation; now we see that the best of saints may be tempted or allured to the worst of evils, since Christ himself is solicited to infidelity, covetousness, and idolatry: now we see that we have not an High-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but such a one as was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sin; and therefore we may go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace in time of need.

4. The time and occasion of the devil's onset; it was "at the end of forty days' fast, and when he was an hungered." Moses fasted forty days at the delivery of the law; and Elias fasted forty days at the restitution of the law; and to fulfill the time of both these types, Christ thinks it fit to fast forty days at the accomplishment of the

law, and the promulgation of the gospel. In fasting so long, Christ manifests his almighty power; and in fasting no longer, Christ manifests the truth of his manhood, and of his weakness: to show that he was man as well as God, and so a fit Mediator betwixt God and man, he would both feed and fast; make use of the creature, and withal fulfill hunger. -- And now our Saviour is an hungered. This gives occasion to Satan to set upon him with his fierce temptations. He knows well what baits to fish withal, and when and how to lay them. He considers the temper and constitution of the person he is to tempt. And he observes all exterior accidents, occasions, and opportunities.

5. The temptations themselves are in number three; whereof the first was this: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What an horrible entrance is this: "If thou be the Son of God"! No question, Satan had heard the glad tidings of the angel; he saw the star, and the journey and the offerings of the sages; he could not but take notice of the gratulations of Zachary, Simeon, and Anna. And of late, he saw the heavens open, and heard the voice that came down from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And yet, now that he saw Christ fainting with hunger, as not comprehending how infirmities could consist with a godhead, he puts it to the question, "If thou be the Son of God." Here is a point in which lies all our happiness: how miserable were we, if

Christ were not indeed the Son of God? Satan strikes at the root, in this supposition: surely, all the work of our redemption, and all the work of our salvation, depends upon this, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If Christ had not been the Son of God, how should he have ransomed the world? How should he have done, or how should he have suffered, that which was satisfactory to his Father's wrath? If Christ be not the Son of God, we are all gone; we are lost, we are undone, we are damned forever. Farewell glory, farewell happiness, farewell heaven. If Christ be not the Son of God, we must never come there. Well, Satan, thou beginnest thy assault like a devil indeed: "If thou be the Son of God"; but what then? "Command that these stones be made bread." He knew Jesus was hungry; and therefore, he invites him to eat bread only of his own providing, that so he might refresh his humanity, and prove his divinity. There is nothing more ordinary with our spiritual enemy, than, by occasion of want, to move us to unwarrantable courses: if thou art poor, then steal; if thou canst not rise by honest means, then use indirect means. I know Christ might as lawfully have turned stones into bread, as he turned water into wine; but to do this in a distrust of his Father's providence, to work a miracle of Satan's choice, and at Satan's bidding, it could not be agreeable with the Son of God. And hence Jesus refuseth to be relieved; he would rather deny to manifest the divinity of his person, than he would do any act which had in it the intimation of a different spirit. O Christians! it is a sinful care to

take evil courses to provide for our necessities. Come, it may be thou hast found a way to thrive, which thou couldst not do before. O take heed; was it not of the devil's prompting, to change stones into bread? sadness, into sensual comforts?

If so, then Satan hath prevailed: alas, he cannot endure thou shouldst live a life of austerity, or self-denial, or mortification; if he can but get thee to satisfy thy senses, and to please thy natural desires, he then hath a fair field for the battle. It were a thousand times better for us to make stones our meat, and tears our drink, than to swim in our ill-gotten goods, and in the fullness of voluptuousness.

But what was Christ's answer? "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

1. It is written. He easily could have confounded Satan by the power of his godhead; but he rather chooses to vanquish him by the sword of the Spirit. Surely this was for our instruction. By this means he teacheth us how to resist, and to overcome. Nothing in heaven or earth can beat the forces of hell, if the word of God cannot do it: O then, how should we pray with David, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes -- and take not from me the words of truth; let them be my songs in the house of my pilgrimage -- so shall I make answer to my blasphemers."

2. Man shall not live by bread. Whilst we are in God's work, God hath made us a promise of the supply of all provisions necessary for us. Jesus was now in his Father's work, therefore he was sure to be provided for, according to God's word. Christians! are we in God's service? God will certainly give us bread; and till he does, we can live by the breath of his mouth, by the light of his countenance, by the refreshment of his promises, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Every word of God's mouth can create a grace, and every grace can supply two necessities, both of the body, and of the spirit. I remember one kept straitly in prison, and sorely threatened with famine: he replied, "That if he must have no bread, God would so provide that he should have no stomach." If our stock be spent, God can lessen our necessities: if a tyrant will take away our meat, God our Father knows how to alter our feint, and feeble, and hungry appetites.

The-second temptation is not so sensual; the devil sees that was too low for Christ, and therefore he comes again with a temptation something more spiritual: "He sets him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee." He that was content to be led from Jordan into the wilderness, yields to be led from the wilderness to Jerusalem. The wilderness was fit for a temptation arising from want, and Jerusalem for a temptation arising from vain-glory.

Methinks it is a sweet contemplation of an holy divine; he supposed as if he had seen Christ on the highest battlements of the temple, and Satan standing by him with this speech in his mouth: “Well then, since in the matter of nourishment thou wilt needs depend upon thy Father’s providence; take now a further trial of that providence, in thy miraculous preservation: cast thyself from this height; and if thou be God, now the eyes of all men are fixed upon thee, there cannot be devised a more ready way to spread thy glory, and to proclaim thy deity: and for danger, if thou art the Son of God, there can be none; what can hurt him that is the Son of God?” Come, cast thyself down, saith Satan: but why did not Satan cast him down? He carried him up thither; and was it not more easy to throw him down thence? O no, the devil may persuade us to a fall, but he cannot precipitate us without our own act; his malice is infinite, but his power is limited: he cannot do us any harm, but by persuading us to do it ourselves; and therefore saith he to Christ, “Cast thyself down.”

To this Christ answers, “Thou, shall not tempt the Lord thy God.” Though it is true, that God must be trusted in, yet he must not be tempted; if means be allowed, we must not throw them away upon a pretence of God’s protection. Christ knew well enough that there were ordinary descents by stairs from the top of the temple,

and therefore he would not so tempt God as to throw himself headlong. All the devils in hell could not so tempt Christ, as to make him tempt his God.

The third temptation is yet more horrid; the temple was not high enough, so that Satan takes him up to the top of an exceeding high mountain, and shews him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, saying, “All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” In this temptation the devil united all his power; by an angelical power he drew into one centre all the kingdoms and glories of the worlds and made an admirable map of beauties, and represented them to the eyes of Jesus: he thought ambition more likely to ruin him, because he knew it was that which prevailed upon himself; therefore, “Come,” saith Satan, “all these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” How! God worship the devil? Was ever the like blasphemy since the creation? The Lamb of God, that heard all the former with patience, could by no means endure this: he commands him away, and tells him, “It is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shall thou serve.” Now was the devil put to flight, and, in his stead, the angels came and ministered unto Jesus; *i.e.* after his fast they minister such things as his necessities required.

O Christians! what shall we say to this? If Christ was thus tempted by Satan, what may we look for? Sometimes it cheers my heart to think that Christ was tempted, because thereby he knows how to succour those that are tempted; and sometimes it affrights my soul to think that Satan durst be so bold with Jesus Christ. Oh what may he do with me! how easily may he prevail against my soul! When he came to tempt Christ, he found nothing in him to join with him in the temptation; but in my heart is a world of corruptions, and, unless the Lord prevent, I am quickly gone.

Sect. V. -- Of the First Manifestation of Christ

To manifest Christ were many witnesses. As, 1. From heaven the Father is witness: “For see,” saith Christ, “the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me: and the Son is witness”; for so saith Christ, “I am one that bear witness of myself; and though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go”: and the Holy Ghost is witness; so saith Paul, “The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us”; and to that purpose he descended like a dove, and lighted upon him. 2. On earth, John the Baptist is witness; for so saith Christ: “Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth; he came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through Christ might believe.” No sooner was John confirmed by a sign from heaven that Jesus was the Christ, but he

immediately manifests it to the Jews, and first to the priests and Levites sent from the Sanhedrim; and secondly:, to all the people he professeth, wheresoever he saw Jesus Christ, “This is he”; yea, he points him out with his finger, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” Then he shows him to Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, and then to another disciple with him, “who both followed Jesus, and abode with him all night.” Andrew brings his brother Simon with him. Then Jesus himself finds out Philip of Bethsaida, and bade him follow him; and Philip finds out Nathanael, and bids him come and see, for the Messiah was found. Thus we see no less than five disciples found out at first, which must be so many witnesses of Jesus Christ.

And yet we find more witnesses: “The works,” saith Christ, “that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.” These works or miracles of Christ were many; but because we are speaking of his first manifestation, I shall instance only in his first work, which was at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The power of miracles had now ceased since their return out of captivity; the last miracle that was done by man until this very time, was Daniel tying up the mouths of the lions; and now Christ begins. He that made the first marriage in paradise, bestows his first miracle upon a marriage-feast. O happy feast where Christ is a guest! I believe this was no rich or sumptuous bridal: who ever found Christ at the magnificent

feasts or triumphs of the great? The poor bridegroom wants drink for his guests; and as soon as the holy virgin hath notice of it, she complains to her son: -- whether we want bread or wine, necessities or comforts, whither should we go but to Christ? But Jesus answered her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” This shows, that the work he was to do must not be done to satisfy her importunity, but to prosecute the great work. In works spiritual and religious, all outward relation ceaseth: matters of miracle concerned the godhead only; and in this case, “O woman, what have I to do with thee?” We must not deny love and duty to relations; but in the things of God, natural endearments must pass into spiritual; and like stars in the presence of the sun, must not appear. Paul could say, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.”

At the command of Jesus, the water-pots were filled with water, and the water by his divine power is turned into wine; where the different dispensation of God and the world is highly observable: “Every man sets forth good wine at first, and then the worse”: but Christ not only turns water into wine, but into such wine that at the last draught is most pleasant. These were the first manifestations of Jesus; you see he had several witnesses to set him forth; some from heaven, and some on earth: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost witness from heaven; the Baptist, disciples, and

his works, witness on earth; and there's no disagreement in their witness, but all bring in this testimony of Jesus, that he is the Messiah; that is, being interpreted, the Christ.

But what are those manifestations to us? or to that great design of Christ in carrying on our souls' salvation? Much every way. For either must Christ be manifested to us even by these witnesses, in the preaching of the gospel, and manifested in us by that one witness, his Holy Spirit, or we are undone forever.

1. Christ must be manifested to us in the preaching of the gospel. This mercy we have this day; nay, you see every sabbath-day all the witnesses speak in us. What do we, but in God's stead, in the Baptist's stead, in the disciples' stead, manifest Christ to you in every sermon! It is the commission which Christ hath given us of the ministry; "Go preach the gospel to every creature."

2. Christ must be manifested in us by his Holy Spirit. Christians! look to your hearts; what manifestations of Christ are there? When Paul speaks of the gospel in general, he adds in particular, "that it pleased God to reveal Christ in me." And when Peter speaks of the word of God, he adds, "That we take heed thereunto -- until the day dawn, and the day-star (that is, Christ, Rev. xxii. 16.) arise in your

hearts”: until then, though we be circled with gospel-discoveries, our hearts will be full of darkness; but when Christ (whom the prophet calls, “The Sun of Righteousness,” and Peter, “The Day-star”) shall arise within us, we shall be full of light.

Sect. VI. -- Of Christ’s Whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple

Concerning Christ’s whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple, we read in the gospel, that “the Jews’ passover being at hand, Jesus went up to Jerusalem”: thither, if we follow him, the first place that we find him in, is the temple; where, by the occasion of the national assembly, was an opportune scene for Christ’s transactions, in that temple Christ first espies a mart; there were divers merchants and exchangers of money, that brought beasts thither to be sold for sacrifice against that great solemnity; at the sight of which Jesus being moved with indignation, makes a whip of cords, and drives them all out of the temple, overthrows the accounting tables, and commands them that sold the doves, to take them from thence.

Sometimes I wonder at the irreverent carriage of some hearers; laughing, talking, prating, sleeping, in our congregations: what! is this a demeanour beseeeming the

presence of Christ? Wouldst thou carry thyself thus in the presence of a prince, or of some earthly majesty; “If thou goest but into a king’s palace,” as Chrysostom speaks, “thou composest thyself to a comeliness in thy habit, look, gait, and all thy guise; and dost thou laugh?” I may add, dost thou any way carry thyself indecently in God’s presence? Some there are, that in the very midst of ordinances the devil usually rocks them asleep: but O! dost thou not fear that thy damnation sleeps not? How justly might Christ come against thee in his wrath, and whip thee out of the temple into hell? Surely we should do well to behave ourselves in such a presence with the thoughts of heaven about us; our business here is an errand of religion, and God himself is the object of our worship: how then should our actions bear at least some degrees of proportion to God and Christ?

And now was the first passover after Christ’s baptism.--This was the first year of Christ’s ministry: whereof the one half was carried on by his forerunner, John the Baptist; and the other half (betwixt his baptism and this first passover) was carried on by himself. And now hath Christ three years to his death. I shall come on to the second year, and to his actings therein in reference to our salvation.

CHAP. II

Sect. I. -- Of the Second Year of Christ's Ministry

Now was it that the office of the Baptist was expired; and Christ beginning his prophetical office, he appears like the sun in succession of the morning-star; he preacheth the sum of the gospel, faith and repentance: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," Mark i. 15. Now, what this gospel was, the sum and series of all his following sermons expressed.

By this time Jesus saw it convenient to choose more disciples: with this family he goes up and down Galilee, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of diseases."

It is not my purpose to enlarge on all the sermons, miracles, or colloquies of Christ with men: in this year, therefore, I shall limit myself to the consideration of Christ in these two particulars: -- 1. His preaching. 2. His miracles: both these relate to the exercise of his prophetical office.

Sect. II. -- Of Christ's Sermons this Year

1. His preaching this year was frequent; and, amongst others, now it was that he delivered his first sermon, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

2. Now was it that he delivered that spiritual and mystical sermon of regeneration, at which Nicodemus wonders; “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” But Jesus takes off the wonder, in telling him, this was not a work of flesh and blood, but of the Spirit of God; for “the Spirit bloweth where it listeth,” and is as the wind, certain and notorious in the effects, but secret in the principle and manner of production.

3. Now was it that the throng of auditors forced Christ to leave the shore. Whilst he was upon land, he healed the sick bodies by his touch; and now he was upon sea, he cured the sick souls by his doctrine: he that made both sea and land, causeth both to conspire to the doing good to the souls and bodies of men.

4. Now it was that he preached that blessed sermon on that text. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.” No question but he preached both to poor and rich, Christ preached to all; but for the power and fruit of his preaching, it was only received by the poor in spirit. In the following particulars, his office is set out still in an higher tenor: “To heal the

broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind”; or, as it is in Isaiah lxi. 1, “the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” A sad thing to be in captivity, but sadder to be bound in chains, or locked up in a prison there; but ‘tis most sad of all to be imprisoned, having one’s eyes put out, as was the case of Samson and Zedekiah. Now the evangelist, willing to render the prophet to the highest sense that might be, useth an expression that meets with the highest mystery; that is, when a man is not only shut up in a prison, but himself also hath his eyes put out: to such Christ should preach, not only deliverance to the captives, but also recovering of sight to blinded persons.

5. Now it was that he delivered the admirable sermon, called, The sermon on the mount. It is a breviary of all those precepts which are truly called Christian; it contains in it all the moral precepts given by Moses, and a more severe exposition than the Scribes and Pharisees had given; it holds forth the doctrines of meekness, poverty of spirit, Christian mourning, desire of holy things, mercy and purity, peace and patience, and suffering of injuries; he teacheth us how to pray, how to fast, how to give alms, how to condemn the world, and how to seek the kingdom of God and its appendant righteousness.

And thus Christ being entered upon his prophetical office; in these and the rest of his sermons he gives a clear testimony, that he was not only an interpreter of the law, but a law-giver; and that this law of Christ might retain some proportion at least with the law of Moses, Christ, in his last sermon, went up into a mountain, and from thence gave the oracle. I cannot stand to paraphrase on this, or any other of his sermons; but seeing now we find Christ in the exercise of his prophetical office, let us observe, first, his titles in this respect. 2. The reasons of his being a prophet. 3. The excellency of Christ above all other prophets.

Sect. III. -- Of Christ's Prophetical Office

1. The titles of Christ in respect of his prophetical office, were these; 1. Sometimes he is called Doctor, or Master: "Be ye not called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ." The word in the original signifies a doctor, moderator, teaching-master, a guide of the way. 2. Sometimes he is called a Lawgiver: "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy." The apostle speaks of the internal government of the conscience, in which case the Lord is our judge. 3. Sometimes he is called a Counsellor; "and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor": -- "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom," saith Christ; "I am understanding, and I have strength." 4. Sometimes he is called the Apostle of our profession:

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” God sent him as an ambassador, to make known his will; he came not unsent: the very word imports a mission, a sending; “How shall they preach, except they be sent?” 5. Sometimes he is called the Angel of the covenant: “even the Angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in.” Christ was the publisher of the gospel covenant; and in this respect he is called a Prophet, Acts iii. 22, whose office it was to impart God’s will unto the sons of men, according unto the name, angel. 6. Sometimes he is called the Mediator of the new covenant: “For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament,” saith the apostle. Now, a mediator is such a one as goes betwixt two parties at variance, imparting the mind of the one to the other, so as to breed a right understanding, and thereby to work a compliance betwixt both: and thus Christ is a Mediator betwixt God and us, an Interpreter, an inter-messenger betwixt God and his people.

2. The reasons of Christ’s being a Prophet, were these: -- 1. That he might reveal to his people the will of his Father. 2. That he might open and expound the same, being once delivered. 3. That he might make saints understand and believe the same.

(1.) As a Prophet, he delivers to the people his Father's will, both in his own person, and by his servants the ministers: in his own person, when he was upon earth, as a minister of the circumcision; and by his servants the ministers, from the beginning of their mission until the end of the world.

(2.) As a Prophet, he opens and expounds the gospel. Thus, being in the synagogue on the sabbath-day, he "opened the book, and found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," &c. and then he closed the book, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The gracious purpose of God towards lost mankind, was a secret locked up in the breast of the Father; and so it had been even to this day, had not Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, revealed it unto us: hence Christ is called the interpreter of God: no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, by his interpretation.

(3.) As a Prophet, he gives us to understand and to believe the gospel. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures; and thus was the case of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened. He that first opens scriptures, at last opens hearts; he is that true light "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." He enlightens every man that cometh into the world. He enlightens

every believer, not only with a common natural light, but with a special supernatural light, of saving, spiritual, and effectual knowledge. Now there is no prophet can do this, save only Jesus Christ; he only is able to cause our hearts to believe and to understand the matter which he doth teach and reveal: other prophets may plant and water; “Paul may plant, and Apollos may water,” but he, and he only, can “give the increase.”

3. The excellencies of Christ, above all other prophets, are in these respects:

(1.) Other prophets were but types and shadows of this great Prophet; even Moses himself was but a figure of him: “A Prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me,” saith Moses. These words, *like unto me*, plainly show that Moses was but an image and shadow of Christ. Now as substances far excel shadows, so doth Christ far excel all the prophets.

(2.) Other prophets revealed but some part of God’s will, and only at some times. “God,” saith the apostle, “at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets”; *i.e.* he let out his light by little and little, till the Day-star and Sun of righteousness arose; “but in these last days he hath spoken by his Son,” *i.e.* he hath spoken more fully and plainly; in this respect, saith the

apostle, the heirs of life and salvation were but children before Christ's incarnation. – As now we see but through a glass darkly, towards what we shall do in the life to come; so did they of old in comparison of us; their light, in comparison of ours, was but an obscure and glimmering light.

(3.) Other prophets speak only to the ears of men, but Christ spake, and still speaks, to the heart: “He hath the keys of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, that shutteth, and no man openeth”; it is a similitude taken from them that keep the keys of a city or castle, without whom none can open or shut; no more can any man open the heart, or break in upon the spirit, but Christ; he only is able to open the eyes of the mind by the secret, kindly, and powerful working of his own Spirit.

(4.) Other prophets had their commission and authority from him: “The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies, which are given from one shepherd”; *i.e.* The words of the wise are divine and heavenly instructions; the masters of assemblies are gospel-ministers; and Christ is that one shepherd, from whom these words are given, and from whom these masters have their authority.

Sect. IV. -- Of Christ's Miracles

1. The miracles of Christ this year were many: now what were these miracles but a pursuance of the doctrines delivered in Christ's sermons? One calls them, "a verification of Christ's doctrine, a signal of Christ's sermons." If we observe, we shall find him to work most of his miracles in actions of mercy: indeed once he turned water into wine, and sometimes he walked upon the waters; but all the rest were actions of relief, according to the design of God, who would have him manifest his power in showing mercy to men.

(1.) Amongst all his miracles done this year, now was that at Cana, where he wrought the first miracle. He does a second; "A certain nobleman," or courtier, "came to Jesus, and besought him to come down to his house, and to heal his son, who was at the point of death." We do not find Christ often attended with nobility; but here he is. This noble ruler listens after Christ in his necessity: happy was it for him that his son was sick, for else he had not been so well acquainted with his Saviour. The first answer Christ gives, is a word of reproof; "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Incredulity was the common disease of the Jews, which no receipt could cure but wonders: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." The doctrine of Christ, and all the words that he spake, must be made up with miracles, or they will not believe. O what a sin is

this! Christ's next answer is a word of comfort: "go thy way, thy son liveth." O the meekness and mercy of Jesus Christ! When we would have looked that he should have punished this suitor for not believing, he condescends to him that he may believe: "go thy way, thy son liveth." With one word doth Christ heal two patients, the son and the father; the son's fever, and the father's unbelief. We cannot but observe here the steps of faith, he that believed somewhat ere he came, and more when he went, grew to more faith in the way, and when he came home he enlarged his faith to all the skirts of his family. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way"; and in the way one meets him and tells him, "thy son liveth"; which recovery he understands to be at the same time that Christ had spoken those healing words, and "himself believed, and his whole house."

(2.) Now was it that a "centurion came unto Christ, beseeching him, and saying. My servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." Many suitors come to Christ, one for a son, another for a daughter, a third for himself, but I see none come for his servant but this one centurion; and if we observe Christ's answers to his suit, we see how well pleased Christ is with his request: "And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." He is no respecter of persons, but he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. It may be this

servant had more grace, or he had more need, and therefore Christ will go down to visit this poor sick servant. “Nay,” says the centurion, “I am not worthy, Lord, that thou shouldest come under my roof”: q. d. Alas, Lord, I am a Gentile, an alien, a man of blood, but thou art holy, thou art omnipotent; and therefore “only say the word, and my servant shall be whole.” The centurion knew this by the command he had over his own servants: “I say to this man, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to a third, do this, and he doth it.” Oh that I were such a servant to my heavenly Master! Alas! every of his commands says, do this, and I do it not: every of his inhibitions say, do it not, and I do it. He says, Go from the world, and I run to it. He says, Come to me, and I run from him. Woe is me! this is not service, but enmity: Oh that I could come up to the faith and obedience of this exemplar, that I could serve my Christ as these soldiers did their master! Jesus marvels at the centurion’s faith. We never find Christ wondering at gold, or silver, or costly and curious works; but when he sees the acts of faith, he so approves of them that he is ravished with wonder. And he that both wrought this faith, and wondered at it, doth now reward it: “Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it unto thee; and his servant was healed in the self-same hour.”

(3.) Now it was, even “the day after, that Jesus goes into the city of Nain.” The fruitful clouds are not ordained to fall all in one field; Nain must partake of the

bounty of Christ, as well as Cana or Capernaum. He no sooner enters the gate, but he meets a funeral; a poor widow, with her weeping friends, is following her only son to the grave; Jesus observing her sad condition, he pities her, comforts her, and at last relieves her: here was no solicitor but his own compassion. In his former miracles he was sued to: but now Christ offers a cure, to give us a lesson, that “whilst we have to do with the Father of mercies, our miseries and afflictions are the most powerful suitors.” Christ sees and observes the widow’s sadness, and presently speaks comfortably to her, “Weep not: and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.” See how the Lord of life speaks with command; the same voice speaks to him, that shall one day speak to us, and raise us out of the dust of the earth. So at the sound of the last trumpet, by the power of the same voice, we shall arise out of the dust, and stand up gloriously: “This mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption.” And lest our weak faith should stagger at so great a difficulty, by this he hath done, Christ gives us a taste of what he will do; the same power that can raise one man, can raise a world.

(4.) Now it was that in the synagogue he finds “a man that had a spirit of an unclean devil.” This, I take it, is the first man that we read of as possessed with a devil: “And he cried, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee?” &c. In these words the devil dictates, the man speaks; and whereas the words are plural, let us

alone, it is probable he speaks of himself, and the rest of the men in the synagogue with him. So high and dreadful things are spoken concerning the coming of Christ, (Mal. iii. 2. “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?”) that the devil by this takes opportunity to affright the men of the synagogue with the presence of Christ; he would dissuade them from receiving Christ by the terrors of Christ, as if Christ had come only to destroy them: “Thou Jesus of Nazareth, art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” The word, hold thy peace, is, in the original, “he muzzled”; it was not a bare command of silence, but there was such power in it, that it cast a muzzle upon the mouth of Satan, that he could speak no more: “and when the unclean spirit had torn him,” not with any gashes in his flesh, or dismembering of his body, for he hurt him not, but with some convulsion-fits, as it is supposed, then “he threw him in the midst,” and made an horrid cry, “and so came out.”

They all take notice of the doctrine attested by so great a miracle. What a word is this! Surely this was the great design of all the miracles of Christ, to prove his mission from God, to demonstrate his power unto men, to confirm his gospel, to endear his precepts, to work in us faith to help us heavenward: These signs are

written that we might believe, -- and that believing, we might have life through his name.

I have given you several instances of the miracles of Christ in this second year of his ministry; only a few words on this doctrine of miracles for our information: as -

1. What they are?
2. Why they are?
3. Whether they are continued in this great transaction of our salvation?

For the first, What they are? Miracles are unusual events, wrought above the course or possibility of nature: such were the miracles of Christ, and such were the miracles of the prophets and of the apostles of Christ; for what they did was above nature; and all the difference betwixt their miracles and the miracles of Christ, was only in this, *viz.* they wrought them not in their own name and power, as Jesus Christ did.

For the second, Why they are? many reasons are given, but this is the main:

“miracles are wrought for the grounding or confirming of some divine truth or

doctrine at its first settling.” To this purpose, miracles were as the trumpets or heralds by which the gospel was first commended unto us; as the law of Moses was first authorized by manifold miracles wrought in Sinai, and in the desert, which afterwards ceased when they were settled in the promised lands; so the gospel of Christ was first authorized by manifold miracles, but the sound thereof having now gone through all the world, these miracles cease.

For the third, Whether they are continued in this great transaction of our salvation? I answer, yea; in this respect miracles cease not; ‘tis without controversy that Jesus Christ, in carrying on our salvation, is adding miracle to miracle: there is a chain of miracles in the matter of our salvation from first to last: as --

1. It was a miracle, that God, before we had a being, should have once thought of us; especially that the blessed Trinity should contrive that astonishing plot of the salvation of our souls: Oh what a miracle was this!

2. It was a miracle that God for our sakes should create the world, and, after our fall in Adam, should preserve the world, especially considering that our sin had unpinned the whole frame of the creation; and that God, even then sitting on his throne of judgment, ready to pass the doom of death for our first transgression,

should give a promise of a Saviour, when justly he might have given us to the devil, and to hell, according to his own law: “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die.”

3. It was a miracle that God’s Son should take upon him our nature, and that in our nature he should transact our peace; that he should preach salvation to us all, if we would believe; and to the end that we might believe, that he would work so many signs and miracles in the presence of his disciples, and of a world of men.

4. It was a miracle that God should look upon us in our blood: O miracle of mercies! If creation cannot be without a miracle, surely the new creature is a miracle indeed. So contrary are our perverse natures to all possibilities of salvation, that if salvation had not marched to us all the way in a miracle, we should have perished in the ruins of a sad eternity. Indeed every man living in the state of grace, is a perpetual miracle; in such a one his reason is turned into faith, his soul into spirit, his body into a temple, his earth into heaven, his water into wine, his aversations from Christ into intimate union with Christ. O what a chain of miracles is this! Why, Lord, “if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” Say thus, you that are yet in your blood; Lord, “I believe, help thou my unbelief.”

CHAP. III

Sect. I. -- Of the third Year of Christ's Ministry

Hitherto all was quiet: neither the Jews nor the Samaritans, nor Galileans, did as yet malign the doctrine or person of Jesus Christ; but he preached with much peace on all hands, till the beginning of this year. I shall not yet speak of his sufferings, neither shall I speak much of his doings; only such things as refer more principally to the main business of our salvation, I shall touch in these particulars: -- as, 1. The ordination of the apostles. 2. His reception of sinners. 3. The easiness of his yoke, and the lightness of his burden.

Sect. II. -- Of Christ's Ordination of his Apostles

In the ordination of his apostles, are many considerable things. The evangelist Luke lays it down thus: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." Till now Christ taught alone; but because after his ascension he

must needs have a ministry, until the end of the world -- in the first place, he chooseth out some, whom he would have on purpose to wait upon him all the time of his ministry, till he was taken up into heaven. In this election, or ordination, here is the first person by whom they are chosen, Jesus Christ. 2. The place where they are chosen, in a mountain. 3. The time when they were chosen, after his watching and praying all night. 4. The company out of whom they were chosen, they were his disciples. 5. The number of them that were chosen, they were twelve. 6. The end to which they were chosen, it was an apostleship; he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles.

1. The person by whom they are chosen is Jesus Christ. They chose not themselves, but were chosen of Christ; this call was immediate, and therefore most excellent.

2. The place where they were chosen, it was on a mountain. Mountains are open and in view, which shows their ministry must be public; again, mountains are subject to winds and tempests, which shows their callings must meet with many oppositions.

3. The time when they are chosen; after he had continued all night in prayer to God: he goes not to election, but first he watches and prays all the night before. This shows the singular care that Christ had in this great employment: what! to set men apart to witness his name, and to publish to the world the gospel of Christ? This he would not do without much prayer.

4. The company out of whom they are chosen, “He called unto him his disciples, and out of them he chose twelve.” A disciple of Christ is one thing, and an apostle of Christ is another thing. Those were Christ’s disciples, that embraced Christ’s doctrine of faith and repentance. It was not material to the constituting of a disciple of Christ, whether they followed Christ, as many did, or returned to their own homes, as others did. The man out of whom the legion of devils were cast, besought Christ that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done to thee.” I make no question but Christ at the election of his apostles had many disciples both waiting on him, and absent from him; and out of them that waited on him, his apostles were chosen: Christ’s ministers should be first disciples. O how unfit are any to take upon them the ministry of Christ, that were never yet the disciples of Christ! First, the grace of God must be within us, and then must that grace of God be discovered by us.

5. The number of them that were chosen, they were twelve. Very probably the number was figured out to us in twelve tribes of Israel.

6. The end to which they were chosen, it was to an apostleship; *i.e.* that they might be Christ's legates to the sons of men, that they might be sent up and down the world to persuade men to salvation.

Sect. III. -- Of Christ's Reception of Sinners

I CANNOT limit this only to one year of Christ's ministry, but I shall only mention it this year. Now this will appear -- 1. In the doctrine of Christ; 2. In the practice of Christ.

1. In his doctrine; Christ lays it down expressly: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is no more but, come, and welcome. The gospel shuts none out of heaven, but those that by unbelief lock the door against their own souls. Christ is so willing to receive sinners, as that he sets all his doors open, and he casts out none that will but come in. And why so? For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

1. I came down from heaven. It was a great journey from heaven to earth; and this great journey I undertook for no other purpose but to save sinners. "Great actions" as one says well, "must needs have great ends." Now this was the greatest thing that ever was done, that the Son of God should come down from heaven. And, what was the end, but the reception and salvation of sinners? "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Had not Christ come down, sinners could not have gone up into heaven; and therefore that they might ascend, he descends. 2. I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. His Father had sent him on purpose to receive and to save sinners and, to this purpose he is called the apostle of our profession, -- who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. His Father could not send him on any errand, but he was sure to do it. His Father's mission was a strong demonstration that Christ was willing to receive those sinners that would come to him.

Again, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The very pith, heart, and marrow of the gospel is contained in these words: the occasion of them was thus; on that last day of the feast of tabernacles, the Jews were wont, with great solemnity, to draw water out of the fountain of Siloam, at the foot of mount Sion, and to bring it to the altar, singing out of Isaiah, "With joy

shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Now Christ takes them at this custom, and recalls them from earthly to heavenly waters; alluding to that of Isaiah, “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” – “Incline your ears, and come unto me, and your souls shall live.” The Father saith, Come; the Son saith, Come; the Spirit saith, Come; yea, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come; let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely.” All the time of Christ’s ministry, we see him tiring himself, in going about from place to place, upon no other errand than this, to cry at the markets, “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters! If any sinners love life, if any will go to heaven, let them come to me, and I will show them the way to my Father’s bosom, and endear them to my Father’s heart.”

2. Christ’s reception of sinners appears yet more in his practice. How welcome were all sorts of sinners unto him! He cast out none that acknowledged him for the Messiah; he turned none away that gave up their souls to be saved by him in his own way. This he manifests -- 1. Parabolically; 2. Really.

(1.) Parabolically, especially in those three parables, of the lost goat, and of the lost sheep, and of the lost son; I shall instance in this last, which may serve for all the rest. -- When the prodigal was yet afar off, his father saw him, and had compassion

on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. In these words, observe, 1. His father sees him, before he sees his father; no sooner a sinner thinks of heaven, but the Lord spies him, and takes notice of him. 2. The Lord sees him while he was yet a great way off; he was but in the beginning of his way: his father might have let him alone until he had come quite home to his house, and it had been a singular mercy to have bid him welcome then; but he takes notice of him yet a great way off. Sinners may be far off from God in their own apprehensions, and yet the Lord even then draws near; whilst thus they apprehend. 3. His father had pity or compassion on him; the Lord's bowels yearn within him, at the sight of his returning prodigals. 4. His father ran; there is much in this: as, (1.) It had been mercy though his father had stood still until his son had come. (2.) What a mercy is this, that his father will go, and give his son the meeting! (3.) But, above all, O what abundant mercy call we this, that the father will not go, but run! If he would needs meet his son, might he not have walked towards him in a soft slow pace? O no, if a sinner will but come, or creep towards Christ, mercy will not go a foot-pace, but run to meet him: bowels full of mercy, out-pace bowels pinched with hunger; God's mercy is over all his works, and so it is over all our needs, and over all our sins. 5. He ran, and fell on his neck; i.e. he hugged and embraced him; O wonder! who would not have been loth to have touched him? was he not in his loathsome, stinking rags? we see mercy is not nice: "When I passed by, said God, I

saw thee polluted in thy own blood, and I said unto thee when thou wast in thy bloody Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live”: that very time of her blood, was the time of love. 6. He ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: there is a passage somewhat like this, “And Esau ran to meet Jacob, and he embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him”; before, he had thought to have killed him, but now he kissed him: it is not to tell how dear the father was to his prodigal son, when he ran, and fell on his neck, and embraced, and kissed him. The scope of the parable is this, that Christ is willing and glad to receive sinners. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; “for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Christ manifests this willingness in his practice really; amongst many instances I shall insist only on one, a notable instance of this year: one of the Pharisees, named Simon, invited Christ to eat with him, into whose house when he had entered, a certain woman, that was a sinner, abiding there in the city, heard of it: she came to Jesus in the Pharisee’s house, and no sooner come, but she lays her burden at Jesus’ feet, and presents him with a broken heart and weeping eye, and an alabaster box of ointment: “She stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head; and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.” 1. She stands at his feet, a sign of her humility. O what a change! She that was before a noble personage, a native of the

town and castle of Magdal, from whence she had her name of Magdalen -- and therefore took her liberty of pride and lust -- comes in remorse and regret for her sins; and throwing away her former pride, stoops, and waits, and humbly stands at Jesus' feet. 2. She stood at his feet behind him; it comprehends a tacit confession of her sins, she knew herself unworthy of Christ's presence: she durst not look him in the face; but, she waits behind him; her shame speaks her repentance. 3. She stood at his feet behind him weeping, her grief burst out in tears; she heeds not the feast, or feaster, but, falling down, weeps bitterly for her sins. 4. She began to wash his feet with tears; she wept a shower of tears, great enough to wash the feet of her blessed Jesus. This was the manner of the Jews, to eat their meat lying down, and leaning on their elbows; and in this posture, Jesus sitting or lying at meat, Mary had the convenience to weep on his feet. 6. She wipes his feet with the hairs of her head; her hair being added to her beauty, she made it a snare for men; but now she consecrates it to her Lord; worthy fruit of serious repentance. 6. She kissed his feet, in token of her new choice, and new affection; her kisses had formerly been to wantons, but now she bestows them on the feet of Christ. 7. She anointed them with ointment; which expression was so great an ecstasy of love and sorrow, that to anoint the feet of the greatest monarch was long unknown, and in all the pomps of Roman prodigality, it was never used until Otho taught it Nero. When Simon observed this sinner so busy, he thought within himself, that Christ was no prophet,

that he did not know her to be a sinner; for although the Jews' religion did permit harlots to live, yet the Pharisees would not admit them to the benefits of ordinary society: and hence Simon made an objection within himself, which Jesus knowing, (for he understood his thoughts as well as words,) first makes her apology, and then his own; the scope gives us to understand, that Christ was not of the same superciliousness with the Pharisees; but that repenting sinners should be welcome unto him; and this welcome he publisheth first to Simon, Her sins which are many, are forgiven; and then to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

What! is Christ most willing to receive sinners? O then! who would not come to Jesus Christ? Methinks now all sinners, of all sorts, should say, though I have been a drunkard, a swearer, an unclean person, yet now I hear Christ is willing to receive sinners, and therefore I will go to Jesus Christ. This is my exhortation, O come unto Christ, come unto Christ; behold here in the name of the Lord I stand, and make invitation to poor sinners; O will you not come? How will ye answer it at the great day, when it shall be said, The Lord Jesus made a tender of mercy to you, and you would not accept of it? O come to Christ, and believe on Christ; as Christ is willing to receive you, so be you willing to give up your souls to him.

Sect. IV. -- Of Christ's easy Yoke and light Burden

For the easiness of Christ's yoke, and the lightness of Christ's burden, Christ delivers it in these words: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, -- for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

My yoke, i.e. my commandments, so the apostle John gives the interpretation, "His commandments are not grievous." *My yoke is easy, i.e.* My commandments are without any inconvenience: the trouble of a yoke, is not the weight, but the uneasiness of it, and Christ speaks suitably, "My yoke is easy, and my burden," *i.e.* my institutions: the word primarily signifies the freight or ballast of a ship, which cuts through the waves, as if it had no burden; and without which burden there were no safety in the ship.

The Christian religion, and the practice of it, is full of sweetness, easiness, and pleasantness.

The reasons of the sweetness, easiness, and pleasantness of the Christian religion, and the practice of it, I shall reduce to these heads:

1. The Christian religion is most rational. If we should look into the best laws that the wisest men in the world ever agreed upon, we shall find that Christ adopted the quintessence of them all into his own law. The highest pitch of reason is but as a spark, a taper, which is involved and swallowed up in the body of this great light, that is made up by the Sun of righteousness. Some observe, that Christ's discipline is the breviary of all the wisdom of the best men, and a fair copy and transcript of his Father's wisdom; there is nothing in the laws of the Christian religion, but what is perfective of our spirits. Indeed the Greeks, whom the world admired for their wisdom, accounted the preaching of the gospel foolishness, and therefore God blasted their wisdom, as it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent," 1 Cor. i. 19. The gospel may be as foolishness unto some, "but unto them which are called," – "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

The Christian religion is all composed of peace; "her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. xvii. 3. Christ framed all his laws in compliance of his design of peace; peace within, and peace at home, and peace abroad. 1. It holds forth a certain heavenly peace and tranquility within: "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." But on the contrary: "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters

cast up mire and dirt”: -- “there is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.” Their passions were never yet mortified; and such passions usually rage in wicked men as are most contrary, and demand contrary things: the desire of honour cries, spend here; but the passion of avarice cries, hold thy hands: lust cries, venture here; but pride saith, no such thing, it may turn to thy dishonour: anger cries, revenge thyself here; but ambition says, it is better to dissemble: and here is fulfilled that of the psalmist, “I have seen violence and strife in the city.” The vulgar renders it, “I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the self-same city. First, Iniquity, for all the demands of these passions are unjust. And, 2. Contradiction, for one passion cries out against another. But, now, great peace have they that love thy law; for by the aid of Christ and his grace, their passions are subdued, and they pass on their life sweetly and calmly, without any perturbations much troubling their spirits; they have that “peace which passeth all understanding,” which the world can neither give nor taste of.

2. It holds forth peace at home: the laws of Jesus teach us how to bear with the infirmities of our relatives; and, indeed, whosoever obeys the laws of Jesus Christ, he seeks with sweetness to remedy all differences, he throws water upon a spark, he lives sweetly with his wife, affectionately with his children, discreetly with his servants; and they all look upon him as their guardian, friend, and patron: but, look

upon an angry man, not subject to these Christian laws, and when he enters upon his threshold, it gives an alarm to his house, every little accident is the matter of a quarrel, and every quarrel discomposes the peace of the house, and sets it on fire, and no man can tell how far it may burn. O the sweetness, easiness, and pleasantness of the Christian religion! Where that is embraced and followed, the man is peaceable, and charitable, and just, and loving, and forbearing, and forgiving; and how should there be but content in this blessed family?

3. It holds out peace abroad; it commands all offices of kindness, gentleness, love, meekness, humility; it prescribes an austere, and yet a sweet deportment; it commands all those labors of love, to relieve the stranger, to visit the sick, to wash the feet of the poor; it sends upon charitable embassies, to unclean prisons, nasty dungeons, and, in the cause of Christ, to lay down our lives one for another: it teacheth us how to return good for evil, kindness for injuries, a soft answer for the rough words of an enemy. O! when I think of this, I cannot but think of him who said, "That either this was not the Christian religion, or we were not Christians."

For my part, I am easily persuaded, that if we would but live according to the Christian religion, one of those great plagues that vex the world (I mean the plague of war) would be no more. Certainly this was one of the designs of Christianity, that there should be no wars, no jars, no discontents amongst men. And if all men

that are called Christians, were indeed charitable, peaceable, just, loving, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, what sweet peace should we have? How would this world be an image of heaven, and of the society of saints and angels in glory?

Thus far I have held forth Jesus in his life, or during the time of his ministry: and now was it that Jesus “knew his hour was come, and that he should depart out of this world unto the Father”: but of that hereafter. Our next business is to direct you in the art or mystery, how we are to look unto Jesus in respect of this life.

CHAP. IV

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Life

From the object considered, that we may pass to the act, --

1. Let us know Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation during his life.

We have many books of the lives of men; of the lives of heathens, of the lives of Christians; and by this we come to know the generations of old: but above all, read

over the life of Jesus, for that is worth thy knowing. To this purpose we have four Evangelists, who in blessed harmony set forth his life: these should be read over and over; “then shall we know,” saith the prophet, “if we follow on to know the Lord.” Ah! my soul, that which thou knowest of Christ already is but the least part of what thou art ignorant of. “We know but in part,” saith Paul of himself and others. The highest knowledge which the most illuminate saints have of Jesus Christ is but imperfect. Come then, and follow on to know the Lord: still inquire after him; imitate the angels, who ever desire to stoop down and to pry into the actings of Christ for our salvation. And for thy better knowledge, (1.) Study over those passages in the first year of Christ’s ministry: as, the preaching of John, the baptism of Christ, his fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his first manifestation by his several witnesses, his whipping of the buyers and sellers out of the temple. (2.) Study over those passages in the second year of Christ’s ministry; as, those several sermons that he preached; and because his miracles were as signals of his sermons, study the several miracles that he wrought: thou hast but a few instances in comparison of all his miracles, and yet how fruitful are they of spiritual instructions! (3.) Study over those passages in the third year of Christ’s ministry; as, his commissioning his apostles to call sinners, his readiness to receive them that would come in, and his sweetening the ways of Christianity to them that are come; “for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.”

O what rare matter is here for Christian study! Some have took such pains in the study of these things, that they have writ large volumes. Men have been writing and preaching a thousand six hundred years of the life of Christ, and they are writing and preaching still. O, my soul, if thou dost not write, yet study what is written. Come with fixed thoughts to that blessed subject, that will make thee wise unto salvation. Paul accounted all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. If thou didst truly understand the excellency of this knowledge, thou couldst not but account all things loss in comparison of it.

Sect. II. -- Of Considering Jesus in that respect

Let us consider Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation during his life. It is not enough to study and know, but we must muse and meditate, and consider it, till we bring it to some profitable issue. By meditating on Christ, we may feel a kind of insensible change; as those that stand in the sun for other purposes, they find themselves lightened and heated; therefore, look further, O my soul, have strong apprehensions of those several passages of the life of Christ.

1. Consider the preaching of John Baptist. We talk of strictness, but show me among all the ministers or saints of this age, such a pattern of sanctity and singular austerity. He had an excellent zeal, and a vehement spirit in preaching, and the commentary upon all his sermons was his life; he was clothed in camels' hair, his meat was locusts and wild honey. He contemned the world, resisted temptations, despised honours, and in all passages was a rare example of self-denial and mortification: and by this means made an excellent preparation for the Lord's coming. O my soul, sit a while under this preacher. See, what effect doth it work on thy heart and life? Dost thou feel in thee a spirit of mortification? Dost thou with the Baptist die to the world? Dost thou deny thy will? Dost thou abstain from pleasures, and sensual complacencies, that the flesh being subdued to the spirit, both may join in the service of God? O my soul, so consider the preaching of this forerunner of Christ, till thou feelest this consideration to have some warmth in thy heart, and influence on thy life, in order to holiness, self-denial, and mortification.

2. Consider the baptism of Christ. He was baptized, that in the symbol he might purify our nature, whose stains and guilt he had undertaken. Surely every soul that lives the life of grace, is born of water and the Spirit; and to this purpose, Christ, who is our life, went down into the waters of baptism, that we, who descend after him, might find the effects of it, pardon of sin, and holiness of life. Had not Christ

been baptized, what virtue had there been in our baptism? As it became him to fulfill all righteousness, and therefore he must needs be baptized, so he fulfilled it not for himself, but for us. Christ's obedience in fulfilling the law is imputed to all that believe unto righteousness, as if themselves had fulfilled; so that he was baptized for us, and the virtue of his baptism is derived unto us; therefore, if thou art in Christ, thou art baptized into his death, and baptized unto his baptism; thou partakest of the fruit and efficacy both of his death, and life, and baptism, and all.

3. Consider the fasting and temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Now we see what manner of adversary we have, how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. In one assault, Satan moves Christ to doubt of his Father's providence; in another, to presume on his Father's protection; and when neither diffidence nor presumption can fasten upon Christ, he shall be tried with honour: and thus he deals with us; if he cannot drive us to despair, he labors to lift us up to presumption; and if neither of these prevail, then he brings out pleasures, profits, honours, which are indeed most dangerous. O, my soul, whilst thou art in this warfare, here is thy condition; temptations, like waves, break one in the neck of another: if the devil was so busy with Christ, how shouldst thou hope to be free? How mayst thou account that the repulse of one temptation will but invite to another? But here is thy comfort, thou hast such a Saviour as was in all things

tempted in like sort, yet without sin. How boldly therefore mayst thou go to the throne of grace to receive mercy, and to find grace to help in time of need! Christ was tempted, that he might succour them that are tempted. Never art thou tempted, O my soul, but Christ is with thee in the temptation. He hath sent his Spirit into thy heart, to make intercession for thee there; and he himself is in heaven, making intercession, and praying for thee there; yea, his own experience of temptations hath so wrought it in his heart, that his love and mercy is most of all at work when thou art tempted most. As dear parents are ever tender of their children, but then especially when they are sick and weak: so, though Christ be always tender of his people, yet then especially when their souls are sick, and under temptation; then his bowels yearn over them indeed.

4. Consider Christ's first manifestations by his several witnesses. We have heard of his witnesses from heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and of his witnesses on earth, the Baptist, his disciples, and the works that he did in his Father's name; and all these witnesses being lively held forth in the preaching of the gospel, they are witnesses to us; even to this day is Christ manifested to us; yea, and if we are Christ's, even unto this day is Christ manifested within us. O my soul, consider this above all! It is this manifestation within that concerns thee most; -- because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. If Christ be not

manifested in thy heart by his blessed Spirit, thou art no son of God; and therefore the apostle puts thee seriously on this trial: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” Is Christ manifested in thee? Surely this is more than Christ manifested to thee. The bare history is a manifestation of Christ unto thee, but there is a mystery in the inward manifestation. The apostle speaking of the saints, adds, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” O the riches of the glory of this mystery! God might have shut thee up in blindness with the world; but hath he revealed Christ in thee? Hath he let thee see into the wonders of his glory? Hath he given thee the light of his glory within? This only the experimental Christian feels.

5. Consider the preaching of Christ. O the admirable sermons of this great prophet! Read and peruse those he hath left on record. How spiritual was that sermon of Christ! “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” It may be thou art a doctor, a master of Israel, thou art a learned scholar, thou art a man of parts and abilities in other things; it may be thou hast read so long in the Bible, thou hast heard so many and so many sermons; but, ah! miserable soul, it may be all the work is to do still within. Come, say this sermon of Christ to thine own soul:

“Unless I be born again, I cannot enter into heaven. Born again! O Lord, what is that? Was ever such a thing done upon me? Was I ever cast into the pangs of a new birth? and continued I in those pangs until Christ Jesus was formed in me? Are all things done away, and all things now become new? Is the old man, the old lusts, the old conversation, quite abandoned and left? Are my principles new? my aims and ends new? my life and conversation new?” Thus might I paraphrase on all the sermons; but I intend brevity. Only consider, O my soul, as if this sermon, and all the rest, had been preached to thee; realize Christ standing by thee, and opening his mouth, and teaching thee thus and thus. Surely there is a speaking of Christ from heaven: “See that ye refuse not him” (saith the apostle) “that speaketh from heaven.” And besides, he hath his ministers here on earth, and they are daily preaching over these sermons of Christ; they preach such things as were first spoken by the Lord himself: they beseech and pray thee in Christ’s stead. O then, meditate on these things, and give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.

6. Consider the miracles of Christ in pursuance of the doctrine delivered in his blessed sermons. Here is a world of matter to run over; such miracles as never man did before. O my soul, consider of these miracles, and believe that doctrine which

was ratified with arguments from above. How shouldst thou but assent to all those mysterious truths which are so strongly confirmed by an almighty hand.

7. Consider Christ's ordination of his apostles: "He chose twelve, whom he named apostles." And what was the office of these apostles, but to go and teach all nations? The gospel was first preached in Jewry, but afterwards the sound of it came unto us. O the goodness of God in Christ! What! that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem, and afterwards among all nations! Of what near concernment, O my soul, is this to thee! What art thou but a sinner of the Gentiles? Understand that term: when the apostles would express the greatest sinners that the world had, he calls them sinners of the Gentiles. Why? The Gentiles knew not God, the Gentiles were unacquainted with Christ, the Gentiles walked in nothing but sin. O then what a love is this, that God should ever have thought of goodwill towards thee? How shouldst thou be ravished in this one meditation! What! that the sun of his gospel, now in these latter times, when the sun is set in Zion where it first arose, should make a noon with us, and shine more brightly here, for ought I know, or can yet learn, than in any other nation, country, kingdom, throughout all the world! O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and counsel of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

8. Consider Christ's reception of sinners. He sent forth his apostles to call them in; and if they would but come, how ready was he to receive them! This was Christ's errand from heaven: Ah, poor soul! why shouldst thou despair because of sin? Look on Christ as spreading out his arms to receive thee. Look on the gracious nature that is in Christ: look on the office of Christ; 'tis an office of saving, and showing mercy, that Christ hath undertaken; 'tis an office to receive sinners; yea, to seek and to save that which was lost; to bring home straying souls to God; to be the great Peace-maker between God and man.

Certainly the devil strangely wrongeth many a poor troubled soul, that he can bring them to have hard thoughts of Jesus Christ: how can they more contradict the office of Christ? How can they more contradict the gospel-description of Christ, than to think him a destroyer of his creatures, and one that hath more mind to hurt than help them? Resolve, O my soul, to throw thyself on him for life and for salvation: why, if thou wilt but come, he hath promised freely to make thee welcome: all the day long he stretcheth out his arms, and would fain gather thee and all others into his embraces.

9. Consider the easiness of his yoke, and the lightness of his burden. Many a one is willing to take Jesus as their Saviour, but they are unwilling to take him on his own terms; they imagine it an hard task, and a heavy burden: it is otherwise with Christians; for his commandments are not grievous. O my soul, if thou canst but taste, thou wilt find a world of sweetness in Christ's ways: there is sweetness in the word, "How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" There is sweetness in prayer; hast thou not known the time that thou hast tasted the joys of heaven in prayer? There is sweetness in meditation: now, O, my soul, thou art in the exercise of this duty, now thou art in the meditation of the easiness of Christ's burden, tell me, is there nothing of heaven in this meditation? O if men did but know what ravishing sweetness were in the ways of God, they could not but embrace them, and esteem one day's society with Jesus Christ better than all the gold in the world!

10. Consider the holiness of Christ's nature, and the holiness of his life.

(1.) For the holiness of his nature; if thou couldst but clearly see it, what work would it make in thy breast! Christ's inward beauty would ravish love out of the devils, if they had but grace to see his beauty. This loveliness of Christ ravishes the

souls of the glorified. How is it, O my soul, that thou art not taken with this meditation? But, --

(2.) Go from the holiness of his nature to the holiness of his life, it may be that will make deep impressions on thy spirit. Consider his charity, his self-denial, his contempt of the world, his mercy, his bounty, his meekness, his pity, his humility, his obedience to his Father. A fruitful meditation on these particulars cannot but make thee like Christ. O the wonder that any should disclaim the active obedience of Christ, as to his own justification! Away, away with these cavils, and consider the obedience of Christ in relation to thyself. "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." That is, under the whole law: the one half of the law, which is the directive part, he was made under that, and satisfied it by the innocency of his life, without breaking one jot or tittle of the law, and so he answers that part, as it might be the principal; the other half of the law, which is the penalty, he was under that also, and satisfied it by suffering a wrongful death, no way deserved or due by him, and so he answered that part, as it might be the forfeiture. But if we come now to ask, For whom is all this? It is only for us, that we might be redeemed and adopted; redeemed from all evil, and adopted or interested into all good. If this be so, O who would, for a world of gold, lose the

influence and the benefit of Christ's active obedience! Consider of this, O my soul, until thou feelest some virtue to come out of Christ's life into thyself.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect

Let us desire Jesus, carrying on the work of salvation in his life: it is not enough to know and consider, but we must desire; our meditation of Christ should draw forth our affections to Christ; and amongst all affections I place this first of all, a desire after Christ.

But what is it in Christ's life that is so desirable? I answer, every passage, everything of Christ, is desirable. All that concerns Christ in any kind whatsoever is very precious, and excellent, and necessary, and profitable, and comfortable, and therefore desirable: but to put them in order, --

1. The meanest things of Christ are desirable things. The very filings of the gold, the dust of precious stones, are of real value. Hence we read, that one poor woman sought no more but to wash Christ's feet, and to kiss them: another breathes out these desires; If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole. John the Baptist thinks it an honour to unloose the latchets of his shoes; David, to be a

doorkeeper of the house of God. Yea, he puts a happiness on the sparrow and the swallow, that may build their nests beside the Lord's altar.

2. The more considerable actions of Christ are especially desirable. O my soul, run through his life, and consider some of his more eminent actions. (1.) To his friends, he was sweet and indulgent: where there was any beginning of grace, he did encourage it; so was the prophecy, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." And so the people that fainted, that were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd; he was moved with compassion on them; he was bowelled in heart, his very bowels were moved within him. (2.) To his enemies he was kind and merciful: many a time he discovers himself most of all unto sinners; he was never more familiar with any at first acquaintance, than with the woman of Samaria, that was an adulteress: and Mary, that had been a sinner, how sweetly did he appear to her at the very first view! How ready was he to receive sinners! How ready to pardon sinners! How gracious to sinners after pardon! See it in Peter: he never upbraided him; only he looks upon him, and afterwards, "Lovest thou me?" Often he was wronged by men; but what then? Did he call for fire down from heaven? indeed, his disciples would fain have had it so, but he sweetly replies. "You know not what spirits you are of; the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Sometimes we find him

shedding tears for those very persons that shed his blood: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, -- if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace.” Well might they sing in that day in the land of Judah, -- “In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.”

3. The ever-blessed and holy person of Christ is desirable above all. “My beloved is the chiefest of ten thousand; yea, he is altogether lovely,” or desirable, so Vatablus renders it, “Christus est totus desideria,” Christ is all desires. If the actions of Christ be desirable, what must himself be? he is the express image of the person of his Father; as the print of the seal on the wax is the express image of the seal itself, so is Christ the highest representation of God. And hence it is that Christ is called the Standard-bearer of ten thousands: all excellencies are gathered in Christ, as beams in the sun. Come, poor soul! thy eyes run to and fro in the world to find comfort and happiness; cast thy eyes back, and see heaven and earth in one; look if thou wilt, at what thy vast thoughts can fancy, not only in this world, but in the world to come; see that, and infinitely more, shining forth from the person of Jesus Christ: no wonder if the saints adore him, no wonder if the angels stand amazed at him, no wonder if all creatures vail all their glory to him.

O, what are things in the world to Jesus Christ! Paul compares them together, with this one thing: “And I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.” And I account all things: surely all things is the greatest account that can be cast up; for it includeth all prices, all sums; it takes in earth and heaven, and all therein; what are they in comparison of Christ, but as feathers, dung, shadows, nothing? If there be any thing worthy a wish, it is eminently, transcendently in the Lord Jesus Christ: there is no honour, no felicity, like that which Christ hath; some are sons, Christ is an only Son; some are kings, but Christ is King of kings; some are honourable, none above angels; Christ is above angels and archangels: “To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?” Some are wealthy, Christ hath all the sheep on a thousand hills; the very uttermost parts of the earth are his: some are beautiful, Christ is the fairest of all the children of men! he is spiritually fair, he is all glorious within. If the beauty of the angels (which I believe are the beautifullest creatures the world has) should be compared with the beauty of Christ, they would be but as lumps of darkness: the brightest cherub is forced to screen his face from the dazzling brightness of Christ. Alas! the cherubim and seraphim are but as stars in the canopy of heaven; but Christ is the Sun of righteousness, that at once illuminates and drowns them all.

Come then, breathe, O my soul, after the enjoyment of this Christ; “O that this Christ was mine! O that the actions of Christ and the person of Christ, were mine! O that all he said, and all he did, and all he were, were mine! O that I had the silver wings of a dove, that in all my wants I might fly into the bosom of Christ; If I must not sit at table, O that I might but gather up the crumbs! Surely there is bread enough in my Father’s house; Christ is the bread of life; Christ is enough for all the saints in heaven and earth to feed on; and what, must I pine away, and perish with hunger? Thousands of instructions dropped from him while he was on earth; O that some of that food might be my nourishment! O that my ways were directed according to his statutes! Many a stream, and wave, and line, and precept, flowed from this fountain, Christ; O that I might drink freely of this water of life! He hath proclaimed it in my ears: ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’ O that I might come and find welcome! Sure I thirst, I feel in me such a burning drought, that either I must drink or die; either the righteousness of Christ, the holiness of Christ, the holiness of his nature, and the holiness of his life, must be imputed unto me, or farewell happiness in another world. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; I long to see the beauty of thy face! Such is thy beauty, that it steals away my heart after thee, and I cannot be satisfied until, with Absalom, I see the King’s face. Come, Christ! or if thou wilt not come, ‘I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love.’”

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

Let us hope in Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation in his life. By this hope, I mean a hope well grounded. The main question is, whether Christ's life be mine? whether all those passages of his life laid open, belong unto me? whether the habitual righteousness, and actual holiness, of Christ be imputed to my justification? and what are the grounds and foundations on which my hope is built? The apostle tells us, that God gives good hopes through grace; if hope be right and good, it will manifest itself by operation of saving grace; O look into thy soul! what gracious effects of the life of Christ are there? Certainly his life is not without some influence on our spirits, if we be his members, and he be our head. O the glorious effects flowing out of Christ's life, into a believer's soul!

1. If Christ's life be mine, then am I freed from the law of sin; this was the apostle's evidence: -- for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Christ's life is called the spirit of life, because of its perfection; and this spirit of life hath such a power in it, here termed a law, that it works out, in believers, a freedom from the law or power of sin. Look to

this! Doth the power of Christ's life throw out of thy heart and life the power of sin? Here is one ground of hope.

2. If Christ's life be mine, then I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Paul speaks out this evidence; "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live," &c. He conjoins the death of Christ, and the life of Christ, in one and the same soul: as if he had said, No man knows the benefit of Christ's death, but he that feels the virtue of Christ's life; there is no assurance of Christ's dying for us, but as we feel Christ living in us; if the power of Christ's death mortify my lusts, then the virtue of Christ's life will quicken my soul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me": I live to God, and not unto myself; I live to Christ, and not unto the world; I live according to the will of God, and not after my own lust and fancy. O my soul! question thyself in these few particulars; dost thou live to God, and not thyself? Dost thou live to Christ, and not to the world? Dost thou derive thy life from Christ? And hath that life of Christ a special influence in thy soul? Dost thou feel Christ living in thy understanding and will, in thy imagination and affections, in thy duties and services? 1. In thy understanding, by prizing the knowledge of Christ, by determining to know nothing in comparison of Christ. 2. In thy will, by making thy will free to choose and embrace Christ; and by making his will to rule in thy will. 3. In thy imagination, by thinking upon him with more frequency and

delight; by having more high, and honourable, and sweet apprehensions of Christ than of all the creatures. 4. In thy affections, by fearing Christ above all earthly powers, and by loving Christ above all earthly persons. 5. In thy duty and services, by doing all thou doest in his name, by his assistance, and for his glory. Why then, here is another ground of thy hope; surely thou hast thy part in Christ's life.

Away, away with all doubts and perplexing fears! If thou findest the power of sin dying in thee; if thou livest, and livest not, but in truth it is Christ that lives in thee; then thou mayest assure thyself that Christ's habitual righteousness, and actual holiness, is imputed to thy justification; thou mayest confidently resolve that every passage of Christ's life belongs to thee. Would Christ have ever lived in thee, have been the soul of thy soul, the all of thy understanding and will, imaginations and affections, duties and services, if he had not purposed to have saved thee by his life? Surely it is good that I both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. I cannot hope in vain, if these be the grounds of my hope.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

Let us believe in Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his life. Many souls stand aloof, not daring to make a particular application of Christ and his life

to themselves; but, herein is the property of faith, it brings all home, and makes use of whatsoever Christ is, or does, for himself.

1. In order to this, faith must directly go to Christ. Many poor souls, humbled for sin, run immediately to the promise of pardon, and rest on it, not seeking for, or closing with Christ in the promise; this is a common error, but we should observe, that the first promise that was given, was not a bare word, simply promising pardon, peace, or any other benefit; but, it was a promise of Christ's person, as overcoming Satan, and purchasing those benefits: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." So, when the promise was renewed to Abraham, it was not a bare promise of blessedness and forgiveness, but of that seed, that is, Christ, (Gal. iii. 6.) in whom that blessedness was conveyed: "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." So that Abraham's faith first closed with Christ in the promise, and therefore he is said to see Christ's day, and rejoice. Christ, in the first place, is everywhere made the thing which faith embraced to salvation, and whom it looks unto and respects, as it makes us righteous in the sight of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And hence it is called the faith of Christ, Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 9. Because Christ is it whom faith apprehends

immediately; and, as for the other promises, they depend all on this, -- “Whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins”; and, “he that believeth on the Son of God shall have life everlasting.” O remember this, in the first place, faith must go unto Christ; and yet I mean not to Christ, as nakedly considered, but to Christ as compassed with all his promises, privileges, benefits.

2. Faith must go to Christ, as God in the flesh. But now under the New Testament, our faith more usually and immediately addresseth itself unto Christ, as God dwelling in our nature, than to the Father, who is merely God. God in the flesh is more distinctly set forth in the New Testament, and so he is more distinctly to be apprehended by the faith of all believers. Remember this; let our faith, in the more direct and immediate exercise of it, be pitched upon Christ, as God in the flesh.

3. Faith must go to Christ, as God in the flesh, made under the law. And hence it is, that the apostle joins these together; God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: if Christ had been out of the compass of the law, his being incarnate, and made of a woman, had done us no good. Suppose one in debt, and danger of the law, to have a brother of the same flesh and blood, of the same father and mother; what will this avail, if that same brother will not come under the law, that is, become his surety, and undertake for him? This is our case, -- we are

debtors to God, and there is an hand-writing against us. Here is a bond of the law, which we have forfeited; now, what will Christ avail, if he had not come under the law, if he had not been our surety, and undertook for us? Our faith, therefore, must go to Christ, as made under the law, not only taking our nature upon him, but our debt also; our nature as men, and our debt as sinful men: “he hath made himself sin for us, who knew no sin”; that is, he made him to be handled as a sinner for us under the law, though he knew no sin on his part, but continued in all things written in the book of the law, to do them. He both satisfied the curse, and fulfilled the commandments! O remember this: as Christ, and as Christ in the flesh, so Christ in the flesh made under the law, is principally to be in the eye of our faith. If we put all together, our first view of faith is to look on Christ, God in the flesh, made under the law.

4. Faith going to Christ as God in the flesh, and as made under the law, is principally to look to the end of Christ, as being God in the flesh, and as fulfilling the law.

The apostle tells us of a remote, and of a more immediate end.

(1.) Of a remote end. “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.” This was the remote end of Christ. Alas! we were strangers from the adoption, and lay under the law, as men whom sentence had passed on. Now, from this latter we are redeemed; he was under the law, that we might be redeemed from under the law; nor is that all, but as we are redeemed, so are we adopted the children of God: and, this end I rather attribute to the life of Christ, that we might receive the adoption; that is, from the estate of prisoners Condemned, that we might be translated into the estate of children adopted. O the mercy of God! who ever heard of a condemned man to be afterwards adopted? Would not a condemned prisoner think himself happy to escape with life? But the zeal of the Lord of hosts hath performed this; we are in Christ both pardoned and adopted; and, by this means, God’s heavenly inheritance is estated upon us. O let our faith look mainly to this design of Christ! “He was made under the law,” yea, and under the directive part of the law, by his life; he fulfilled every tittle of the law by his obedience, that we might be entitled to glory.

(2.) For the more immediate end of Christ: the apostle tells us Christ was made under the law, or fulfilled all righteousness, that the law might be fulfilled in us. O my soul, look to this! Herein lies the pith and the marrow of thy justification. Of

thyself thou canst do nothing good; but Christ fulfilleth the law in thy stead; and if now thou wilt but exercise thy faith, thou mayest feel the virtue and efficacy of Christ's righteousness flowing into thy own soul. But here is the question, How should I manage my faith, to feel Christ's righteousness my righteousness? I answer, 1. Thy way is to discern this righteousness of Christ, this holy and perfect life of the Lord Jesus, in the whole, and in all the parts of it, as it is laid down in the written word. 2. Thy way is to believe and to receive this as sacred and unquestionable in reference to thy own soul. 3. Thy way is to apply and improve this discovery according to those ends, to which thou believest they were designed. Yea, but there lies the question, how may that be done? I answer, --

[1.] Setting before thee that discovery, (that perfect life of Christ,) first endeavor to be deeply humbled for thy great inconformity thereto in whole and in part.

[2.] Still keeping thy spirit intent on the pattern, quicken, provoke, and increase thy sluggish soul, with renewed, redoubled vigilancy and industry, to come up higher towards it, and (if it were possible) completely to it.

[3.] Yet having the same copy before thee, exercise faith thereupon, as that which was performed, and is accepted on thy behalf. And so go to God, and offer Christ's

holy life and active obedience unto him. And that, first to fill up the defects of thy utmost endeavor. Secondly, to put a value and worth upon what thou doest, and attainest to. Thirdly, to make Christ's righteousness thy own, that thou mayest say with the psalmist, in way of assurance: "O God my righteousness."

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation, during his life. O what a lovely object is the life of Christ? Who can read over his life, who can think over his worthiness, both in his person, relations, actions, and several administrations, and not love him with a singular love?

O my soul, much has been said to persuade thee to faith; and if now thou believest thy part in those several actings of Christ, let thy faith take thee by the hand, and lead thee from one step to another; from his baptism to his temptations; from his temptations to his manifestations; and so on. Is not here fuel enough for love?

Canst thou read the history of love, (for such is the history of Christ's life), and not be all on a flame? Come, read again! There is nothing in Christ but what is lovely, winning, and drawing.

1. When he saw thee full of filth, he goes down into the waters of baptism, that he might prepare a way for the cleansing of thy polluted soul.

2. When he saw the devil ready to swallow thee up, he himself enters in the list, and overcomes him, that thou mightest overcome, and triumph with Christ in his glory.

3. When he saw thee in danger of death through thy unbelief, he condescends so far to succour thy weakness, as to manifest himself by several witnesses. Three in heaven, and three on earth; yea, he multiplies his three on earth to thousands of thousands: so many were the signs witnessing Christ, that the disciples which testified of them, could say, “If they should be written every one, the world could not contain the books that should be written.”

4. When he saw thee like the horse and mule, not having understanding, he came with his instructions, adding line unto line, and precept on precept, teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom; and sealing his truths with many miracles, that thou mayest believe, and in believing mightest have life through his name.

5. When he saw thee a sinner of the Gentiles, stranger from the commonwealth of Israel, and without God in the world, he sent his apostles and messengers abroad, and bade them preach the gospel to thee: “Go to such a one in the dark corner of the world, an isle at such a distance, and set up my throne amongst that people, open the most precious cabinet of my love there; and amongst that people, tell such a soul that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom he is one.”

6. When he saw thee cast down, and refusing thy own mercy, crying and saying, “What! is it possible that Jesus Christ should send a message to such a dead dog as I am?” He then appeared, and even then spread his arms wide to receive thy soul: he cried, “Come unto me, thou that art weary and heavy laden with sin, and I will give thee rest.”

7. When he saw thee in suspense, and heard thy complaint, “Oh it is a hard passage, and a high ascent up to heaven! -- Oh, what shall become of my poor soul!” He told thee that all his ways were ways of pleasantness, and all his paths peace; -- that thou shouldst find by experience his yoke was easy, and his burden light.

8. When he saw the wretchedness of thy nature, and original pollution, he took upon him thy nature, and by this means took away thy original sin. Here is the lovely object! What is it but the absolute holiness of the nature of Christ? This is the fairest beauty that ever eye beheld: this is that compendium of all glories. Now if love be a motion and union of the appetite to what is lovely, how shouldst thou flame forth in love upon the Lord Jesus Christ! -- See, O my soul, here is the sum of all the particulars thou hast heard, -- Christ loves thee, and Christ is lovely; his heart is set upon thee, who is a thousand times fairer than all the children of men. Doth not this double consideration, like a mighty loadstone, snatch thy heart unto it! "It pleased thee, my Lord, to say to thy poor church, 'Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me': -- But O let me say to thee, Turn thine eyes to me, that they may overcome me: my Lord, I would be thus ravished, I would be overcome; I would be thus out of myself, that I might be all in thee. -- How chill and cold art thou in thy converses with Jesus Christ! Surely, had Christ's love been like this faint and feeble love of mine, I had been a damned wretch without all hope. O Christ, I am ashamed that I love thee so little; I perceive that loves are great, by all those actings in thy life: come, blow upon my garden, persuade me by the Spirit, that I may love thee; many sins are forgiven me, O that I may love thee much!"

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation during his life.

1. In order to this, let us contemplate this life of Christ, let us spend our frequent thoughts upon this blessed object; the reason we miss of our joys, is, because we are so little in contemplations of our Christ. It is said, “that he pities us in our sorrows; but he delights in us, when we delight in him.’ Certainly he would have us to delight in him; and to that purpose he way-lays our thoughts, that wheresoever we look, we shall still think on him: O my soul, cast thine eyes which way thou wilt, and thou shalt hardly look on anything, but Christ Jesus hath taken the name of that very thing upon himself. What! is it day, and dost thou behold the sun? -- he is called “the Sun of righteousness.” Or is it night, and dost thou behold the stars? -- he is called a star; “there shall come a Star out of Jacob.” Or is it morning, and dost thou behold the morning star? -- he is called, “the bright morning Star.” Or is it noon, and dost thou behold clear light all the world over? -- he is “that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Come a little nearer: If thou lookest on the earth, and takest a view of the creatures about thee; seest thou the sheep? -- “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Or, seest thou a lamb? -- “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sins of the world.” Seest thou a shepherd watching over his flock: -- “I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” Or seest thou a fountain, rivers, waters? -- he is called a fountain: “In that day there shall be a Fountain opened to the house of David.” Or seest thou a tree, good for food, or pleasant to the eye? -- he is called “the Tree of life”: and, “as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.” Seest thou a rose, a lily, any fair flower in a garden? -- he is called a Rose, a Lily: “I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys.” To come a little nearer yet; art thou adorning thyself, and takest a view of thy garments? -- he is a garment: “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Art thou eating meat, and takest a view of what is on thy table? -- he is “the Bread of God,” “true Bread from heaven,” “the Bread of life.” Thus Christ way-lays our thoughts, that wheresoever we look, we should ever think of Christ. Now, I cannot think of Christ, or the life of Christ, of Christ preaching, or of Christ preached, but I must rejoice in Christ; as sometimes the apostle said, “Christ is preached, I therein rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

2. Let us upon good grounds hope our share in the life of Christ. Hope and joy go together: if I have but assured hope that Christ’s life is mine, I cannot but rejoice therein. Look to this, O my soul: peruse again and again thy grounds of hope: do not slightly run them over; thou canst not be too sure of Christ. When Zaccheus in

the sycamore tree heard but Christ's voice, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house"; O what haste made Zaccheus to receive Christ! He came down hastily, and received him joyfully. This offer of Christ to Zaccheus is thine as well as his, if thy hope be right: -- Come down, poor soul, saith Christ, "This day must I abide in thy house." Then what joy should there be in thy heart when Christ comes in, or when thou feelest Christ come in! The friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. How much more may the bride herself rejoice!

3. Let us come up to more and more fruition of Christ: all other things work our delight but as they look towards this. Now in this fruition of Christ are contained these things: (1.) A propriety unto Christ; for, as a sick man doth not feel the joy of a sound man's health, so neither doth a stranger to Christ feel the joy of a believer in Christ. How should he joy in Christ that can make no claim to him? (2.) A possession of Christ. This exceedingly enlargeth our joy. O how sweet was Christ to the spouse, when she could say, "I am my beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." Many are taken up with the joy and comfort of outward possessions, but Christ is better than all: in one Christ, is comprised every scattered comfort here below. Christ mine, (saith the soul) and all mine. O the usefulness of Christ to all believing souls? The scriptures are full of this, as appears by all his titles in

scripture: he is our life, our light, our bread, our water, our milk, our wine; “His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.” He is our father, our brother, our friend, our husband, our king, our priest, our prophet: he is our justification, our sanctification, our wisdom, our redemption: he is our peace, our mediation, our atonement, our reconciliation, our all in all. Alas! I look on myself, and I see I am nothing; I have nothing without Jesus Christ. Here is a temptation, I cannot resist it; here is a corruption I cannot overcome; here is a persecution, I cannot down with it: well, but Christ is mine, I have interest in Christ, and I have possession of Christ, and I find enough in Christ to supply all my wants.

Those that lived with him, “all rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by him.” And doth not thy heart leap within thee, O my soul? I cannot but check thee for thy deadness: it is said, that when “Christ was at the descent of the mount of olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen.” What! a multitude of disciples rejoicing in Christ’s acts? And art thou not one amongst the multitude? If thou art a disciple, rejoice thou: surely it concerns thee as much as them; and therefore rejoice, lift up thy voice in harmony with the rest, rejoice, and again rejoice.

Sect. VIII. -- Of Calling on Jesus in that respect

Let us call on Jesus, or on God the Father in and through Jesus. Thus we read, that looking up to Jesus, or lifting up the eyes to Jesus, goes for prayer in God's book: "My prayer will I direct to thee," saith David, "and will look up." Faith in prayer, will often come out at the eye. Thus Stephen looked up to heaven; let us look up to Jesus by calling on him: now this calling on him contains prayer and praise.

1. We must pray that all these transactions of Jesus during his life, or during his ministry upon earth, may be ours: we hope it so, and we believe it to be so; but for all that, we must pray that it may be so. There is no contradiction betwixt hope, and faith, and prayer; Lord, I believe, yet help my unbelief; be it to me according to my faith, how weak soever.

2. We must praise God for all those passages in Christ's life. Thus did the multitude: "They praised God with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" What, my soul, hath Christ done this for thee? Was he made under the law to redeem thy soul, and adopt thee for his son, to the inheritance of heaven? Came he down from heaven, and travelled so many miles on earth, to woo and win thy heart? Spent he

so many sermons, and so many miracles to work thee into faith? O how shouldst thou bless, and praise, and magnify his name! How shouldst thou break out into that blessed hymn; “To him that loved us, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

Let us conform to Jesus, as he acted for us in his life. Looking to Jesus, intends this especially: we must look as one looks to his pattern; as mariners at sea, that they may run a right course, keep an eye on that ship that bears the light: so in the race that is set before us, we must have our eye on Jesus, our blessed pattern. This must be our constant query, “Is this the course that Jesus steered?”

In this particular I shall examine these three queries: 1. Wherein we must conform?
2. Why we must conform? 3. How we must conform to this life of Jesus?

For the first, I answer, --

We must not, cannot, conform to Christ in those works proper to his godhead; as in working miracles. -- Nor need we to conform to Christ in some other particulars: as, in his voluntary poverty, and ceremonial performances.

But we must conform to Christ's life.

1. In respect of his judgment, will, affections; look we at his Spirit, observe what mind was in Jesus Christ, "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ," Phil. ii. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 16.

2. In respect of his virtues, graces, holiness. "Learn of me," saith Christ, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." I might instance in all other graces; for he had them all in fullness: "And of his fullness have we all received, grace for grace."

3. In respect of his words. The very officers of the priest could say, "Never man spake like this man": and sometimes "they all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth"; "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again."

4. In respect of his carriage, conversation, close walking with God. The apostle sets forth Christ as an high priest, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate

from sinners”: and in like manner saith Peter; “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”; -- that ye should in your lives and conversations express those graces and virtues which were so eminent in Jesus Christ; that you should, not only have them, but that you should hold them forth. The word signifies properly, to preach: so clearly should we express the virtues of Christ. As if our lives were so many sermons of the life of Christ.

As for all other saints, though they are imitable, yet with limitation, only so far as they express his life in their conversation; “Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.”

For the second; -- Why must we conform? upon what motives? I answer; 1.

Because Christ hath done and suffered much to that end. If it had not been for thy imitation, I cannot think that Christ would have lived on earth so many years, to have done so many glorious and meritorious works.

2. Because Christ is the best and highest exemplar of holiness that ever the world had: hence we must needs conform to Christ. Christ is “the head of the body, the

beginning, the firstborn from the dead, in all things he hath the preeminence”: and the rule is general, that, that which is first and best in any kind, is the rule and measure of all the rest. Why, such is Christ; O then let him be the guide of our life, and of our manners.

3. Because Christ doth not only give us an example, but he doth succour and assist us by its easiness. Some sweetly observe, that Christ’s piety (which we must imitate) was even, constant, unblamable, complying with civil society, without any prodigious instances of actions greater than the imitation of men. We are not commanded to imitate a life, whose story tells us of ecstasies in prayer, of abstractions of senses, -- no; but a life of justice, piety, and devotion: and it is very remarkable, that besides the easiness of this imitation, there is a virtue and efficacy in the life of Christ: it may be, we think our way to heaven is troublesome, obscure, and full of objection: “Well,” saith Christ, “but mark my footsteps; come on, and tread where I have stood, and you shall find the virtue of my example will make all smooth and easy; you shall find the comforts of my company, you shall feel the virtue and influence of a perpetual guide.”

4. Because Christ in his word hath commanded us to follow his steps: “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” – “And ye call me Master and Lord, and ye

say well, for so I am; if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." – "And as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." We must be holy as Christ is holy, yet still we must look at the holiness of Christ, as the sun, and root, and fountain; and that our holiness is but as a beam of that sun, but as a branch of that root, but as a stream of that fountain.

For the third, How must we conform to this life? I answer: --

1. Let us be humbled for our great unconformity to this copy. What an excellent pattern is here before us; and how far, how infinitely, do we come short! Alas! if Christ will not own me, unless he see his image written upon me, what will become of my poor soul? Why, Christ was meek, and humble, and lowly in spirit; Christ even went about doing good: and now, when I come to examine my own heart according to this original, I am as opposite to Christ as hell to heaven. O woe is me! what a vast disproportion there is betwixt Christ's life and mine! Thus, O my soul, shouldst thou humble thyself; each morning, each prayer, each meditation, each self-examination, shouldst thou fetch new, fresh, clear, particular occasions of humiliation: as thus, lo there the evenness, gravity, holiness,

heavenliness, of Jesus Christ; lo there the dear love, tender pity, constant industry, unwearied pains, self-denial, contempt of the world, in Jesus Christ; lo there those continual devout breathings of soul after God his Father's glory, after the immortal good of precious souls. O the sweet expressions, gracious conversation! O the blessed lustre of his divine soul! O the sweet countenance, sacred discourse, ravishing demeanour, winning deportment, of Jesus Christ! and now reflect I upon myself; O the wide disproportion of mine therefrom! I should punctually answer, perfectly resemble, accurately imitate, exactly conform to, this life of Christ: but, ah! my unevenness, lightness, vanity! ah, my deformity, slightness, execrableness! ah my sensuality, brutishness, devilishness! how clearly are these, and all my other enormities, discovered by the blessed life of Jesus!

2. Let us quicken our sluggish souls to conform to Christ. If this was one of the ends of Christ's coming, to destroy the works of the devil, to deface all Satan's works, especially his work in me, and to set his own stamp on my soul; how then should I but endeavor to conform! I read but of two ends of Christ's coming into the world in relation to us; whereof the first was to redeem his people, and the other was to purify his people: "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The one is the work of his merit, which goeth upwards to the sanctification

of his Father; the other is the work of his grace, which goeth downwards to the sanctification of his church: in the one he bestoweth his righteousness on us by imputation, in the other he fashioneth his image in us by renovation; and what, O my soul, wouldst thou destroy the end of Christ's coming in the flesh? Thus let us provoke our souls to this conformity; let us excite our faint, drooping, languishing affections, desires, endeavors. Let us with enlarged industry engage and encourage our backward spirits to fall upon this duty; let us come up higher towards it, or if possibly we may, completely to it; that the same mind, and mouth, and life, may be in us that was in Jesus Christ, that we may be found to walk after Christ, that we may tread in the very prints of the feet of Christ, that we may climb up after him into the same heavenly kingdom; that we may aspire continually towards him, and grow up to him, even to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

3. Let us regulate ourselves by the life of Christ; whatsoever action we go about, let us do it by this rule, -- would Christ have done this? It is true, some things are expedient and lawful with us, which are not suitable to the person of Christ:

"Marriage is honourable with all men, and the bed undefiled," but it did not benefit his person. Writing of books is commendable with men, because, like Abel, being dead, they may still speak; but it would have been derogatory to the person and office of Christ: for it is his prerogative to be in the midst of the seven golden

candlesticks, to be present to all his members; to teach by power, and not by ministry; to write his law in the hearts of his people, and to make them his epistle.

In these things we must only respect the allowance of Christ, but in other things we must reflect upon the example of Christ, as, 1. In sinful acts eschewed by Christ. 2. In moral duties that were done by him.

(1.) In sinful acts eschewed by Christ, as when I am tempted to sin, then am I to reason thus with myself: would my blessed Saviour, if he were upon earth, do thus and thus? If he were to live again, would he live after this manner? Would this be his language? would such speech as this drop from his lips?

(2.) In case of moral obedience, concerning which we have both his pattern and precept. I look upon Christ as my rule; and I question thus, Did Christ frequently pray with his disciples, and alone? And shall I never in my family, or in my closet, think upon God? Did Christ show mercy to his very enemies? And shall I be cruel to Christ's members? O my soul, look in all thy sins, and in all thy duties, to thy original, and measure them by the holiness of Christ! Whether in avoiding sin, or in doing duty, think -- what would my blessed Saviour do in this case, or what did he in the like case, when he was upon earth? If we had these thoughts every day, if Christ were continually before our eyes, if in all we do or speak we should still

muse on this -- what would Jesus Christ say, if he were here? it would be a blessed means of living in comfort, and spiritual conformity to the commands of God.

Let us look fixedly on Jesus Christ; let us keep our spiritual eyes still on the pattern, until we feel ourselves conforming to it; let us set the copy of Christ's life in our view, and let us look upon it with the eye of reason, and with the eye of faith.

But how should we keep the eye of our faith on this blessed object, until we feel this conformity in us? I answer, --

1. Let us set apart some times on purpose: the day begins to close; if together with our closet prayer we would fall on this duty of looking unto Jesus by lively faith, how blessed a season might this be?

2. Let us remove hinderances: Satan labors to hinder the soul from beholding Christ with the dust of the world. The god of this world blinds the eyes of men: O take heed of fixing our eyes on this world! Our own corruptions are also great hinderances to this view of Christ: away with all carnal passions, sinful desires; unless the soul be spiritual, it can never behold spiritual things.

3. Let us fix our eyes only on this blessed object; a moving eye sees nothing clearly: when the angels are said to look into these things, the word signifies, that they look into them narrowly; as they who bowing or stooping down look into a thing, so should we look narrowly into the life of Christ; our eye of faith should be set upon it in a steady manner, as if we forgot all the things behind, and had no other business in the world.

4. Let us look on Christ with a craving eye, with an humble expectation to receive a supply of grace. Lord, thou art not only anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows, but for thy fellows; I am earthly-minded, but thou art heavenly; I am full of lusts, but the image of God is perfect in thee; thou art the fountain of all grace, an head of all influence, as well as of eminence; thou art not only above me, but thou hast all grace for me: O give me some portion of thy meekness, lowliness, heavenly-mindedness, and of all the other graces of thy Spirit. Surely thou art an heaven of grace, full of bright shining stars: O that of that fullness thou wouldst give me to receive grace for grace.

5. Be ye assured that our prayer (if it be in faith) is even now heard; never any came to Christ with strong expectations to receive grace, or any benefit prayed for,

that was turned empty away; besides, Christ hath engaged himself by promise, to make us like himself: “as he which hath called us is holy, so should” (yea, and so shall) “we be holy in all manner of conversation.” O let us build on his gracious promise: heaven and earth shall pass away before one tittle of his word shall fail; only understand we that our conformity must be gradual: “We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,” *i.e.* from grace to grace; or from glory inchoate in obedience, to glory consummate in heaven.

6. If, notwithstanding all this, we feel not for the present this conformity in us, at least in such a degree; let us act over the same particulars again: the gifts of grace are therefore communicated by degrees, that we might be taken off from living upon a received stock of grace, and that we might still be running to the spring; we have continual need of Christ’s letting out grace into our hearts, and therefore we must wait at the well-head, Christ; we must look on Christ as appointed on purpose by his Father to be the beginner and finisher of our holiness; and we must believe that he will never leave that work imperfect, whereunto he is ordained of the Father. O then be not weary of this work until he accomplish the desires of thy soul.

I have now done with this subject; only, before I finish, one word more. I deny not other helps; but amongst them all, if I would make choice which to call upon, that I may become more and more holy, I would set before me this glass; *i.e.* Christ's holy life, the great exemplar of holiness; and this image we lost through our sin, and to this image we should endeavor to be restored by imitation; and how should this be done but by looking on Christ as our pattern? In this respect I charge thee, O my soul (for to what purpose should I charge others, if I begin not at home?) that thou make conscience of this evangelical duty: O be much in the exercise of it; not only in the day, but when night comes, and thou liest down on thy bed, let thy pillow be as Christ's bosom, in which John the beloved disciple was said to lean; there lean thou with John; thus mayest thou lie down in peace, and the Lord only will make thee to dwell in safety; and when day returns again, have this in mind, yea, in all thy thoughts, words, and deeds, even look unto Jesus as thy holy exemplar: say to thyself. If Christ my Saviour were now upon earth, would these be his thoughts, words, and deeds? would he be thus disposed as I now feel myself? would he speak these words that I am now uttering? would he do this that I am now putting my hand unto? O let me not yield myself to any thought, word, or action, which Jesus would be ashamed to own: yea, if it were possible, going and standing, sitting and lying, eating and drinking, speaking and holding thy peace, by thyself or in company, cast an eye upon Jesus, for by this means thou canst not

choose but love him more, and joy in him more, and trust in him more, and be more and more familiar with him, and draw more and more grace, and virtue, and sweetness, from him: O let this be thy wisdom, to think much of Christ, so as to provoke thee to imitation; then shalt thou learn to condemn the world, to do good to all, to injure no man, to suffer wrong patiently, yea, to pray for those that despitefully use thee, and persecute thee; then shalt thou learn to ‘bear about in thy body the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in thy body.’ This is to follow Christ’s steps: he descended from heaven to earth for thy sake; do thou trample on earthly things, “seek after the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” for thy own sake: though the world be sweet, yet Christ is sweeter; though the world prove bitter, yet Christ sustained the bitterness of it for thee: and now he speaks to thee, as he did to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, “Come, follow me”; O do not faint in the way, lest thou lose thy place in thy country, that kingdom of glory.

BOOK V: LOOKING UNTO JESUS IN HIS DEATH

CHAP. I

Sect. I. -- Of the Day of Christ's Sufferings, divided into Parts and Hours

THE Sun of righteousness, that arose with healing, we shall now see go down in a ruddy cloud. And in this piece, as in the former, we must first lay down the object, and then direct you to look upon it.

The object is Jesus, carrying on the work of man's salvation during the time of his sufferings; we shall observe them, as they were carried on successively in those few hours of his passion and death.

The whole time of these last sufferings of Christ, I shall reduce to somewhat less than one natural day; day before us, consisting of twenty-four hours; and begin with the evening, according to the beginning of natural days from the creation, (as it is said, The evening and the morning made the first day). In this revolution of time, I shall observe these several passages. --

1. About six in the evening, Christ celebrated and ate the Passover with his disciples, at which time he instituted the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and this continued till the eighth hour.

2. About eight in the evening, he washed the disciples' feet, and then leaning on the table, pointed out Judas that should betray him; and this continued until the ninth hour.

3. About nine in the evening, (the second watch in the night,) Judas went from the disciples; and in the mean time, Christ made that spiritual sermon, and afterwards that spiritual prayer, recited by John, chap. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. and this (together with a psalm they sung) continued at least until the tenth hour. That which concerns his passion, follows immediately upon this; and that only I shall take notice in my following discourse.

This passion of Christ I shall divide between the night and day. 1. For the night, and his sufferings therein, we may observe these periods:

1. From ten to twelve, he goes over the brook Cedron, to the garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed earnestly, and sweat blood.

2. From twelve to three, he is betrayed, bound, brought to Jerusalem, and carried into the house of Annas, the chief priest.

3. From three till six, they led him from Annas to Caiaphas, when he and all the priests of Jerusalem set upon Jesus Christ; and there it was that Peter denied Christ, and at last the whole Sanhedrin gave their consent to Christ's condemnation.

4. At six in the morning, about sun-rising, our Saviour was brought unto Pilate, and Judas Iscariot hanged himself. -- About seven, Christ is carried to Herod, who the year before had put John the Baptist to death. -- At eight, our Saviour is returned to Pilate, who propounded to the Jews, whether they would have Jesus or Barnabas loosed. -- About the ninth, (which the Jews call the third hour of the day,) Christ was whipped and crowned with thorns. -- About ten, Pontius Pilate brought forth Jesus out of the common-hall, saying, "Behold the man!" and then, in the place called Gabbatha, publicly condemned him to be crucified. -- About eleven, our Saviour carried his cross, and was brought to the place called Golgotha, where he was fastened on the cross, and lifted up, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." -- About twelve, (which the Jews call the sixth hour,) that supernatural eclipse of the sun happened. -- And about three in the afternoon,

which the Jews call the ninth hour,) the sun now beginning to receive his light, Christ cried, “It is finished!” and commending his Spirit into his Father’s hands, gave up the Ghost. -- I shall add to these; that about four in the afternoon, our blessed Saviour was pierced with a spear, -- and about five, (which the Jews call the eleventh, and the last hour of the day,) he was buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. -- So that in this round of our natural day, you see the wonderful transaction of Christ’s sufferings.

Sect. II. -- Of the Brook over which Christ passed

The first passage of that night, was Christ’s going over the brook Cedron, to the garden of Gethsemane. “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples.”

In this passage observe we these particulars. 1. The river over which they passed. 2. The garden into which they entered. 3. The prayer he made. 4. The agonies he suffered.

1. He and his disciples went over the brook Cedron. So it was called, say some, from the cedars that grew along the banks; or, say others, from the darkness of the valley, so *kader* signifies darkness; find this was done to fulfill a prophecy: “He shall drink of the brook in the way.” By the brook, we may understand mystically the wrath of God, and rage of men, the afflictions which befell Jesus Christ; and by his drinking of the brook, Christ’s enduring afflictions.

2. In the way, he hath a serious conference with his disciples: so the evangelist; “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out towards the mount of Olives, and then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended, because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” Christ now begins the story of his passion, the Shepherd shall be smitten; and he proves it from the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah xiii, “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow.” --

“Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.” God the Father is here brought in, as drawing and whetting his sword, and calling upon it to do execution against Jesus Christ. Christ’s sufferings were long since resolved on in the councils of heaven; and now in the way, the only-begotten Son, which lay in the bosom of his Father, reveals this story; he tells his disciples, “It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.”

3. The disciples hearing this, are amazed; Peter, who seems boldest, speaks first:

“Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”

O rash presumption! it appears in these particulars: -- 1. Peter prefers himself before the rest, as if all other disciples had been weak, and he only strong: “Though all should be offended, yet will not I.” 2. Peter contradicts Christ, with a few bragging words; as if he had said, “What, though Zechary hast said it, yet I will never do it”; “Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee.” 3. Peter never mentions God’s assistance; whereas the apostle’s rule is, “Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this and that”: so Peter should have said, “By God’s assistance I will not be offended, by the Lord’s help I will not deny thee.”

4. Ah, my brethren! let us remember we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, and our way lies over the brook Cedron; we cannot expect to enter with Christ into glory, but we must first “drink of the brook in the way”; that is, we must endure many afflictions, variety of afflictions. You will say, “This is an hard saying, who can hear it?” When Jesus told his disciples of his sufferings to be accomplished at Jerusalem, Peter takes the boldness to dehort his Master, “Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee”: Jesus thereupon calls him Satan, meaning that no greater contradictions can be offered to the designs of God, than to dissuade us

from sufferings. There is too much of Peter's humour amongst us; O, this doctrine of afflictions will not down with Antinomians; and hence we believe we have our congregations so thin in comparison of some of theirs; they that can break off the yoke of obedience, and present heaven in the midst of flowers, and offer great liberty of living under sin, shall have their schools filled with disciples; but they that preach the cross, and sufferings, and afflictions, and strictness of an holy life, shall have the lot of their blessed Lord; that is, they shall be ill thought of, and deserted, and railed against. Well, but if this be the way that Christ hath led us, let us follow him over the brook.

Sect. III. -- Of the Garden into which Christ entered

Matthew relates it thus: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane"; that is, a valley of fatness; certainly, it was a most fruitful and pleasant place, seated at the foot of the mount of Olives; accordingly John relates it thus: "Jesus went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden." I believe it is not without reason, that our Saviour goes into a garden. 1. Because gardens are solitary places, fit for meditation and prayer; to this end, we find Christ sometimes on a mountain, and sometimes in a garden. 2. Because gardens are places fit for repose and rest, when Christ was weary with preaching,

working of miracles, and doing acts of grace in Jerusalem, then he retires into this garden. 3. Because a garden was the place wherein we fell, and therefore Christ made choice of a garden, to begin the work of our redemption. 4. Christ goes into this garden, that his enemies might the more easily find him out; the evangelist tells us, “Judas, which betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples”: sure then he went not thither to hide himself; but rather to expose himself, to appear first in the field, and to expect his enemies. Thus it appears to all the world, that Christ’s death was voluntary. “He poureth forth his soul unto death,” saith the prophet; “He gave himself for our sins,” saith the apostle; nay, himself tells us, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.”

Sect. IV. -- Of the Prayer that Christ there made

Jesus entering the garden, left his disciples at the entrance of it, calling with him Peter, James, and John; they only saw his transfiguration, the earnest of his future glory, and therefore his pleasure was, that they only should see of how great glory he would disrobe himself, for our sakes.--

He betakes himself to his great antidote, which himself prescribed to all the world: he prays his heavenly Father; he kneels down; and not only so, but falls flat upon the ground; he prays with an intension great as his sorrow, and yet with a submission so ready, as if the cup had been the most indifferent thing in the world. The form of his prayer ran thus, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” In his prayer observe we these particulars: 1. The person to whom he prays, “O my Father.” 2. The matter for which he prays; “let this cup pass from me.” 3. The limitation of this prayer; “if it be possible,” and “if it be thy will.”

1. For the person to whom he prays; it is his Father. As Christ prayed not in his godhead, but according to his manhood; so neither prayed he to himself as God, but to the Father, the first person of the godhead.

2. For the matter of his prayer, “Let this cup pass from me,” some interpret thus: “Let this cup pass from me; though I must taste it, yet O that I may not be too long!” That which leads unto this last interpretation, is that of the apostle: “Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death; and he was heard in that which he feared,” Heb. v. 7. How was he heard? not in the removal of the cup, for

he drank it all up; but in respect of the tedious annoyance; for though it made him sweat drops of blood, though it laid him dead in his grave, yet presently, within the space of forty hours, he revived, and awaked, as a giant refreshed with wine: and so it passed from him, as he prayed, in a very short time; and by that short death, he purchased to his people everlasting life.

3. For the limitation of his prayer; “If it be possible, if it be thy will.” He knows what is his Father’s will, and he prays accordingly, and is willing to submit unto it; if the passing of the cup be according to the last interpretation, we shall need none of those many distinctions to reconcile the will of God and Christ. “If it be possible,” signifies the earnestness of the prayer; and, “If it be thy will,” the submission of Christ unto his Father: the prayer is short, but sweet. How many things needful to a prayer do we find centred in this! Here is humility of spirit, lowliness of deportment, importunity of desire, a fervent heart, a lawful matter, and a resignation to the will of God. Some think this the most fervent prayer that ever Christ made on earth: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” And, I think it was the greatest submission to the will of God, that ever was found upon the earth; for whether the cup might pass or not pass, he leaves it to his Father; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt: as if he had said, ‘Though in this cup are many ingredients, it is full red, and hath in it many dregs, and I know I must drink, and

suck out the very utmost dreg; yet, whether it shall pass from me in that short time, or continue with me a long time, I leave to thy will; I see, in respect of my humanity, there is in me flesh and blood; I cannot but fear the wrath of God; and therefore I pray thus earnestly unto my God”: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

But what was there in the cup, that made Christ pray thus earnestly that it might pass from him? I answer --

1. The great pain that he must endure; the buffetings, whippings, bleedings, crucifyings; all the torments from first to last, throughout all his body; all these now came into his mind, and all these were put into the cup of which he must drink.

2. The great shame that he must undergo. Now came into his thoughts, his apprehending, binding, judging, scorning, reviling, condemning; and, O, what a bloody blush comes into the face of Christ, whilst in the cup he sees these ingredients!

3. The neglect of men, notwithstanding both his pain and shame. I look upon this as a greater cut to the heart of Christ, than both the former; when he considered, that after all his sufferings and reproaches, few would regard. This was a bitter ingredient! Naturally men desire, if they cannot be delivered, yet to be pitied; but when it comes to this, that a poor wretch is under many sufferings, and finds none to regard, it is an heavy case; hence was Christ's complaint: "Have ye no regard, O all ye that pass by the way? Consider, and behold if ever there were sorrow like unto my sorrow!" Christ complains not of the sharp pains he endured, but of this, "Have ye no regard?" He cries not out, "O deliver me, and save me"; but, "O consider and regard me": as if he had said, "All that I suffer, I am contented with, I regard it not; only this troubles me, that you will not regard: it is for you that I endure all this; and do you so look upon it, as if it nothing at all concerned you?" Christ is willing to redeem us with his own precious blood; but he saw many to pass by without any regard, yea, ready to trample his precious blood under their feet, and to account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing: this was another spear in the heart of Christ, a bitter ingredient in this cup.

4. The guilt of sin which he was now to undergo; "upon him was laid the iniquity of us all." All the sins of all the world, from the first creation to the last judgment, were laid on him: O what a weight was this! Surely one sin is like a talent of lead:

O, then, what were so many thousands of millions! The very earth itself groans under the weight of sin until this day. David cried out, that his iniquities were “a burden too heavy for him to bear.” Nay, God himself complains, “Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” Then no wonder if Christ, bearing all the sins of Jews and gentiles, bond and free, cries out “My soul is heavy”; for sin was heavy on his soul: -- “Christ, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” How bare our sins on the tree, but by his sufferings? -- “And he hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” How laid on him, but by imputation? -- “And he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” How made sin for us? Surely there was in Christ no fundamental guilt; no, but he was made sin by imputation: he was our surety, and so our sins were laid on him, in order to punishment: as if now in the garden, he had said to his Father, “Thou hast given me a body; as I have taken the debts and sins of all the world upon me, come now, and arrest me as the only paymaster. Lo here I am, to do and suffer for their sins whatsoever thou pleasest,” Psal. xl. 6-8, Heb. x. 4-9. Now this was no small matter; little do we know or consider, what is the weight and guilt of sin. And this was another ingredient in Christ’s cup.

5. The power and malice of Satan: the devil had full leave; not as it was with Job, “Do what thou wilt, but save his life.” No, he had a commission without any such

limitation; the whole power of darkness was let loose to afflict him, as far as possibly he could; and this our Saviour intimates, when he saith, that “the prince of this world cometh.” Now was it that the word must be accomplished, “Thou shall bruise his heel.” If we look on the devil in respect of his evil nature, he is compared to “a roaring lion”: not only is he a lion, but a roaring lion; his disposition to do mischief, is always wound up to the height; and if we look on the devil in respect of his power, there is no part of our souls or bodies that he cannot reach; the apostle describing his power, gives him names above the highest comparisons; as “principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness above.” Devils are not only called princes, but *principalities*; not only mighty, but *powers*; not only rulers of a part, but of *all the darkness of all this world*; not only wicked spirits, but *spiritual wickedness*; not only about us, but *above us*; they hang over our heads continually: you know what a disadvantage it is to have your enemy get the upper ground; and this they have naturally, and always. O then, what a combat must this be, when all the power, and all the malice, of all the devils in hell, should, by the permission of God, arm themselves against the Son of God. Surely this was a bitter ingredient in Christ’s cup.

6. The wrath of God himself: this, above all, was the most bitter dreg; it lay in the bottom, and Christ must drink it also. “The Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his

fierce anger”: God afflicts some in his mercy and some in anger; this was in his anger: and yet in his anger God is not alike to all; some he afflicts in his more gentle and mild, others in his fierce anger; this was in the very fierceness of his anger. Christ saw himself bearing the sins of all, and standing before the judgment-seat of God; to this end, are those words, “Now is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world shall be cast out.” Now is the judgment of this world; as if he had said, “Now I see God sitting in judgment upon the world; and as a right representative of all the world, here I stand before his tribunal, ready to undergo all the punishment due to them for their sins: there is no other way to save their souls, and to satisfy justice, but that the fire of thy indignation should kindle against me”; as if he had said, “I know it is ‘a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God’: I know ‘God is a consuming fire; who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.’ But for this end came I into the world. O my Father, I will drink this cup. Lo here an open breast; come, prepare the armoury of thy wrath, and herein shoot all the arrows of revenge. -- And yet, O my Father, let me not be swallowed up by thy wrath; there is in me flesh and blood, in respect of my humanity, and ‘my flesh trembleth for fear of thee; I am afraid of thy judgments’; O! if it be possible, ‘if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.’”

Sect. V. -- Of the Agonies that Christ suffered

Christ's passion in the garden, was either before, or at, his apprehension; his passion before is declared, 1. By his sorrow. 2. By his sweat.

1. For his sorrow. The evangelists diversly relate it: "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy," said Matthew: "He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy," saith Mark: "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly," saith Luke: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour," saith John. All avow this sorrow to be great, and so it is confessed by Christ himself: "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Ah, Christians! who can speak out this sorrow? "The Spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Christ's soul is "sorrowful"; or, if that be too flat, his soul is "exceeding sorrowful"; or, if that language be too low, his soul is exceeding sorrowful, "even unto death"; such, and so great, as that which is used to be at the very point of death; and such as were able to bring death itself, had not Christ been reserved to an heavier punishment. Many a sorrowful soul have been in the world; but the like sorrow to this, was never since the creation. Surely the bodily torments of the cross, were inferior to this agony of his soul: it was a sorrow unspeakable.

2. “And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

1. “His sweat was as it were blood.” Here is the first step; his sweat was a wonderful sweat, not a sweat of water, but of red gore-blood.

3. Great drops of blood, *θρομβοι αιματος*. This bloody sweat of Christ, came not from him in small dews, but in great drops; they were drops, and “great drops of blood,” thick drops; and hence it is concluded as preternatural: for though in faint bodies, a subtle thin blood, like sweat, may pass through the pores of the skin; that through the same pores, thick and great drops of blood should issue out, could not be without a miracle.

4. They were “great drops of blood falling down to the ground”: great drops, and those so many, that they went through his apparel, streaming down to the ground. Now was it, that his garments were dyed with crimson. That of the prophet, though spoken in another sense, yet in some respect may be applied to this: “Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat?” O what a sight was here! His head and members are all on a bloody sweat, his sweat trickles down to the ground. O happy garden, watered with such tears of blood!

how much better are these rivers than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus; yea, than all the waters of Israel; yea, than all those rivers that water the garden of Eden!--

Thus far of Christ's passion before his apprehension. And now we may suppose it about midnight, the very time which Christ called "the hour and power of darkness." What followed from twelve till three at night, we shall discover in the next section.

Sect. VI. -- Of Judas's Treason, Christ's Apprehension, Binding, and Leading unto Annas

By this time, the traitor Judas was arrived at Gethsemane, and being near the garden door, Jesus goes to his disciples, and calls them from their sleep: by an irony (as some think) he bids them "Sleep on now, and take their rest"; meaning, if they could; but withal adds, "Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners; arise, let us be going, behold he is at hand that doth betray me." That it might appear he undertook his sufferings with choice, he not only refused to fly, but calls his apostles to rise, that they might meet his murderers. And now they come "with swords and staves"; or, as John adds, "with

lanterns and torches, and (Judas going before them, and drawing near unto Jesus to kiss him) they took him, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first.”

In this period, I shall observe; 1. Judas’s treason. 2. Christ’s apprehension. 3. Christ’s binding. 4. Christ’s leading to Annas.

1. Judas’s treason: “And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.” This traitor is not a disciple only, but an apostle; not one of the seventy, but one of the twelve. Augustine speaks of many offices of love, that Christ had done to Judas in an especial manner; he had called him to be an apostle, made him his friend, his familiar, caused him to eat of his bread, and sit at his table. And that now Judas should betray Christ; how doth this add to the sufferings of Christ! Behold a multitude, and Judas in the front. The evangelist gives the reason of this, that he might have the better opportunity to kiss him; this was the sign he gave the rout: “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him.” He begins war with a kiss, and breaks the peace of his Lord by a symbol of kindness. Jesus takes this ill; “What, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” as if he had said, “What! dost thou make the seal of love, the sign of treachery?” What a friendly reproof is here!

2. For Christ's apprehension: "Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him." Before they took him, he himself begins the inquiry, and leads them into their errand; he tells them, that he was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought: this was but a breath, a meek and gentle word; yet had it greater strength in it than the voice of thunder; for God was in that still voice, and it struck them to the ground. And yet he suffers them to rise again, and they still persist in their inquiry after him: he tells them once more, "I am he"; he offers himself to be sacrificed; only he sets them their bounds, and therefore he secures his apostles to be witnesses of his sufferings. In this work of redemption, no man must have an active share besides himself; he alone was to tread the wine-press: "If therefore ye seek me," saith Christ, "let these go their way." Thus he permits himself to be taken, but not his disciples.

3. For Christ's binding. The evangelist tells us, that "the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him," *εδησαν*, they bound his hands with cords; certainly they wanted no malice, and now they wanted no power, for the Lord had given himself into their hands. Binding argues baseness: fools and slaves were accustomed to be bound, and so were thieves; but is our Saviour numbered amongst any of these? O yes! "In that same hour said Jesus to the

multitude, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" O wonderful condescension of Christ! He that was eminently just, is reputed a thief; he that was equal with God, is become a servant; he that was stronger than Samson, is bound with cords, and, as a lamb, continues bound for the slaughter; and thus began our liberty from sin and death. Christ was faster bound with his cords of love, than with iron fetters; his love was strong as death; it overcame him who is invincible, and bound him who is omnipotent: the Jews' cords were but the symbols and figures; but the dear love, the tender bowels of Jesus Christ, were the things signified.

4. For his leading to Annas. John records, that "they led him to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high-priest that same year." 1. They led him away; *απηγαγον*, they snatched, haled him from the garden back again to Jerusalem, over the brook Cedron. -- 2. They led him first to Annas; he was chief of the Sanhedrim, father-in-law to Caiaphas, and high-priest the next year following.

Come, Christians, let us lay our hands upon our hearts, and cry, "O my pride! O my covetousness! O my malice and revenge! O my unbelief! O my unthankfulness! O my uncharitableness to the needy members of Christ! These

were the rout, these were they that led, and dragged, and drew Jesus (as it were) by the hair of his head; these were they that pulled him forwards, and showed him in triumph to that bloody Annas; nay, these were the Judas, Jews, Annas, and all. O that ever I should lodge within me such sins, such betrayers, such murderers of Jesus Christ!”

We may now suppose it about the third hour, or the last watch. In the gospel it is called the fourth watch of the night, the morning watch, which continueth until the morning.

Sect. VII. -- Of Christ's Examination and Condemnation

Now it was that they led him from Annas to Caiaphas; and presently a council is called of the high priests, scribes, and elders; these were the greatest, gravest, learnedst, wisest men amongst them, and they all conspire to judge him, who is the great Judge both of quick and dead. In their proceedings we may observe, I. The examination of the high-priest. 2. The smiting of one of the servants. 3. The accusations of the witnesses. 4. The sentence of the judges. 5. The denial of Peter. 6. The abuses of the attendants.

1. For the examination of the high-priest: “The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.” (1.) Of his disciples. What the questions were, is not expressed; and to them he answered nothing.

(2.) He asked him of his doctrine. -- And to this question our Saviour answers; (O how wisely!) “I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing: why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.” As if he had said, I appeal to the testimony of the enemies themselves. I tell the truth; I spake nothing in secret; that is, nothing in the least manner tending to sedition. Ask these mine enemies, these who have apprehended, and bound, and brought me hither: they know what I have said; let them speak, if they can, wherein I have transgressed the law.

2. For the stroke given Christ. “One of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?” That holy face, which was designed to be the object of heaven, was now smitten in the presence of a judge; and howsoever the assembly was full, yet not one amongst them all reproved the fact, or spake a word for Christ.

If a subject should but lift up his hand against the son of an earthly sovereign, would he not be accounted worthy of punishment? How much more in this case, when the hand is lifted up against the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

Come, look upon this lively and lovely picture of patience; he was struck on the face, but he was never moved in his heart. Notwithstanding the abuse, he showed all mildness and gentleness towards his enemies. O what art thou that canst not bear a distasteful speech, that canst not put up with the smallest offence! Come, learn of Christ, If ever we mean to have a share in his sufferings, let us conform to him in meekness and patience.

3. For the accusation of the witnesses. He is falsely charged with the things that he never knew. In his accusation I observe these things: 1. That they sought false witnesses; for true witnesses they could have none: “Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witnesses against Jesus to put him to death.” They were resolved in a former council that he should not live; and now palliating their design, they seek out for witnesses. 2. “Though many false witnesses came in to testify against him, yet they found none, because their witnesses did not agree together.” The judges seek out for witnesses, the witnesses for proof, those proofs for unity and consent, and nothing was ready for their

purpose. 3. At last, after many attempts, “came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” They accuse him for a figurative speech, which they could not understand.

Observe their false report of the words he had spoken: he said not, “I am able to destroy this temple of God, and to build it in three days”; but, “destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The allegation differs from the truth in these particulars: (1.) “I am able to destroy,” say they; “destroy ye,” saith Christ. (2.) “I am able to destroy this temple of God,” say they; but, “destroy ye this temple,” saith Christ; simply “this temple,” without addition. (3.) “I am able to destroy this temple of God, and to build it in three days,” say they; “destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” saith Christ. He spoke not of building an external temple, but of raising up his own body. These were the accusations of the false witnesses, to all which Jesus answered nothing. But, (4.) Another accusation is brought in. Caiaphas had a reserve, which he knew should do the business in that assembly. “I adjure thee,” says he, “by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” The holy Jesus being adjured by so sacred a name, would not now refuse an answer, but confessed himself to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And this the highpriest was pleased (as the

design was laid) to call blasphemy; and in token thereof he rends his clothes, prophetically signifying, that the priesthood should be rent from himself.

4. For the sentence of these judges: Caiaphas, prejudging all the Sanhedrim, in declaring Jesus to have spoken blasphemy, and the fact to be notorious, he then asked their votes. “What think ye? And they answered and said, He is guilty of death.” They durst not deny what Caiaphas had said; they knew his faction was very potent, and his malice great, and his heart was set upon the business, and therefore they all say, as he would have them, “He is guilty of death.” But they had no power at that time to inflict death, they only declared him worthy of death.

5. For Peter’s denial. While these things were thus acting, a damsel comes to him, and tells him, “Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee”: and then another maid tells the bystanders, “This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.” And after a while, they that stood by spake themselves, “Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee” as if he had said, Thy very idiom declares thee to be a Galilean. Peter thus surprised, shamefully denies his Lord; and, 1. He doth it with a kind of subterfuge, “I know not what thou sayest.” He seems to elude the accusation with this evasion -- I know not thy meaning. 2. At the next turn, he goes on “denying Christ with an oath: I know not the man.” And, lastly, he aggravates his sin so far,

that he denies his Lord with “cursing and swearing, I know not the man.” Here’s a lie, an oath, and a curse. O Peter, is the man so vile, that thou wilt not own him? Hadst thou not before confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God? and dost thou not know him to be man, as well as God? Is not this the God-man, that called thee and thy brother Andrew at the sea of Galilee, saying, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”? Is not this he whom thou sawest on mount Tabor, shining more gloriously than the sun? Is not this he whom thou sawest walking on the water, and to whom thou saidst, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water”? How is it then that thou sayst, “I know not the man”? Surely here’s a sad example of human infirmity; and withal, a blessed example of repentance. No sooner the cock crew, and Christ gave a look on Peter, but he goes out, and weeps bitterly.

Let us learn hence to think modestly and soberly of ourselves: “Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.” If Peter could first dissemble, and then lie, and then forswear, and then blaspheme and curse; O let us not be high-minded, but fear.-- And in case we fall indeed, as Peter did, yet let us not despair, as Judas did; but still, upon our repentance, let us trust in God.

6. For the abuses the base attendants offered to Christ; the evangelist tells us, “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?” And, as Luke adds, “Many other things blasphemously spake they against him.”

(1.) They spit in his face. This was accounted among the Jews a matter of great infamy and reproach.

(2.) They buffet him. We heard before, that one of the officers struck Jesus with the palm of his hand; but now they buffet him.

(3.) They covered his face, Mark xiv. 65. Several reasons are rendered for it; that they might smite him more boldly, and without shame.

(4.) They smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?” Some reckon these taunts among the bitterest passages of his passion. Nothing is more miserable, even to the greatest misery, than to see itself scorned of enemies.

Consider, Christians, whether we had not a hand in these abuses. (1.) They spit in the face of Christ, who defile his image in their souls. (2.) They buffet him, who persecute Christ in his members: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (3.) They mock and scoff at Christ, who scorn his messengers. “He that despiseth you, despiseth me,” saith Christ. O that we would lay these things to our hearts, and observe wherein we stand guilty of these sins, that we may repent. You that take your name from Christ, how should you admire the immensity of this love of Christ! Was it a small thing that the wisdom of God should become the foolishness of men, and scorn of men, and contempt of the world, for your sin’s sake? O think of this!

And now the dismal night is done, what remains but that we follow Christ, and observe him in his sufferings the next day. The psalmist tells us, “Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”: only Christ can find none of this joy neither morning nor evening; for after a dismal night, he meets with as dark a day.

CHAP. II

Sect. I. -- Of Christ's Indictment, and Judas's fearful End

About six in the morning, Jesus was brought unto Pilate's house. "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the judgment hall, and it was early." – "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and when they had bound him, and led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor; then Judas which had betrayed him, hanged himself." O the readiness of our nature to evil! When the Israelites would sacrifice to the golden calf, they rose up early in the morning. If God leave us to ourselves, we are as ready to practise mischief as the fire is to burn. The transactions of this hour I shall consider in these two passages, -- Christ's indictment, and Judas's fearful end.

In Christ's indictment, we may observe, 1. His accusation. 2. His examination.

In his accusation we may observe, 1. Who are his accusers. 2. Where he was accused. 3. What was the matter of which they accuse him.

(1.) His accusers were *the chief priests and elders of the people*. The very same that before had judged him guilty of death, are now his accusers before the

temporal judge: but why must our Saviour be twice judged? Was not the Sanhedrin, or ecclesiastical court, sufficient to condemn him? I answer, he is twice judged, 1. That his innocency might more appear. 2. Because, said the Jews, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The Romans had come and restrained the Jews from the execution of their laws.

(2.) The place of the accusation was at the door of the house. "They would not go into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover." They are curious of a ceremony, but make no strain to shed innocent blood: they are precise about matters of the law; but mercy, judgment, fidelity, and the love of God, they let them pass.

(3.) The matter of which they accuse him. 1. That he seduced the people. 2. That he forbade to pay tribute to Caesar. 3. That he said he was a king. How great, but withal how false, were these accusations!

2. For his examination. Pilate was nothing moved with any of the accusations, saving the third; and therefore letting all the rest pass, he asked him only, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" To whom Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." By which Pilate knew well that Christ was no enemy to Caesar. Christ's

kingdom is spiritual, his government is in the hearts of men, and what is this to Caesar?

How many lessons may we learn from hence? 1. Christ was accused; who can be free? The chief priests and elders of the Jews accused Christ. No wonder if those that are chief and great among us accuse poor Christians: there's a perpetual enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; an everlasting, irreconcilable, implacable enmity.

(2.) Christ is examined only of his usurpation: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" The men of this world mind only worldly things. Pilate regards not Christ's doctrine; but he is afraid lest he should aspire to the kingdom: and concerning this our Saviour puts him out of doubt, "My kingdom is not of this world." O eternity! to be forever in heaven with God and Christ, how shall this swallow up all other thoughts and aims!

2d. "Then Judas which betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself." There is a repentance that comes too late. In hell men shall repent to all eternity, and such a repentance was this of Judas. About midnight he had received his money in the house of Annas, and now betimes in the morning he

repents his bargain, and throws his money back again. The end of this tragedy was, that Judas died a miserable death; he perished by his own hands. “He went and hanged himself. And he fell headlong, and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.”

Who would die such a death for the pleasure of a little sin! The Lord keep our souls from betraying Christ, and from despairing in God’s mercy through Christ. Amen, Amen.

Sect. II. -- Of Christ’s mission to Herod

About seven in the morning, Jesus was sent to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time. The reason of this was, because Pilate had heard that Christ was a Galilean; and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, he concludes that Christ must be under his jurisdiction: Herod was glad; “for he was desirous to see Christ of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.” That which I shall observe in this passage is,

1. Herod’s questioning of Jesus Christ. 2. Christ’s silence to all his questions. 3. Herod’s derision; and Christ’s dismissal back again to Pilate.

1. Herod questioned with him in many words. Herod could not abide to hear his word, but he was well content to see the miracles of Christ.

2. Whatever his questions were, “he answered him nothing.” Herod had been sottishly careless of Jesus Christ; he lived in the place where Jesus more especially had conversed, yet never had seen his person, or heard his sermons. It gives us to learn thus much, that if we refuse to hear the voice of Christ in the time of mercy, Christ may refuse to speak to us in our time of need.

3. This silence they interpret for simplicity; and so, “Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.” They arrayed him with a white, glittering, gorgeous raiment: the meaning of Herod was not so much to declare his innocence as his folly. In this posture they sent him away again to Pilate; to all their former derisions they added this, that now he was exposed in scorn to the boys of the streets.

Was the uncreated Wisdom of the Father reputed a fool? No wonder if we suffer thousands of reproaches. We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men; we are fools for Christ’s sake. We are made as the filth of the world,

and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day. Christians must wear the badge and livery of Jesus Christ: we cannot expect to fare better than our Master. I never knew Christians in better temper than when they are styled by the name of Puritans, hypocrites, formalists, or the like.

Let us not judge of men by their outside garments. Wisdom is often clad in the coat of a fool.

Let us admire at the condescension of Christ, who came down from heaven to teach us wisdom. Wisdom itself was content to be counted a fool, that those who are accounted “the foolish things of the world,” might be wise unto salvation.

Do not we set Christ at nought? Do not we mock him, and array him in a gorgeous robe? Whatsoever we do to one of the least of his saints, he tells us that we do it to himself, Matt. xxv. 40, 45; and have we not dealt thus with his saints? Have we not dealt thus with his ministers? When Elisha was going up to Bethel, “there came little children out of the city and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head, Go up, thou bald head.” A reproach of bald head, round head, given to a faithful Elisha, or a minister of Christ, proclaims you as bad as those little children, yea, as bad as Herod, and his men of war. Such Herods were a little before the

destruction of Jerusalem. Some there were then “that mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

Sect. III. -- Of Christ and Barabbas compared; and of the Question debated betwixt Pilate and the Jews

About eight in the morning Christ is returned to Pilate, who propounded to the Jews, whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas loosed unto them. “Ye have a custom, said he, that I should release unto you one at the passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.” It is supposed, that in this passage Pilate endeavoured Christ’s liberty; “he knew that for envy they had delivered him,” and he saw that Herod had sent him back uncondemned; and therefore now he propounds this medium to rescue him: “Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” In prosecution of this passage, I shall observe, 1. Who this Barabbas was. 2. What is the difference betwixt him and Christ. 3. How they vote. 4. Pilate’s query upon the vote. 5. Their answer to his query. 6. His reply unto their answer. 7. Their reduplication upon his reply.

For the first, What was this Barabbas? “One that had made insurrection, and committed murder in the insurrection,” Mark xv. 7. One that was the greatest malefactor of his time; and must he be taken, and Jesus cast!

2. What is the difference betwixt him and Christ. Let us weigh them in the balance, and we may find, 1. Barabbas was a thief, and by violence took away the bread of the needy; but Christ was a feeder and supplier of their needs. 2. Barabbas was a murderer, and had slain the living; but Christ was the Saviour, restoring life unto the dead. 3. Barabbas was a man of blood; but Christ was a meek and quiet spirit. Here’s a competition indeed! the author of sedition with the Prince of peace; a murderous mutineer with a merciful Mediator; a son of Belial with the Son of God.

3. For their votes, they give them in thus: “Not this man, but Barabbas.” A strange vote, to desire the wolf before the lamb, the noxious and violent before the righteous and innocent.

4. For Pilate’s query upon the vote, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” There is more pity in Pilate than in all the Jews. In some things Pilate did justly: as, first, he would not condemn him before his accusations were

brought in; nor then neither, before he was convicted of some capital crime: and because he perceives that it was envy that drove on their design, he endeavors to save his life by balancing him with Barabbas; and now he sees that they prefer Barabbas before Jesus, he puts forth the question, “What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?” As if he had said, I know not what to do with him; it is against my light to condemn him to death, who is of innocent life.

5. “And they all said unto him. Let him be crucified.” This was the first time that they speak openly their design. It had long lurked within them, that he must die a cursed death, and now their envy breaks out. The cross was a gradual and slow death, it spun out pain into a long thread, and therefore they make choice of it, as they made choice of Jesus; let him die rather than Barabbas, and let him die the death of the cross rather than any speedy death.

6. For Pilate’s reply unto this answer, “Why, what evil hath he done?” Sometimes the Jews themselves could say, “He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.” Surely he hath done all things well: he stilled the winds, and calmed the seas; he raised the dead; he gave grace, and he forgave sins; and by his death he merited for his saints everlasting life: why then should he

die, that hath done all things well? No wonder if Pilate object against these malicious ones, “What evil hath he done?”

7. “But they cried out the more, saying, let him be crucified.” Instead of proving some evil against him, they cried out the more; they were instant with loud voices; they made such a clamour, that the earth rang with it. And now is Pilate threatened into another opinion, they require his judgment; and the voices of them, and of the chief-priest, prevailed: so it follows, “And when he saw he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, then Barabbas is released unto them, and Jesus is delivered to be scourged.”

(1.) Give me leave to look amongst ourselves: Is there not some or other amongst us that prefer Barabbas before Jesus? O, yes! those that listen to that old mutinous murderer in his seditious temptations; those that reject the blessed motions of God’s own spirit in his tenders and offers of graces those that embrace the world, with its pleasures and profits, and make them their portion; all these choose Barabbas, and reject Jesus Christ.

(2.) Give me leave to look on the love and mercy of God in Christ. Our Jesus was not only content to take our nature upon him, but to be compared with the greatest

malefactor of those times; and by public sentence to be pronounced more worthy of death than Barabbas. O the love of Christ! He died, that we might live: it was the voice of God, as well as men. Release Barabbas, every believing Barabbas, and crucify Jesus.

Sect. IV. -- Christ whipped, clothed with Purple, and crowned with Thorns

About nine (which the Jews call the third hour of the day) was Christ whipped, clothed with purple, and crowned with thorns.

1. When Pilate saw the Jews were set upon his death, he consented. “Then the soldiers of the governor look Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers; and they stripped him.” They pulled off his clothes, and made him stand naked before them all. He that adorns the heaven with stars, and the earth with flowers, is now himself stripped naked.

2. Pilate gave him to be scourged. This some think he did upon no other account, but that the Jews might rest satisfied, and so desist from taking away his life. That Pilate might give him to be scourged on that account, is very probable; because, after the scourging, he brings him out to the Jews, proclaiming, “I find no fault in

him.” And before his scourging, he speaks it more expressly; “He hath done nothing worthy of death, I will therefore chastise him, and release him.”

We may read here a lecture of the immense love of God in Christ to us poor Gentiles. Was there ever love like unto this love? Had he not been God as well as man, he could never have had in his heart such a love as this. It was a divine love; a love far surpassing either the love of men, or women, or angels.

3. They put upon him a purple robe, or a scarlet robe. John calls it purple, and Matthew scarlet. Howsoever some difference may be, yet because of their likeness they are put sometimes one for another. It is in the original, “a scarlet cloak.” It was a loose short garment, at first used only by kings or emperors, and the colour of it was suitable to Christ’s condition, for he was now purple all over: his body and his garment were both of a deep-dyed sanguine colour. What is his scarlet garment, but the emblem of his wounded body? that, as he spake of the woman, “she anointed him before-hand unto his burial”; so Pilate, in the mystery, clothes him aforehand unto his bloody death.

4. They platted “a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head.” A goodly crown for the King of kings! We read of many sorts of crowns, as of the triumphal, laurel,

naval, mural, but never till this did we read of a crown of thorns. A crown it was to deride him, and a crown of thorns to torment him. In this we may read both his pain and shame. After they had put it upon his head, “they took a reed, and smote him on the head”: that is, they smote him on the head to fasten the crown of thorns upon him surer, and to imprint it deeper.

How many lessons might we draw from hence! They put upon his head a crown of shame, of death, of torture; who came to give us a crown of victory, of life, of glory. O what a shame is it for any of us to crown our heads with rosebuds, to spend our time in vanity, folly, sin, when Christ our Lord had such a grove of thorns growing on his sacred head! The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” If our Lord and Master was crowned with thorns, surely the members of Christ should not be soft, delicate, effeminate, sensual, or given up to pleasures.

Sect. V. -- Of Christ brought forth and sentenced

About ten, Christ was brought forth, and sentenced. 1. For his bringing forth, I shall therein observe these particulars; as, (1.) We find Pilate bringing forth Jesus

out of the common-hall, and showing this sad spectacle to the people. “Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe; and Pilate saith unto them. Behold, the man!” He thought the very sight of Christ would have moved them with compassion: they had lashed him almost unto death, they had clothed him with purple, crowned him with thorns; and now they bring him out, and expose him to public view; Pilate crying, “Behold the man!” As if he had said, “Behold a poor, miserable, distressed man. Behold how he stands disfigured with wounds; behold him weltering in his own blood; and let this sufficient, yea, more than sufficient punishment, suffice to satisfy your rage.”

2. We find the Jews more enraged against Jesus; “When the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him! crucify him!” O ye Jews, children of Israel, seed of Abraham, is not this he, concerning whom your fathers cried, “O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might bow down at thy presence!” How is it that you should despise him present, whom they desired absent? How is it that your cry and theirs should be so contrary?

3. We find Pilate and the Jews yet debating the business; Pilate is loath to pronounce the sentence, and the chief of the Jews provoke him to it with a threefold argument: as –

(1.) “They had a law, and by their law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God”: the text tells us, that “Pilate hearing the argument, was the more afraid.” “Pilate,” saith Cyril, “was a heathen idolater, and so, worshipping many gods, he could not tell but that Christ might be one of them.” This was the meaning of Pilate’s question, “Whence art thou?” of what progenitors art thou sprung? “And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him.”

(2.) The Jews came with another argument; they threatened Pilate, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend”: a forcible reason, as the case then stood. It was no small matter to be accused of high treason against Caesar, and therefore under this obligation, Pilate seems to bend: whom the fear of Christ’s divinity had restrained, him the fear of Caesar’s frown provoked to go on. And yet before he gives sentence, “he takes water, and washeth his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it.”

(3.) In reference to this, they engaged themselves for him, which was their last argument. “His blood be upon us, and upon our children.” Thus far of the first general.

(4.) For the sentence itself: “When Pilate heard that,” – “he sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement,” (because erected of stones;) “but in the Hebrew, *Gabbatha*.” This word signifies *an high-place*, and *raised above*; it was so, on purpose that the judges might be seen when they pronounced sentence. And here Pilate sitting down, “gave sentence that it should be as they required”; and then, “he delivered Jesus to their will.”

From this sight of Christ, as he was presented by Pilate to the people, we may learn remorse; not any of us who have crucified Christ by our sins, but we are called on at this time to *behold the man*. Suppose we saw him with our bodily eyes; suppose we had the same view of Christ as the Jews had, when he was thus presented; suppose we saw him in the midst of us, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and the reed held in his right hand: suppose we heard the voice of Pilate speaking to us, as he did to the Jews, “Behold the man”; suppose we saw the purple robe lifted up, that we might see all under, how his body was torn; and that

same voice from heaven should come to us, saying, "This same is he whom ye have buffeted, scourged, crowned, crucified with your sins." Were not this enough to prick us in our hearts, and to make us cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We look on Pilate, on the soldiers, on the Jews; but we look not on our sins, saying, "Could we but realize our sins as the principal of these sufferings of Christ, methinks our hearts should break." Consider, yesterday so many lies were told, and so many oaths were sworn; little did we think, that all this while we had been stripping Christ naked, whipping Christ with rods, clothing Christ with a purple -scarlet robe, plating a crown of thorns, and putting it on his head, sceptering him with a reed, and saluting him with scorn, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Men, brethren, and fathers, be not deceived, Christ is mocked, scorned, and thus abused by you when you sin; your sins thus dealt with Christ, and in God's acceptation your sins thus deal with Christ even unto this day. Never say, it was long since Christ was crucified, and he is now in heaven, for by your sins you crucify again the Lord of glory, you put him again to open shame. O look on him whom you have pierced! Pilate thought that if the Jews would but behold the man, their hearts would have mollified; and shall not I think as well of you? It is a blessed means to make sin bitter, and to breed in our hearts remorse for sin, if we will but hearken to this voice of Pilate, "Behold the man."

Sect. VI. -- Of Christ Crucifying

About eleven, they prepare with all speed for the execution. In this hour we may observe these several passages. 1. Their taking off the robe and clothing him again with his own raiment. 2. Their leading him away from Gabbatha to Golgotha; bearing the cross with Simon's help. 3. His comforting the women who followed weeping. 4. Their giving him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. 5. Their crucifying, or fastening him on the cross.

1. The evangelist tells us, "They took the robe off from him, and they put his own raiment on him." Origen observes, "They took off his robes, but they took not off his crown of thorns." It is supposed this small business could not be done without great pain; after his sore whipping, his blood congealed, and by that means stuck to his scarlet mantle; so that in pulling off the robe, and putting on his raiment, there could not be but a renewing of his wounds.

2. "They led him away, bearing his cross." They had scarce left him so much blood or strength, as to carry himself, and must he now bear his heavy cross! Yes, till he faint and sink, so long he must bear it, and longer too, did they not fear that he should die with less shame and smart than they intended him; which to prevent,

“they constrained one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear his cross after him.” The cross was a Roman death, and so one of their abominations; hence they themselves would not touch the tree of infamy, lest they should have been defiled; but to touch the Lord’s anointed, to crucify the Lord of glory, they make no scruple at all.

3. He comforted the women who followed weeping. “And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him; but Jesus turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” In the midst of his misery, he forgets not mercy; in the midst of all their tortures and scorn, he can hear his following friends weeping behind him, and neglect all his own sufferings to comfort them. He hath more compassion on the women that follow him weeping, than of his own mangled self, fainting and bleeding unto death: he feels more the tears that drop from their eyes, than all the blood that flows from his own veins. We heard before, that he would not vouchsafe a word to Pilate that threatened him, nor to Herod that entreated him; and yet, unasked, how graciously doth he turn about his bleeding face to these weeping women, affording them looks and words too, both of compassion and of consolation, “Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but for yourselves.” -- And yet observe, he did not turn his face to them, until he heard them weep; nor may we think to see his face in glory, unless we first bathe our

eyes in sorrow. It is a wonder to me that any in our age should ever decry tears, remorse, contrition, compunction. How many saints do we find, both in the Old and New Testament, confuting by their practices those gross opinions. The promise tells us, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy”; he that follows Christ, or “goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

But what’s the meaning of this, *Weep not for me*? May we not weep for the death of Christ? Do we not find in scripture that all the people wept at the death of Moses? that all the church wept at the death of Stephen? that the women lamented the death of Dorcas? And, did not Christ himself weep for Lazarus, and Jerusalem? Nay, is he not here weeping showers of blood, all along the way? O, what’s the meaning of this, *Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves*?

I answer, the words are not absolute, but comparative. Christ doth not simply forbid us to weep for our friends, but rather to turn our worldly grief into godly sorrow for sin.

Christ pointed the women to the true cause of all their sorrow, which was their sins; and thus we have cause to weep indeed. Our sins were the cause of the

sufferings of Christ; and in that respect, O that our heads were fountains, and our eyes rivers of tears! O that the Lord would strike these rocky hearts of ours with the rod of true remorse, that water might gush out! O that we could thus mourn over Jesus, whom we have pierced and “be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

4. No sooner was he come to the place of execution, “but they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall”: this was a custom amongst Jews and Romans, that to the condemned they ever gave wine to drink. But in that they gave him vinegar mingled with gall, it was an argument of their cruelty and envy.

5. They crucified him, that is, they fastened him to the cross; and then lift him up. That I mean to observe of this crucifying of Christ, I shall reduce to these two heads, *viz.* the shame and pain.

(1.) For the shame, it was a cursed death; “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” When it was in use, it was chiefly inflicted upon slaves, that either falsely accused, or treacherously conspired their master’s death; but on whomsoever it was inflicted, this death, in all ages among the Jews, hath been branded with a

special kind of ignominy; and so the apostle signifies when he saith, “He abased himself to the death, even to the death of the cross.”

(2.) For the pain, it was a painful death; as appears several ways. 1. His legs and hands were violently racked, and pulled out to the places fitted for his fastening, and then pierced through with nails. 2. By this means he wanted the use both of his hands and feet, and so was forced to hang immovably upon the cross, as being unable to turn any way for his ease. 3. The longer he lived, the more he endured; for by the weight of his body, his wounds were opened and enlarged, his nerves and veins were rent and torn asunder, and his blood gushed out more and more. 4. He died by inch-meal, as I may say, and not at once: the cross kept him a great while upon the rack. It was full three hours betwixt Christ’s affixion and expiration; and it would have been longer, if he had not freely and willingly given up the ghost: it is reported that Andrew the apostle was two whole days upon the cross before he died; and so long might Christ have been, if God had not heightened it to greater degrees of torment.

I may add to this, as above all this, the pains of his soul while he hanged on the cross; for there also Christ had his agonies and conflicts, these were those *ωδινες θανατος*, those pains, or *pains of death*, from which Peter tells us Christ was loosed.

The word *ωδινες*, properly signifies the pain of a woman in travail; such were the pains of Jesus Christ in death: the prophet calls it *the travail of his soul*; and the psalmist calls it *the pains of hell*: “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.” The sorrows or cords of death compassed his body, and the pains of hell gat hold upon his soul: and these were they that extorted from him that passionate expostulation, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He complains of that which was more grievous to him than ten thousand deaths. “My God, my God, why hast thou withdrawn thy wonted presence, and left my soul (as it were) in hell?”

And now we reflect on the shame and pain: O the curse and bitterness that our sins have brought on Jesus Christ! When I but think on these bleeding veins, scourged sides, furrowed back, harrowed temples, digged hands and feet, and then consider that my sins were the cause of all; methinks I should need no more arguments for self-abhorring. Christians, would not your hearts rise against him that should kill your father, mother, brother, wife, husband? O then, how should your hearts and souls rise against sin! Surely your sin it was that murdered Christ, that killed him who is instead of all relations, who is a thousand times dearer to you than father; mother, husband, child. One thought of this should, methinks, be enough to make you say, as Job did, “I abhor myself in dust and ashes.” O, what’s that cross on the

back of Christ? My sins. O, what's that crown on the head of Christ? My sins. O, what's that nail in the right-hand, and that other in the left-hand of Christ? My sins. O, what's that spear in the side of Christ? My sins. O, what are those nails and wounds in the feet of Christ? My sins. With a spiritual eye I see no other engine tormenting Christ; no other Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, condemning Christ; no other soldiers, officers, Jews, or Gentiles, doing execution on Christ, -- but only sin. O my sins, my sins!

Comfort we ourselves in the end of this death of Christ: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Without this consideration, the contemplation of Christ's death would be altogether unprofitable. Now what was the end? Surely this, Christ lifted up, that he might draw all men unto him: Christ hanged on a tree, that he might bear our sins on the tree. This was the plot which God aimed at in the crucifying of Christ; and thus our faith must take it up: indeed our faith hangs on this. The design of Christ in his sufferings is that welcome news, (O remember this,) Christ is crucified! And why so? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Sect. VII. -- Of the Consequents after Christ's Crucifying

1. About twelve, when the sun is usually brightest, it began now to darken. This darkness was so great, that it spread over all the land of Jewry: some think, over all the world; so we translate it in Luke, “And there was darkness over all the earth”: and many Gentiles, besides Jews, observed the same as a great miracle.

The cause of this darkness is diversely rendered by several authors. Some think that the sun, by divine power, withdrew, and held back its beams. Whatsoever was the cause, it continued for the space of three hours as dark as the darkest winter’s night.

2. About three, which the Jews call the ninth hour, the sun now beginning to receive his light, “Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – “And then, that the scripture might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst.” – “And when he had received the vinegar, he said. It is finished.” – “And, at last, crying with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” I cannot stay on these seven words of Christ which he uttered on the cross: his words were ever gracious, but never more gracious than at this time. We cannot find, in all the

books of men, in all the records of time, either such sufferings or such sayings, as were these last sayings and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

3. About four in the afternoon he was pierced with a spear, and there issued out of his side both blood and water. “And one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.” This was a fountain of both sacraments, the fountain of all our happiness, “the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” There are three that bear witness on earth, saith John, “the Spirit, the water, and the blood.” Out of the side of Christ, being now dead, there issues water and blood; signifying that he is both our justification and sanctification.

4. About five (which the Jews call the eleventh, and the last hour of the day) Christ was taken down, and buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.

Thus far we have propounded the blessed object of Christ’s suffering and dying for us. Our next work is to direct you how to “look unto him” in this respect.

CHAP. III

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great work of our Salvation in his death

1. Let us know Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation during his sufferings and death. This is the high point which Paul was ever studying: preaching, "I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Christ crucified, is the rarest piece of knowledge in the world. The person of Christ is a matter of high speculation; but Christ farther considered, as clothed with his garments of blood, is that knowledge which especially Paul pursues: he esteems not, determines not, to make any profession of any other science or doctrine. O my soul, how many days, and months, and years, hast thou spent to attain some little measure of knowledge in the arts, and tongues, and sciences? And yet what a poor skill hast thou attained in respect of the many thousands of them that knew nothing at all of Jesus Christ! And what if thou hadst reached a greater proficiency? Couldst thou have dived into the secrets of nature? Couldst thou have excelled "the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, and the wisdom of Solomon, who spake of beasts, of fowls, of fishes, of all trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," yet without the saving knowledge of Christ crucified, (Christ suffering, bleeding, and dying,) all this had been nothing, see

Eccl. i. 18, and above all, that is the rarest which shows him suffering for us, and so freeing us from hell-sufferings. Come then, and spend thy time for the future more fruitfully in reading, learning, knowing this one necessary thing. Study it therefore, but be sure thy study and knowledge be rather practical than speculative. Do not merely learn the history of Christ's death, but the efficacy, virtue, and merit of it. Know what thou knowest in reference to thyself, as if Jesus had been all the while carrying on the business of thy soul's salvation; as if thou hadst stood by, and Christ had spoke to thee, as to the woman, "Weep not for me, but for thyself; thy sins caused my sufferings, and my sufferings were for the abolition of thy sins."

Sect. II. -- Of Considering Jesus in that respect

Let us consider Jesus carrying on this great work of our salvation during his sufferings and death. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced," saith the prophet; that is, they shall consider me: and accordingly the apostle was looking unto Jesus, or considering Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame." It is good in all respects, and under all considerations, to look unto Jesus from first to last; but, above all, this text relates to the time of his sufferings: and hence it is that Luke

calls Christ's passion *θεωριαν*, a theory or sight: "And all the people that came together to that sight, smote their breasts and returned." Not but that every passage of Christ is a sight, worthy our looking on, or considering; Christ in his Father's purpose, Christ in the promise, Christ in performance, Christ in his birth, and Christ in his life. O what blessed objects are these to look upon! But above all, "Consider him," saith the apostle, "that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." -- Consider him, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame." Of all other parts, acts, or passages of Christ, the Holy Ghost hath only honoured Christ's passion (his sufferings and death) with this name, *theory*, and *sight*. O then let us look on this, consider this.

1. Consider him passing over the brook Cedron. It signifies the wrath of God, and rage of men. Through many tribulations must they go, that will follow after him to the kingdom of glory. Consider him entering into the garden of Gethsemane: in a garden Adam sinned, and in this garden Christ must suffer. Into this garden no sooner was he entered, but he began to be agonized: all his powers within him were in conflict. Consider, O my soul, how suddenly he is struck into a strange fear. Never was man so afraid of the torments of hell, as Christ, standing in our room, is of his Father's wrath; nor was he only afraid, but very heavy. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His sorrow was deadly, it melted his soul

as wax is melted with heat; it continued with him till his last gasp; his heart was like wax burning all the time of his passion: nor was he only afraid and heavy, but he began to be sore amazed. This signifies an universal cessation of all the faculties of the soul from their several functions. We usually call it a *consternation*. It is like a clock stopped for the while from going, by some hand or other laid upon it; such a motion of the mind as whereby for the present he was disabled to mind anything else, but the dreadful sense of the wrath of God. O what an agony was this! what a struggling passion of mixed grief! “O, my Father! Sinner, thou hast bent thy bow, lo here an open breast! fix herein all thy shafts; better I suffer for a while, than that all men should be damned for ever: thy will is mine: lo, I will bear the burden of sin: shoot here thy arrows of revenge!” And thus, as he prayed, he sweat, “and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” O what man or angel can conceive the agony, the fear, the sorrow, the amazement of heart, that, without all outward violence, bled through the flesh and skin; not some faint dew, but solid drops of blood! O my soul, consider this; and if thou wilt bring this consideration home, say, thy sins were the cause of this bloody sweat.

2. Consider his apprehension. Judas is now at hand, with a troop following him.

See how, without all shame he set himself in the van, and, coming to his Lord and Master, gives him a most traitorous kiss: “What, Judas, betrayest thou the son of

man with a kiss?" Hast thou sold the Lord of life to such cruel merchants as covet greedily his blood? At what price hast thou set the Lord of all the creatures? At thirty pence? What a slender price for the Lord of glory. At that time said Christ, "Ye be come as against a thief, with swords and staves; I sat daily among you teaching in the temple, and ye never laid hands on me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Now the prince of darkness exercised his power; now the ravenous wolves assaulted the most innocent lamb in the world: now they furiously haled him this way and that way. What cries, and shouts, and clamours made they over him! Now they lay hold on his holy hands, and bind them hard with rough and knotty cords. Now they bring him back again over Cedron. Now they lead him openly through the streets of Jerusalem, and carry him to the house of Annas in triumph. O, my soul, consider these several passages leisurely, and with good attention, till thou feelest some motions in thy affection. He that is fairer than all the children of men, is besmeared with weeping, and troubled with sorrow of heart. Surely there is something, O my soul, in thee that caused all this: hadst not thou sinned, the Sun of righteousness had never been eclipsed.

3. Consider the hurrying of Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas. There a council is called, and Caiaphas the high-priest adjures our Lord to tell him, if he was Christ the Son of God? No sooner he affirms it, but he is doomed guilty of blasphemy. Now again they disgorge all their malice and revenge; each one gives him buffets and strokes: they spit upon that divine face, they hoodwink his eyes, and strike him on the cheek, scoffing, and jesting, and saying, “Who is it that smote thee?” O my soul, why dost thou not humble thyself at this so wonderful example? How is it that there should remain in the world any token of pride after this so marvellous example of humility! I am astonished this so great patience overcomes not my anger, this so great abasing assuageth not my pride, these so violent buffets beat not down my presumption: Jesus Christ by these means should overthrow the kingdom of pride, and yet that there should remain in me the relics of pride! Consider all those night-sufferings of Christ; now was the season that all creatures should take their rest. All the night long Christ is tormented by thy sins. Not one jot of rest hath Christ, whom thou by the alarm of thy sins disquieted, both at evening, at midnight, and at the cock-crow, and at the dawning.

4. Consider the hurryings of Christ from Caiaphas to Pilate. Now he stands before Pilate, where he was accused of sedition and usurpation. Not only Jews, but Gentiles, have their hands imbrued in the blood of Christ: Pilate was delegated

from Caesar, yet not without a prophecy: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished; for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles.” At the Gentile tribunal, being questioned of his kingdom, he answers both the Jews and Gentiles, that they need not fear his usurpation: “My kingdom is not of this world.” He gives kingdoms that are eternal; but he will take away none that are temporal. Christ came not into the world to be Caesar’s, or Pilate’s, or Herod’s successor; but, if they had believed, to have been their Saviour. O that I could but condemn the world as Christ did! O that I could seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. O my soul, I feel it, unless I can be free from the affection of all creatures, I cannot with freedom of mind aspire unto divine things; unless I be willing with Christ to be despised and forsaken of all, I can have no inward peace, nor be spiritually enlightened, nor be wholly united unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Consider the hurryings of Jesus from Pilate to Herod. There is he questioned of many things, but justly is the Lamb of God dumb, and opened not his mouth; upon this he is mocked, and arrayed in a gorgeous robe. Wisdom is taken for folly, and the justifier of sinners for a sinner. See how he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation, that he might fill thee with goodness, and make thee wise unto salvation.

6. Consider the hurryings of Jesus from Herod back again to Pilate. O my Saviour, how art thou now abused! New accusations are forged; and when Pilate sees that nothing will do, but Christ must die, he delivers him to be stripped, whipped, clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, and sceptered with a reed. Who can number the stripes wherewith they tore his body, one wound eating into another! O my heart, how can I think of this without tears of blood! O joy of angels, and glory of saints, who hath thus defiled thee with so many bloody blows? Certainly they were not thy sins, but mine. Love was the cause why thou didst bestow upon me all thy benefits, and mercy moved thee to take upon thee all my miseries.

7. Consider that sad spectacle of Jesus, when he came forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saying unto them, "Behold the man!" O my soul, fix thy eyes on the sad object! Suppose thyself in the case of Jesus; what if in so sensible and tender a part as thy head is, men should fasten a number of thorns! Alas! thou canst hardly abide the prick of a pin, much less the piercing of so many thorns: O, but thy Jesus was crowned with thorns, and sceptered with a reed, and that reed was taken out of his hands to beat the crown of thorns into his head; thy Jesus was whipped with cords and rods; and being in this plight, thou art called to behold the man! Canst thou consider him at present, as if thou hadst a view of this

very man? Methinks it should make thee break out, and say, “O the brightness of thy Father’s glory, who hath thus cruelly dealt with thee? O unspotted glass of the majesty of God, who hath thus wholly disfigured thee? O river that flows out of the paradise of delights, who hath thus troubled thee? It is my sins, O Lord, that have so troubled thee: my sins were the thorns that pricked thee, the lashes that whipped thee, the purple that clothed thee: it is I, Lord, that am thy tormentor, and the very cause of these thy pains.”

8. Consider Pilate’s sentence, that Jesus should be crucified as the Jews required.

Now they had him in their will, and they did to him what seemed them good.

Follow him from Gabbatha to Golgotha. See how they lay the heavy cross upon his tender shoulders, that were so rent and torn with whips. Accompany him all the way to the execution, and help to carry his cross to mount Calvary; and there see him lifted up on that engine of torture, the bloody cross: he hangs on nails, and as he hangs, his own weight becomes his affliction. O see how his arms and legs were racked with violent pulls, his hands and feet bored with nails, his whole body torn with stripes, and gored with blood. And now, O my soul, run with all thy might into his arms, held out at their full length to receive thee. O weigh the matter!

Because sin entered by the senses, therefore the head, in which the senses flourished, is crowned with searching thorns; because the hands and feet are more

especially the instruments of sin, therefore his hands and feet are nailed to the cross for satisfaction. Be enlarged, O my thoughts, and consider it, and consider it again.

9. Consider the darkness that spread over all the earth. Now was the sun ashamed to show his brightness, considering that the Father of lights was darkened with such disgrace: the heavens discoloured their beauty, and are in mourning robes: the lamp of heaven is immantled with a miraculous eclipse. The sun in the firmament will sympathize with the Sun of righteousness. It will not appear in glory, though it be mid-day, because the Lord of glory is thus disgraced. And now hear the voice that comes from the Son of God, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Christ, in the garden, tasted the bitter cup of God’s fierce wrath, but now he drunk the dregs of it. O but what’s the meaning of this; “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Surely, 1. This was not a perpetual, but a temporary forsaking. The godhead was not taken away from the manhood, but the union remained still, even now when the manhood was forsaken. 2. This was not a forsaking on Christ’s part, but only on the Father’s part; the Father forsook Christ, but Christ went after him. God took away the sense of his love; but the Son of God laid hold upon him, crying, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” 3. This forsaking was not in respect of his being, but in respect of the feeling of God’s favour, love, and mercy. Certainly God loved him still; but his sense of comfort was now quite gone,

so as it never was before. In his agony there was now and then some little flash of lightning to cheer him; but now all the sense and feeling of God's love was gone. Christ now took the place of sinners, and God the Father shut him out, as it were, amongst the sinners; he drew his mercy out of sight, and therefore he cried out in a kind of wonder, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After this he speaks but a few words more, and gives up the ghost. He dies, that we might live; he is dissolved himself, that we might be united to his Father. O my soul, see him now, if thou canst for weeping; his eyes are dim, his cheeks are wan, his face is pale, his head is bowing, his heart is panting, himself is dying. Come, and die with him by mortification. Look pale, like him, with grief and sorrow, and trouble for thy sins.

10. Consider the piercing of his side with a spear, whence came out a stream of blood and water. O fountain of everlasting waters! Methinks I see the blood running out of his side more freshly than those streams which ran out of the garden of Eden, and watered the whole world. Consider the taking of his body down by Joseph, the burying of it by Joseph and Nicodemus. O my spirit, go with me a little! Christ being dead, it is pity but he should have a funeral. According to the letter, let Joseph and Nicodemus bear his corpse; let the blessed Virgin go after it sighing and weeping, and at every other place looking up to heaven; let Mary

Magdalen follow after with precious ointment, and with her hair hanging, ready, if need were, to wipe his feet again. Now, let every sinner, according to the nature of his sin, draw something from the passion of Christ to the mortifying of his sin; yea, let all turn mourners; let all bow their heads, and be ready to give up the ghost for the name of Christ. O my soul, that thou wouldst thus meditate, and thus imitate, that so thy meditation might be fruitful, and thy imitation real; I mean, that thy life and death might be conformable to the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect

Let us desire Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation in his death. Indeed nothing doth so cool and refresh a parched and thirsty soul, as the blood of Jesus; which made the poor woman cry out so earnestly, "I have an husband, and children, and many other comforts, but I would give them all, and all the good that ever I shall see in this world, or in the world to come, to have my poor thirsty soul refreshed with that precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."

But what is there in Christ's blood or death that is so desirable? I answer,

1. There is in it the person of Christ, he that is God-man, “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” It is he that died; every drop of his blood was not only the blood of an innocent man, but of one that was God as well as man. God with his own blood purchased the church. Now surely everything of God is desirable.

2. There is in it a worth. Christ considered under the notion of a sacrifice, is of infinite worth. No wealth in heaven or earth besides this, could redeem one soul; and therefore the apostle sets this against all corruptible things, as silver and gold, the things so much set by amongst the men of this world: “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

3. There is in it a merit and satisfaction. The scripture doth not expressly use these words, but it hath the sense and meaning of them; as in that text, “He hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood.” The very words, *redeeming* and *buying*, plainly demonstrate, that a satisfaction was given to God by the death of Jesus; He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us. – “Ye are bought with a price.” And what price was that? Why, his own blood; “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood”; that is, by thy death

and passion. This was the *λυτρον*, that ransom which Christ gave: “The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many”; or, as the apostle, “He gave himself a ransom for all”: the word is here *αντιλυτρον*, which signifies an adequate price, or a counter-price; as when one doth or undergoeth some thing in the room of another; as when one yields himself a captive for the redeeming of another out of captivity, or gives up his own life for the saving of another man’s life; so Christ gave himself *αντιλυτρον*, a ransom, or counter-price, submitting himself to the like punishment, that his redeemed ones should have undergone.

4. There is in it not only a true, but a copious and full satisfaction. Christ’s death and blood is superabundant to our sins: The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, 1 Tim. i. 14, *υπερεπλεονασε*, it was over full, redundant, more than enough. Many an humble soul is apt to complain, “O if I had not been so great a sinner, there might have been hope.” This is to undervalue Christ’s redemption, this is to think there is more in sin to damn, than in Christ’s sufferings to save: whereas all thy sins to Christ, are but as a little cloud to the glorious sun; yea, all the sins of all the men in the world, are but, to Christ’s merits, as a drop to the ocean.

5. There is in it remission of sins, so saith Christ: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Remission of sins is attributed to Christ's death as a cause; it is not thy tears or prayers, or rending of heart, that could pay the least farthing: "Without shedding of blood," saith the apostle, "there is no remission." God will have tears, and blood also, though not for the same purpose; for all thy tears, thou must fly to Christ only as the cause: it is true thou must mourn, and pray, and humble thyself, but it is Christ's blood only that can wash us clean. O remember this! God will not pardon without satisfaction by the blood of Christ. And surely this makes Christ's death so desirable: "O, my sins afflict me," cries many a one; "O I am loathsome in my own eyes, much more in God's; surely God is offended with my dullness, slothfulness, and my thousand imperfections; I am all the day long entangled with sin." But let this contrite spirit look on Christ's death, and therein he may find all sin is pardoned. See here what an argument is put into thy mouth, from these sufferings of Christ; well mayest thou say, "O Lord, I am unworthy, but it is just and right that Christ obtain what he died for; O pardon my sins for his death's sake, and for his precious blood's sake."

6. There is in it reconciliation and peace with God. "In Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition

between us.” -- “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” -- This certainly should support the drooping soul; it may be thou criest, “My sins have made a breach betwixt God and my soul; I have warred against heaven, and now God wars against me; and O what odds! if the Lord be angry, yea, but a little, what will become of my poor soul? Is stubble able to contend with the consuming fire? How then shall I contend with God?” But come and look on Christ’s death, as the means and meritorious cause of reconciliation; and thou canst not but say, “O, this death is desirable!” When God the Father looks at a sinner in the bloody glass of Christ, then saith God, “Fury is not in me, I have no more controversy with this soul: seeing Christ hath suffered, it is enough, I have as much as my justice can demand, my frowns are now turned into smiles.” Why, this is it that makes Christ’s death and blood so desirable to the soul; what shall Jacob so rejoice in seeing Esau’s face altered to him? shall he say to Esau, “I have seen thy face, as the face of God”? How much rather may the humble and believing sinner be filled with gladness, when God, through Christ’s blood, shall be thus appeased and reconciled with him!

There is in it a blessed virtue to open heaven, and to make passage thither for our souls, liberty “to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” It is the blood of Christ that rends the veil, and makes a way into the holy of holies, that is, into the

kingdom of heaven. Without this blood, there is no access to God. It is only by the blood of Christ, that heaven is open to our prayers, and that heaven is open to our persons: this blood is that key that unlocks heaven, and lets in the souls of his redeemed ones. “And I looked,” saith John, “and behold a door was open in heaven, and the first voice I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither”; and no sooner was he in the spirit, and entered in, but he heard the new song: “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.”

Come now, and gather in all these particulars; there is in Christ’s blood, the person of Christ, the price of souls, a merit and satisfaction, a copious and full satisfaction, remission of sins, reconciliation with God, a passage into glory; I might add all other privileges, benefits, dignities of the soul, for they all flow from the blood of Jesus, and they are all contained, either expressly or virtually, in the blood of Jesus; and is not all this worth the looking after? O my soul, where is thy languor and fainting towards this blessed object? When David desired strongly God’s law, he expressed his longings, by the breaking and fainting of his soul: “My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgments at all times”; -- “and my soul fainteth for thy salvation.” O where be these breakings and faintings? Strength of desire, is expressed by the apostle, by groaning, which is the language of sickness. O where

be these groanings after Christ's death? When I call to mind that Christ's death is my ransom, that Christ's stripes are my cures, that Christ's blood is my fountain to wash in, and to be clean; how should I but pray in this sense, "His blood be upon us, and on our children!" O, I am undone, except I have a share in this blood! It is only this fountain, that can quench my thirst; and now I have seen the fountain opened, how should I but thirst, and cry out with the woman of Samaria, "O give me this water, that I may thirst no more!" But alas, I say it, I only say it. O that I could feel it! O my Jesus, that thou wouldst breed in me ardent desires, vehement longings, unutterable groans, mighty gaspings. When my spirit is in right frame, I feel some desires after Christ's blood; but how short are these desires, how unworthy of the things desired! Come, Lord, kindle in me hot, burning desires, and then give me the desirable object.

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

Let us hope in Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation, in his sufferings and death. By this hope, I intend only that which the apostle calls *full assurance of hope*. It is not every hope that is a well-grounded hope; that we may discern that the grounds of our hope in Christ's death are not false, I shall lay down these signs:

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1. If Christ's death be mine, then is that great end of his death accomplished in me; viz. "By the sacrifice of himself he hath put away sin," even my sin; -- and, "in him I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." As on this account he suffered, "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity"; so if his death be mine, I may assuredly say, "My sins are pardoned, and mine iniquities are done away." Come then, and try by this sign, canst thou assure thyself that thy sins are forgiven thee? hast thou heard the whisper of God's spirit, "Son, or daughter, be of good comfort, thy sins are remitted"? there is no question then, but thou art redeemed by his blood, thou hast part in his sufferings.

2. If Christ's death be mine, then am I made conformable to Christ in his death. The same that was done to Christ in a natural way, is done in the believer in a spiritual way; that is, as Christ died, so the believer dies; as Christ died for sin, so the believer dies to sin: "In that he died, he died unto sin," -- "Likewise reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin." Observe here the analogy and resemblance betwixt Christ and us; both die unto sin; Christ by way of expiation, for the sins of others; we by the way of mortification, and crucifying our sins. I look upon this sign as the very touchstone of a Christian.

Two questions I suppose needful, to resolve the grounds of our hope concerning our interest in the death of Christ.

1. Whether in truth our sins are mortified?

2. Whether we grow in mortification?

For the first: whether in truth our sins are mortified, it is a skill worth our learning, because of the many deceits that are within us; sin may seem to be mortified when the occasion is removed; or, when it is not violent, but quiet; when it is but removed from one sin unto another; or, when the sap and strength of sin is dead: as the lamp goes out, when either the oil is not supplied, or taken away. Now that in this scrutiny we may search to the bottom, and know the truth of our mortification, it will appear by these rules:

1. True mortification springs from a root of faith. If we can make out, that we believe in Christ for life and salvation, and that now we feel in us the decay of sin, we may conclude from the cause, that this decay of sin is true mortification: it is a blessed effect arising from a right cause.

2. True mortification is general; not only one sin, but all sins are mortified in a true believer. As death is unto the members of the body, so is mortification unto the members of sin; now death seizeth upon every member, it leaves not life in any one member of the body; so neither doth mortification leave life in any one member of sin. It is good to observe the degrees of mortification: The first is, to forbear the practice of gross sins, in word and deed. The second is, to deny consent and will to all frailties and infirmities. The third is, to be free from any liking of any evil motion; not only to deny consent, but also to deny the very thought or imagination. If when these motions first arise, we presently quench, reject, detest, and cast them away from us; therein is true mortification.

2d. Whether we grow in our mortification? True mortification is that which grows. Now the growth of our mortification will appear by these following signs: --

1. Growing mortification hath its chief conflicts in spiritual lusts. At first we mortify grosser evils; but when we grow in this blessed duty, we then set ourselves against spiritual wickedness; as pride, presumption, self-confidence. This method the apostle sets down; "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and

spirit.” First, from all filthiness of the flesh or body, and then from all filthiness of the spirit.

2. Growing mortification is constant, lasting, durable. When there is in the heart a sudden flowing and reflowing, it comes from those vast seas of corruption that are within us: in this case, mortification is very weak. But on the contrary, if we find our standing more firm and sure, if for the main we walk evenly, and keep closely to the Lord; it carries with it an evidence that our mortification grows.

3. Growing mortification feels lust more weak, and the spirit more strong in its ordinary actings. Suppose it be a lust or fancy, it cannot boil up to gross fancies as it was wont; or, suppose it be pride, it boils not up to such a spirit of pride as formerly; instead of bringing forth fruit, it now brings forth blossoms; or, instead of bringing forth blossoms, it now brings forth nothing but leaves: this is a sign that this lust is withering more and more; when the waters abate, and overflow less ground, we may conclude, that mortification grows.

4. Growing mortification hath more ability to abstain from the very occasions and beginnings of lust. When a man cannot endure to come where such a one is that he loves not, when he cannot endure the sight of him, or any thing that puts him in

mind of him, not so much as to parley or speak with him; this is a sign of strong hatred: and so when a man hates the very garment spotted with the flesh, here's a good sign.

O my soul, try now the growth of thy mortification by these signs: hast thou overcome grosser sins, and is now thy chief conflict with spiritual wickednesses? Is thy standing and walking with God more close, and even, and constant, than sometimes it hath been? Is thy lust more weak, and thy grace more strong, in ordinary actings? Hast thou now more ability to quench the flame of sin in the very spark, to abstain from sin in its first motion? Why, then is the promise accomplished, "He will subdue our iniquities": surely thou art a growing Christian; thou hast fellowship with Christ in his sufferings; thy ground is solid, firm, and stable; thy hope hath foundation, and thou mayest build upon it, that Christ's death and sufferings are thine, even thine.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

Let us believe in Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation during his sufferings and death. Everyone looks upon this as an easy duty; only the humble soul cries out, "O what a hard thing is it, considering my enmity against Christ, to

believe that Christ died for me, that he gave himself to the death, even to the death of the cross, for my soul!”

Trembling soul! throw not away thyself by unbelief. It may be thou wouldst not die for an enemy, an irreconcilable enemy; but are not the mercies of God above all the mercies of men? Look on Jesus as lifted up, and then look at the end and meaning; why was Jesus thus lifted up?

1. One design of Christ’s death, was to redeem us from the slavery of death and hell. We were carnal, “sold under sin”; whereupon the law seized on us, locked us up, as it were, in a dungeon; yea, the sentence passed, and we but waited for execution. Now, to get us rid from this dismal, damnable estate, Christ himself is made under the law, that he might redeem us: not by way of entreaty; that would not serve the turn. Sold we were, and bought we must be, it was a matter of redemption: but with what must we be redeemed? “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” His precious blood was the price we stood him in; which he paid when he gave his life a ransom for many. The case stood thus betwixt Christ and us in this point of redemption; we all, like a company of malefactors, were ready to be executed. Now, what said Christ to this? “I will suffer that which they should suffer; I will

take upon me their execution, upon condition I may redeem them.” Now this he did at his death, and this was the end why he died, that by his death we might be redeemed from death and hell.

2. Another design of Christ’s death, was to mortify our members which are upon the earth. Not only would he remit sin, but he would destroy it, kill it, crucify it; he would not have it “reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof.” This design the apostle sets out in these words, “He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness.” Christ, by his death, had not only a design to deliver us from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Paul was a mortified man, dead to the world, and dead to sin. But how came he so to be? Why, this he attributes to the cross, the death of Christ. The death of Jesus was the cause of this death in Paul: “How much more shall the blood of Christ” – “purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?” There is in the death of Christ, first, a value, and, secondly, a virtue; the former is available to our justification, the latter to our sanctification. Now sanctification hath two parts, mortification and vivification: Christ’s death, or passive obedience, is more properly conducive to the one; his life, or active obedience, to the other.

O my soul, look to this: herein lies the pith and marrow of the death of Christ; and now if thou wilt but exercise thy faith in this respect, how mightest thou draw the virtue of his death into thy soul? But here's a question, How should I manage my faith, to draw down the virtue of Christ's death, and so to feel the virtue of Christ's death in my soul, mortifying, crucifying, and killing sin?

I answer, 1. In prayer, meditation, self-examination, and receiving of the Lord's supper. I must propound to myself the Lord Jesus Christ, as having undertaken and performed that painful work of suffering even unto death, yea, that of the cross. 2. I must look upon those grievous, painful, shameful sufferings of Christ as very strange and wonderful; but especially the spiritual part of his sufferings, viz. the sense and apprehension of God's forsaking and afflicting him in the day of his fierce anger. How should I but stand aghast at these so wonderful sufferings of Jesus Christ! 3. I must weigh and consider what it was that caused all this, viz. sin, yea, my sin; yea, this and that sin particularly. This comes nearer home, and from this I must now gather these several conclusions.

1. It was the design of Christ, by his sufferings, to give satisfaction to the infinite justice of God for sin. 2. it was intended to give the world a most eminent

demonstration of the odiousness and execrableness of sin. 3. It holds forth, as sin is horrid in itself, so it cannot but be exceeding grievous and offensive to Christ; it put him to all this pain. How then should it but offend him above anything in the world! 4. If therefore there be in me any spark of love towards Christ, or any likeness to Christ, or if I would have Christ bear any love unto me, it will absolutely behoove me by all means to loath sin, and cast it away from me; to root it up, to quit my hands, and to rid my heart of it. The truth is, I cannot possibly give forth a more pregnant proof of my sincere love to Christ, than by offering all violence, all holy severity, against sin for his sake.

Now when the heart is thus exercised, God, by his Spirit, will not fail to meet us; our desire and endeavor to weaken and kill sin in the soul is not without its reward; but especially when sin hath in this way, and by this means, lost the affection of the soul, and is brought into hatred and disesteem, it decays and dies of itself: so matters going thus and thus in the heart, the influence that should nourish sin is cut off, and it withers by degrees till it be finally destroyed.

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect

Let us love Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation during his sufferings and death. What! did he suffer and die? “Greater love than this hath no man, that a man should give his life for his friends.” – “But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Here’s an argument of love indeed; how should we but love him who thus loved us? In prosecution of this, I have no more to do, but first to show Christ’s love to us, and to exercise our love to him again.

1. For his love to us: it is worth our while to consider it in an holy meditation. -- Indeed, with what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold the Lord Jesus, who from everlasting was clothed with glory and majesty, now exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, persecution! But let them pass: into what ecstasies may I be cast, to see the Judge of all the world accused, judged, condemned! to see the Lord of life dying upon the tree of shame and curse! to see the eternal Son of God struggling with his Father’s wrath! to see him who had said, “I and my Father are one,” sweating drops of blood in his agony, and crying, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” O whither hath his love to mankind carried him? Had he only sent his creatures to serve us, had he only sent his prophets to advise us in the way to heaven; had he only sent his angels from his chamber of presence to attend us, and to minister to us, it had

been a great deal of mercy: or if it must be so, had Christ come down from heaven himself, only to visit us, or had he come only and wept over us, saying, “O that you had known, even in this your day, the things belonging to your peace! O that you had more considered my goodness! O that you had never sinned!” this would have been such a mercy as that all the world would have wondered at it: but that Christ himself should come, and lay down his life for his people; and yet I am not at the lowest, that he should not only part with life, but part with the sense and sweetness of God’s love, which is a thousand times better than life; that he should be content to be accursed, that we might be blessed; that he should be content to be forsaken, that we might not be forsaken; that he should be content to be condemned, that we might be acquitted: O what raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of this infinite mercy! Be thou swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love; and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this world.

Look upon him! He hangs on the cross all naked, torn, and bloody; betwixt heaven and earth; he hath a crown indeed, but such a one as few men will touch, none will take from him: his hair is all clotted with blood, his face all clouded with black and blue; he is all over pitifully rent, outwards, inwards, body and soul. I will think the rest: alas! had I the tongues of men and angels, I could not express it. O love more

deep than hell! O love more high than heaven! The brightest seraphims that burn in love, are but as sparkles to that mighty flame of love in the heart of Jesus.

2. If this be Christ's love to us, what is that love we owe to Christ! O now for a heart that might be some ways answerable to these mercies! O for a soul sick of love, yea, sick unto death! This only sickness is our health, this death our life; and not to be thus sick, is to be dead in sins and trespasses: why, surely I have heard enough, for which to love Christ forever. The depths of God's grace are bottomless, they pass our understanding, yet they recreate our hearts; they give matter of admiration, yet they are not devoid of consolation. O God, raise up our souls to thee; and if our spirits be too weak to know thee, make our affections ardent and sincere to love thee.

The whole gospel is no other thing than a motive to draw man to God by the force of God's love to man. In this sense the holy scriptures may be called the Book of true Love, seeing therein God both unfolds his love to us, and also binds our love to him; but of all the motives we may draw from Christ, and of all the arguments we may find in the gospel of Christ, there is none to this, the death of Christ, the blood of Jesus. Is not this such a love-letter as never was the like? Read the words, "For his great love wherewith he loved us," Eph. ii. 4. O consider it, is not this a

great love? Are not all mercies wrapt up in the blood of Christ? It may be thou hast riches, honours, friends, means; O but thank the blood of Christ for all thou hast. It may be thou hast grace, and that is better than corn, or wine, or oil! For this thank the blood of Jesus; surely it was the blood of Christ that did this for thee; thou wast a rebellious soul, thou hast a hard and filthy heart, but Christ's blood was the fountain opened, and it took away all sin and all uncleanness. Christ is in all, and Christ above all, and wilt thou not love him? O that all our words were words of love; and all our labor, labor of love; and all our thoughts, thoughts of love, -- that we might speak of love, and muse of love, and love this Christ, who hath first loved us, with all our heart, and soul, and might!

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his sufferings and death. What! hath Christ suffered for us? hath he drunk off all the cup of God's wrath, and left none for us? how should we but be cheered! Precious souls, why are you afraid? There is no death, no hell, "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." There is no divine justice for them to undergo, that have their share in this death of Christ. O the grace and mercy that is purchased by this means of Christ! O the waters of comfort that flow from the sufferings and obedience of Christ! Christ

was amazed, that we might be cheered; Christ was imprisoned, that we might be delivered; Christ was accused, that we might be acquitted; Christ was condemned, that we might be redeemed; Christ suffered his Father's wrath, that the victory might be ours, and that in the end we might see him face to face in glory. Is not here matter of joy? It may be, sin, and justice, and conscience, and death, and hell, may appear as enemies; but is there not enough in the blood of Christ to chase them away? Give me leave but to frame the objections of some doubting souls, and see whether Christ's death will not sufficiently answer them all.

1. One cries thus, "O! I know not what will become of me, my sins are ever before me: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' I have sinned against a most dear, and gracious, and merciful God and Father, in our Lord Jesus. O the aggravations of my sins! Are they not sins above measure sinful?"

It may be so, but the blood of Christ is "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." -- "And now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." -- As the scape-goat under the law had upon his head all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and so was "sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness"; so the Lord Jesus (of whom that goat was a

type) had all our iniquities laid upon him by God his Father, and bearing them, he took them away; “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!” He went away with them into the wilderness, or into the land of forgetfulness. See what comfort is here.

2. Another cries thus, “O! I know not what will become of me, I have transgressed the law, and it speaks terribly: ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’”

Say not so; for by the death of Christ, though the law be broken, yet the curse is removed. The apostle is clear; “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” He was made a curse for us; that is, the fruits and effects of God’s curse, the punishment due to sinners, the penal curse which justice required, was laid upon Christ, and by this means we are freed from the curse of the law. “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus”: the law is satisfied, and the bond is cancelled. O what comfort is this!

3. Another cries thus, “O! I know not what will become of me, I have offended justice; and what, shall I appeal from the seat of justice to the throne of grace! My

sins are gone before, and they are knocking at heaven-gates, and crying, Justice, Lord, on this sinner.”

By this death of Christ, free grace and justice are both thy friends. Thou needest not appeal from the court of justice to the mercy-seat. In this mystery of godliness there may be as much comfort in standing before the bar of justice, as at the mercy-seat. And yet I speak not against relying on God’s mercy for pardon; but what need we appeal from justice to mercy, when by faith we may tender the death of Christ, and so find acceptance with the justice of God itself? Come, and let me tell thee, if thou hast any share in the death of Christ, thou hast two tenures to hold thy pardon by, mercy and justice, free grace and righteousness; mercy in respect of thee, and justice in respect of Christ. Not only is free grace ready to acquit thee, but a full price is laid down to discharge thee of all thy sins: so that now when the prince of this world comes against thee, thou mayest say, “How can he accuse me, seeing Christ is my surety; seeing the bond hath been sued, and Christ Jesus would not leave one farthing unpaid?”

4. Another cries thus, “O! I know not what will become of me; I see death standing before me: O, this is he that is the king of fears, the inlet to all those plagues in another world, and die I must, there is no remedy: O! I startle, and am afraid of it.”

And why so? “It is Christ that died,” and by his death took away the sting of death. Come, meditate upon the death of Christ, and thou shalt find matter enough in his death, for the subduing of thy fears of death, both in the merit of it, in the effect of it, and in the end of it. 1. In the merit of it; Christ’s death is meritorious, and, in that respect, the writ of mortality is but to the saints a writ of ease, a passage into glory. 2. In the effect of it, Christ’s death is the conquest of death; Christ went down into the grave, that the grave, which was before a prison, might now be a thoroughfare, so that all his saints may with ease pass through, and sing, “O death, where is thy sting?” 3. In the end of it, Christ’s death, amongst other ends, aims at the ruin of him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime in bondage. Christ pursued this end in dying, to deliver thee from the fear of death; and if now thou fearest, thy fearing is a kind of making Christ’s death of none effect. O come, and with joy draw water out of this well of salvation!

Come then, and comfort yourselves, all believers, in this death of Christ; do you believe? Why then do you sit drooping? “What manner of communications are these that you have, as ye walk and are sad?” Away, disquietness of spirit; Christ is dead, that you might live; in this respect everything speaks comfort; God and men,

heaven and earth, angels and devils; the very justice of God is now your friend, and bids you go away comforted, for it is satisfied to the full; heaven itself waits on you, and keeps the doors open, that your souls may enter. O my soul, I see thou art poring on sin, on thy crimson sins, but I would have thee dwell on that crimson blood of Christ; it is the blood of sprinkling, it “speaks better things than the blood of Abel”; it cries for mercy, and pardon, and refreshing, and salvation: thy sins cry, Lord, do me justice against such a soul: but the blood of Christ hath another cry; I am abased, I have answered all. Methinks this should make thy heart leap for joy; it is the spiritual wine that makes merry the heart of man; and it is the voice of Christ to all his guests, “Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.”

Sect. VIII. -- Of Calling on Jesus in that respect

Let us call on Jesus, or on God the Father, in and through Jesus.

1. We must pray that all these transactions of Christ in his sufferings and death may be ours; if we direct our prayers immediately to Jesus Christ, let us tell him what pains he hath suffered for our sakes; and let us complain against ourselves, “O what shall we do, who by our sins have so tormented our dearest Lord? What contrition can be great enough, what tears sufficient, what hatred and detestation

equal to those sad and heavy sufferings of our Jesus?” And then let us pray, that he would pity us, and forgive us those sins wherewith we crucified him; that he would bestow on us the virtue of his death, that his wounds might heal us, his death might quicken us, and his blood might cleanse us from all our filth of sin; and lastly, that he would assure us that his death is ours; that he would persuade us, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, should be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. We must praise the Lord for all these sufferings of Christ. Hath he indeed suffered all these punishments for us? Then, what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? What shall we do for him, who hath done and suffered all these things? But especially, if we believe our part in the death of Christ; in all the virtues, benefits, victories, purchases, and privileges of his precious death; then what manifold cause of thankfulness and praise is here? Be enlarged, O my soul; sound forth the praises of thy Christ, tell all the world of that love of Christ, which flowed with his blood out of all his wounds into thy spirit; tune thy heart-strings aright, and keep concert with all the angels of heaven, and all his saints on earth; sing that psalm of John the divine: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from

our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

Let us conform to Jesus in respect of his sufferings and death: looking unto Jesus is effective of this. Come then, and let us look on Christ, and conform to Christ in this respect.

In this particular, I shall examine these queries; 1. Wherein we must conform? 2. What is the cause of this conformity? 3. What are the means of this conformity?

For the first, Wherein we must conform? I answer, In his graces, sufferings, and death.

1. In the graces that most eminently shined in his bitter passion; his life indeed was a gracious life, but his graces shined most clearly at his death: I shall instance in some of them.

(1.) His humility; that the most high God of God, should vouchsafe to be contemned, and less esteemed than Barabbas a murderer; that Christ should be crucified betwixt two thieves, as if he had been the ringleader of all malefactors; O what humility was this!

(2.) His patience; “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps”; -- “who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” O the patience of Christ!

(3.) His love; “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” This love is an exemplar of all love, it is the fire that should kindle all our sparks: “Be ye followers of God,” saith the apostle, “as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.” Some observe, that in the temple there were two altars, the brazen and the golden; the brazen altar was for bloody sacrifices, the golden altar was for the offering of incense: now the former was a type of Christ’s bloody offering upon the cross, the latter of Christ’s intercession for us in his glory; in regard of both, the

apostle tells that Christ gave himself both for an “offering and sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour unto God.” O what love was this!

(4.) His meekness; in all his passion, he showed not the least anger; he suffered himself to be carried like a sheep to the butchery, and “as a lamb before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter”: a lamb goes as quietly to the shambles, as if it were going to the fold: and so went Christ to his cross. O the meekness of Christ!

(5.) His obedience: “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” – “He sought not his own will, but the will of him that sent him.” There was a command that the Father laid on Christ from all eternity: “O my Son, my only begotten Son, thou must go down, and leave heaven, and empty thyself, and die the death, even the death of the cross, and go and bring up the fallen sons of Adam out of hell.” All which the Lord Jesus did in time; he was obedient to death, even to the death of the cross.

Now in all these graces we must conform to Christ. “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.” -- And, “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” It is as if Christ

had said, Mark the steps where I have trod, and follow me in humility, in patience, in love, in meekness, in obedience unto death.

We must conform to Christ in his sufferings, if he calls us to them; this was the apostle's prayer, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings": it was his desire that he might experimentally know what exceeding joy and comfort it was to suffer for Christ, and with Christ.

Concerning this, the other apostle speaks also, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." But the text that seems so pertinent, and yet so difficult, is that of Paul; "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." One would wonder how Paul should fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ: were Christ's sufferings imperfect, and must Paul add to them? no surely? "for by one offering, Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." I suppose this is the genuine meaning of the passage.

"Now rejoice I in my sufferings for you, whereby I fulfill the measure of these tribulations, which remain yet to be endured of Christ in his mystical body, which I do for the body's sake, not to satisfy for it, but to confirm it, to strengthen it, by my example in the gospel of Christ." The sufferings of Christ are either personal or general; his personal sufferings were those he endured in his own body, as

Mediator; which once forever he finished. His general sufferings are those which he endures in his mystical body, the church; as he is a member with the rest; and these are the sufferings Paul speaks of, and which Paul fills up.

But wherein is the conformity betwixt our sufferings, and the sufferings of Christ?

I answer:

1. Our sufferings have no conformity with Christ in these two things. 1. Not in the office of Christ's sufferings; for his were meritorious and satisfactory, ours only for edification. 2. Not in The weight and measure of Christ's sufferings; for his were such as would have pressed any other creature as low as hell.

2. Our sufferings must have conformity with Christ. 1. In the cause of them: Christ's sufferings were instrumentally from Satan and wicked men; we must look to suffer by the enemies of Christ, if we have any share in Christ. 2. In the manner of undergoing them; we must suffer with a proportion of that humility, and patience, and love, and meekness, and obedience, which Christ showed in his sufferings. 3. In respect of the issue of them; we must look upon Christ's issue, and expect it to be ours. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so enter

into glory?” -- And, “If so be that we suffer with Christ, we shall be glorified together with Christ,” – “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.”

By reason of this conformity, we have communion with Christ in all these particulars; as, 1. We have Christ’s strength to bear sufferings. 2. His victories to overcome sufferings. 3. His intercession to preserve us from falling away in sufferings. 4. His compassion to proportion our sufferings to the measure of strength which he hath given us. 5. His Spirit to draw in the same yoke with us, and to hold us under all sufferings, that we sink not. 6. His graces, to be more glorious by our sufferings; as a torch, when it is shaken, shines the brighter. 7. His crown to reward our sufferings, when we shall have tasted our measure of them.

O my soul! study this conformity, and be content with thy portion: yea, comfort thyself in, this condition of sufferings; must we not drink of our Saviour’s cup? Never wonder that thou art hated or persecuted of men: why, I tell thee, if Christ himself were now amongst us in the form of a servant, in that very condition that sometimes he was, and should convince men of their wickedness, as searchingly as sometimes he did, I verily think he would be the most hated man in all the world.

3. We must conform to Christ in his death, carrying in us a resemblance and representation of his death. But what death is this? I answer in a word, A death unto sin: so the apostle, “In that he died, he died unto sin”; -- “likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” There is a likeness between Christ’s death, and our death, in this respect; “we are planted together in the likeness of his death.” True mortification carries a resemblance of the death of Christ. As for instance,

1. Christ’s death was a voluntary death. “I lay down my life that I may take it again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Not all men on earth, nor all devils in hell, could have enforced Christ’s death, if he had not pleased: his death was a spontaneous act; so is our mortification. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power”: many may leave their sins against their wills; but this is not true mortification; it bears not in it the likeness of Christ’s death, for he died, willingly.

2. Christ’s death was a violent death; he died not naturally, but violently; “He was put to death in the flesh; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” So is our mortification, it is voluntary in respect of us, but violent in respect of sin: when a man lays violent hands on his sins; when he cuts them off, being yet in their

strength; when he pulls up those weeds before they wither in themselves, this is true mortification.

3. What is the cause of this conformity? I answer, The death of Christ.

1. It is a meritorious cause; Christ's death was of so great a price, that it deserved at God's hands our conformity to Christ: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that by his death he might sanctify it, and cleanse it"; -- "and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

2. It is an exemplary cause; "He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps." He died for us, leaving us an example that we should die to sin, as he died for sin.

3. It is an efficient cause, it works this conformity by a secret virtue issuing from it. Thus Christians are said to be "engrafted with Christ in the likeness of his death."

4. It is an impelling, or a moving cause, as all objects are; for objects have an attractive power. Christ crucified doth heal sin, beget grace, encourage to

sufferings by being looked upon with the eyes of faith; look unto Jesus, and the very sight of him will draw you after him. Christ crucified hath an attractive power. “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.”

5. What are the means of this conformity? I answer:

1. Go to the cross of Jesus Christ. It is not all our resolutions, promises, vows, endeavors, without this, that will effect our conformity to Christ in his death; no, this conformity is a fruit of the death of Christ, and therefore whosoever would have this work wrought in him, let him first have recourse to Christ’s cross.

2. Look up to him that hangs upon it, contemplate the death of Jesus Christ; consider seriously his bitter, shameful, painful sufferings. Much hath been said, only here draw it into some epitome: as, 1. Consider who he was. 2. What he suffered. 3. Why he suffered. 4. For whom he suffered. 5. For what end he suffered. 6. With what mind he suffered. Every one of these will make some discoveries either of his graces, or of his gracious actings in our behalf; and who can tell how far this very look may work on us to change us, and transform us into the image of Jesus Christ?

3. Let us humbly bewail our defect and inconformity, either to the graces, sufferings, or death of Christ. As thus: “Lo here the profound humility, wonderful patience, fervent love, admirable meekness, constant obedience, of Jesus Christ! These are the particulars to which I shall conform. But, O alas! what a wide distance is there betwixt me and them! Christ in his sufferings shined with graces, his graces appeared in his sufferings, like so many stars in a bright winter’s night; but how dim are the graces in my soul! His sorrows and sufferings were so great, that some think it dangerous to define them: but how poor, how little, are my sufferings for Jesus Christ! I have not yet resisted unto blood, and if I had, what were this in comparison of his sufferings! Christ in his sufferings died; his passive obedience was unto death, even to the death of the cross: he hung on the cross till he bowed his head and gave up the ghost; he died unto sin once; but, alas! how do I live in that for which he died? To this day my sin hath not given up the ghost; to this day the death of Christ is not the death of my sin; my sin is not yet crucified: O how unanswerable am I to Christ in all these respects!”

4. Let us quicken, provoke, and rouse up our souls to this conformity; let us set before them exciting arguments: *ex. gr.* The greatest glory that a Christian can attain to in this world, is to have a resemblance to Jesus Christ. Again, the more like we are to Christ, the better he is pleased with us. Again, A likeness to Christ in

his death, will cause a likeness to Christ in his glory: “if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” Thus let us quicken and provoke our souls to this conformity.

5. Let us pray to God that he will make us conformable to Jesus Christ. Is it grace we want? Let us beg of him, that of that fullness that is in Christ, we may in our measure receive grace for grace. Is it patience or joy in sufferings that we want? Let us beg of him, that as he hath promised, he will send us the Comforter, that we may follow Christ cheerfully, from his cross to his crown, from earth to heaven. Is it mortification our souls pant after? This indeed makes us most like to Christ in his sufferings and death; why then, pray we for this mortification.

6. Let us frequently return to our looking unto Jesus Christ, to our believing in Christ, as he was lifted up. There is something flowing into the soul, while it is acting faith on the death of Christ, which, for the rise, or the manner of its working, is beyond what tongue can speak, or pen can write, or pencil can delineate. Come then, if we would have grace, endure afflictions, die to sin, grow in mortification: let us again and again return to our duty of looking unto Jesus, or believing in Jesus, as he was lifted up.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, IN HIS RESURRECTION

BOOK VI

CHAP. I

Sect. I. -- Of the Time and Reasons of Christ's Resurrection

The sun, that went down in a ruddy cloud, is risen again with glorious beams. In this piece, as in the former, we shall first lay down the object, and then give directions how to look upon it.

The object is Jesus, carrying on the great work of man's salvation in his resurrection, and during the time of his abode on earth after his resurrection. Now in all the transactions of this time, I shall only take notice of these two things: 1. Of his resurrection. 2. Of his apparitions. First, he arose; and secondly, he shows himself that he was risen.

The scripture tells us, that he rose again the third day. In this point I shall observe these particulars. 1. When he arose. 2. Why he arose. 3. How he arose.

1. When he arose; it was the third day after his crucifying. Had he rose sooner, a doubt might have been of his dying.

2. Why he arose. We have these reasons:

(1.) That he might powerfully convince or confound his adversaries, notwithstanding their care, their watch, their seal, their making all as sure as possibly they could; at the very same time he told them before, he broke open the gates of death, and made the gates of brass to fly asunder.

(2.) That he might confirm the faith of all his followers. “If Christ be not risen your faith is vain,” saith the apostle. Christ’s resurrection both confirms our faith, as to his person, and to his office: for his person; this speaks him to be the eternal Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead: and as for his office, this speaks him to be the promised Messiah, The King and Saviour of his church.

(3.) That it might appear he had fully satisfied the justice of God for sin: so it was, that God laid the forfeiture of the bond on Christ; he arrested him, brought him to the goal, the grave, and there he was until the debt was paid to the uttermost farthing; and then, that it might clearly appear the bond was cancelled, he arose again from the dead.

(4.) That he might conquer sin, death, and the devil: and hence the apostle cries victory upon the occasion of Christ's resurrection: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now was the day that he spoiled principalities and powers, that he trode on the serpent's head, that he came upon him, took from him his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils.

(5.) That he might become "the first-fruits of them that slept." Christ is called the first-fruits in a double respect. 1. In respect of the day whereon he rose: Paul was an excellent critic, the very feast carried him to the word, as the day of his passion was the day of the passover; and the apostle thence could say, "Christ is our passover," 1 Cor. xv. 7. So the day of Christ's rising was the day of the first-fruits; and the apostle thence could say, "Christ is our first-fruits." Concerning this feast of the first-fruits, we read, Lev. xxii. 10, 11. It was their first harvest of their basest grain, barley; the full harvest of their best grain of wheat, was not until pentecost.

Now, upon this day, the morrow after the sabbath, the beginning of their first harvest, when the sheaf of their first-fruits was brought unto the priest, and waved before the Lord, Christ arose from the dead, and in this respect Paul calls him the “first-fruits of them that sleep,” of all the saints. He arose first on this day; for the full harvest is not till the general resurrection-day. 2. He is called the first-fruits in respect of them whom he there sanctified: for as an handful of the first-fruits sanctified the whole field of corn that was growing; so Jesus Christ, the first-fruits of the dead, sanctifies all those who are lying in the grave to rise again by his power, even when they are in the dust of death. “If Christ be not risen,” saith the apostle, “ye are yet in your sins.” – “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.”

(6.) That being formerly abased as a servant, and crucified as a sinner, he might thus be declared to be the Son of God, and exalted to be a Prince and Saviour; and so his name might be glorified of all the world. “He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It was of necessary consequence, that he that was so humbled, must be thus exalted: “therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death.” Of all the reasons of Christ’s

resurrection, we must look upon this as the main; for as he hath made all things for his own glory, “so Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father”; by the glory, or to the glory, or for the glory, of himself, and of his Father.

Sect. II. -- Of the Manner of Christ’s Resurrection

How he rose; the manner of his resurrection we may consider in these particulars:

1. That Christ rose again as a common person, he stood in our stead; Adam, we know, was reckoned before the fall as a common person, not standing singly for himself, but as representing all mankind to come of him; so Jesus Christ is reckoned to us, both before his death, and in his death, and after his death, as a common person; not living, dying, or rising again, singly, for himself, but as representing all the believers in the world. As among all the sheaves in the field, there was some one sheaf, that in the name of all the rest was lift up and waved before the Lord; so when all were dead, Christ as the first-fruits rose again from the dead. Let this ever be remembered, that Christ rose again as the first-fruits, as an head, as a common person.

2. That Christ rose again by his own power: this he meant when he said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” He saith not, Destroy you, and some other shall raise it up; no: but I, even I myself, will do it; yea, and by my own power: here is a plain argument of the divine nature of Christ, for none ever did, ever could do that, but God himself.

It is true that The Father raised him, and yet this contradicts not but that he raised up himself: “Whatsoever the Father doth, I do,” saith Christ. Christ’s resurrection is the invisible work of the blessed Trinity; it is a work common to all the three persons: there is but one power of the Father, and of the Son; so that of both it is true, the Father raised him, and the Son raised himself.

3. That Christ rose again with an earthquake: “And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.” The earth shook at his death, and now it trembles at his resurrection; plainly speaking that it could neither endure his suffering, nor hinder his rising.

4. That Christ rose again, “angels ministering to him.” “An angel came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sate upon it.” Christ’s power was not included in the grave, but extended to heaven, and to the hosts therein: however, The chief

priests and Pharisees conspired together to close him in the earth; they sealed the stone, and set a watch; yet, the angels of heaven are ready to wait on him as their sovereign Lord. An angel descended to roll away the stone: not that Christ was unable to do it himself; he shook the earth, and could not he lift a stone? O yes! but thus he would manifest his power, by declaring his power over the mighty angels; he need but to say unto his angel, Do this, and he doth it.

5. That Christ rose again accompanied with others: “And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” It may be the graves were opened when Christ was laid down in his grave, yet the spirits came not into the dead bodies till Christ’s resurrection; the text is plain, that they came not out of their graves until Christ was raised. “Christ is the beginning,” saith the apostle, “the first-born from the dead,” both in time and efficacy. 1. In time; he rose to eternal life the first of all men. 2. In respect of efficacy; Christ rose first, that by his power all the rest might rise. It is a question what became of those bodies which now rose: some think they died again; but it is more probable, that seeing they rose to manifest the quickening virtue of Christ’s resurrection, they were also glorified with Christ: and as they rose with Christ arising, so they ascended up into heaven with Christ ascending.

6. That Christ rose again with a true, perfect, incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, agile, and glorious body.

1. He had a true body, consisting of flesh, and blood, and bone; so he told his disciples when they supposed him a spirit: "Handle me, and see," said he, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." I know, this body, after his resurrection, was comparatively a spiritual body; yet for all that, he never laid aside the essential properties of a true body.

2. He had a perfect body: however he was cut and mangled before his death, yet after his resurrection all was perfect.

3. He had an incorruptible, immortal body. The apostle is express: "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Consonant hereunto is that of Christ; "I am he that liveth, and was dead! and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen."

4. He had a powerful body. Luther could say of the glorified saints, that they had a power so great as to toss the greatest mountains in the world like a ball, and

Anselm hath an expression not much unlike, “They have such a power, as they are able to shake the whole earth at their pleasure.” How much more could Christ cause that great earthquake at the rising of his body!

5. He had a spiritual body: it needed not meat, drink, or refreshings, as it did before; it is true, that the disciples “gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honey comb, and he took it, and did eat before them”; but this he did only to confirm their faith; he ate out of power, and not out of necessity.

6. He had an agile body: it was in his pleasure to move as well upwards as downwards, as it may appear by the ascension of his body into heaven; which was not caused by constraint, or by any violent motion, but a property agreeing to all bodies glorified. Augustine hath an expression concerning the glorified saints, “That they shall move to any place they will, and as soon as they will”; they shall move up and down like a thought; how much more may it be said of the body of Christ!

7. He had a glorious body: this appeared in his transfiguration, “when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light”; but especially after his resurrection and ascension, “when his head and his hair were white as snow, and

his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” It is true, that from his resurrection, until his ascension, his body appeared not thus glorious unto them that saw it: but whether his glory was delayed during his forty days’ abode upon earth, or whether he so far condescended for his disciples’ sake, as to keep in his glory, that it might not dazzle them, is hard to determine. I am apt to think, that in some sort he might draw in the beams of his glory, and yet that he was not entered into that fullness of glory, as after his ascension; and so some expound those words of Christ to Mary, “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father”; q. d. Fix not your thoughts so much upon my present condition, for I have not yet attained the highest pitch of my exaltation, nor shall I until I ascend unto my Father.

From this resurrection of Christ, how are we informed that Christ is the Son of God? Thus Paul speaks, “He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” – And how are we informed that Christ is Lord over all things? “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” -- And how are we informed that Christ rose again for us? “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.” -- And how are we informed that by his resurrection we are justified? “Who was delivered for our

offences, and was raised again for our justification”: and that by his resurrection at the last day we shall be raised; “for the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies”: and that by his resurrection finally we shall be saved; for after we are raised, “we shall never die any more, but be equal unto the angels, and be the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

Sect. III. -- Of the Arguments of Christ’s Resurrection

Christ after his passion shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs. And so he had need, to persuade men into the faith of so strange a truth; if we consult with primitive times, or latter times, never was matter carried on with more scruple, and slowness of belief, with more doubts and difficulties, than was this truth of Christ’s resurrection. Mary Magdalen saw it first, and reported it; “but they believed her not,” Mark xvi. 10. The two disciples that went to Emmaus, they saw it also, and reported it, but “they believed them not,” Luke xxiii. 37. Divers women together saw him, and came and told the disciples; but “their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed, them not,” Luke xxiv. 11. They all saw him, and even seeing him, “yet they believed not for joy, but wondered,” Luke xxiv. 41. When the wonder was over, and the rest told it but to one that happened to be absent, you know how peremptory he was: not he; “except he saw in his hands the print of the

nails, and put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hands into his side, he would not believe,” John xx. 25. -- In after-times the whole world stopt their ears at this report of the resurrection of Christ, it was with the Grecians at Athens a very scorn; “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked,” Acts xvii. 22. It was with Festus, the great Roman, a plain frenzy; Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, thou art besides thyself, much learning doth make thee mad,” Acts xxvi. 24. -- But come we to our own times, the resurrection of Christ is to this day as much opposed by Jews and Atheists, as any one article of our creed. And surely we had need to look to it; “for if Christ be not risen,” (as the apostle argues,) “then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain,” 1 Cor. xv. 14. “If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins; and they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished,” 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18. Of all the precious truths in the book of God, we had need to be well skilled in the defending this of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I mean not to enter into controversies; only I shall declare those clear demonstrations, that substantially prove Christ to have risen again; namely, the several apparitions that Christ made to others after his resurrection.

1. He appeared to Mary Magdalen apart. As a woman was the first instrument of death, so was a woman the first messenger of life.

2. He appeared to all the Marys together, as they returned homewards from the sepulchre: never any truly sought for Christy, but, with these women, they were sure to find Christ.

3. He appeared to Simon Peter alone; he first went into the sepulchre, and he first saw him that was raised thence.

4. He appeared to the two disciples journeying towards Emmaus: the name of the one was Cleopas; and probable it is the other was Luke, “who out of modesty concealed his own name,” saith Theophilact.

5. He appeared unto the ten apostles, when the doors were shut.

6. He appeared to all his disciples, and Thomas was with them; and then he showed them his wounds, to strengthen the weak faith of his wavering servants.

7. He appeared to Peter, and John, and James, and Nathaniel, and Didymus, and two other disciples, when they were a-fishing at the sea of Tiberias: there he proved the verity of his deity, by that miracle of the fishes; and the verity of his humanity, by eating meat with them.

8. He appeared unto more than five hundred brethren at once; of this we read not in the evangelists, but the apostle Paul records it.

9. He appeared unto James the brother of the Lord: *i.e.* the cousin-german of Christ according to the flesh; called James the Just, in regard of his upright life.

10. He appeared to the eleven disciples, on mount Tabor in Galilee. And this Matthew intimates, when Jesus bade the woman tell his brethren that he was risen, and that they should go into Galilee, and there they should see him; and accordingly in that mountain where Jesus had appointed them, they saw him, and worshipped him.

11. He appeared to all his apostles and disciples upon mount Olivet by Jerusalem, when in the presence of them all he ascended up into heaven.

12. He appeared unto Paul travelling unto Damascus.

My meaning is not to speak of all these apparitions in order, but of the most considerable.

Sect. IV. -- Of Christ's Apparition to Mary Magdalen

On the first day were many apparitions: but I shall speak only to one or two, as related by the evangelist John.

1. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalen apart: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalen, early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre": she came whilst it was yet dark; she departed from home before day, and by that time she came to the sepulchre, the sun was about to rise; thither come, she finds the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus gone: upon this she runs to Peter and John, and tells them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Then Peter and John ran to see; they looked into the sepulchre, and not finding the body there, they presently returned. By this time Mary Magdalen was

come back, and howsoever the disciples would not stay, yet she was resolved to abide by it, and to see the issue.

We find this apparition, for our farther assurance, compassed and set about with each needful circumstance: here is the time when, the place where, the persons to whom, the manner how, he appeared; together with the consequents after his apparition.

1. For the time when he appeared: “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning.” It was the first day of the week, the next day to their sabbath; and it was very early in the morning: the apparition was early, but Mary’s seeking Christ was so early, that it was yet dark: she sought him early whom she loved entirely; they that will not seek Christ until they have given over seeking other things, may justly fear to miss Christ.

2. For the place where he appeared: it was in the garden, where Christ was buried.

3. For the person to whom he appeared: it was Mary Magdalen; she that sometimes lived a sinful life, that was no better than a common courtesan, now is first up to seek our Saviour. Let never any despair of mercy. Her love to Christ appears at this

time: “But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping; and as she wept she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.”

(1.) Mary stood at the sepulchre; she stood by the grave of Christ; it signifies her great love: Mary chooseth Christ’s tomb for her best home, and his dead corpse for her chief comfort; having lost that light of the Sun of righteousness, she desired to dwell in darkness, in the shadow of death.

(2.) “But Mary stood at the sepulchre, weeping.” This was love indeed; see how every word is a degree of love. She cannot think of Jesus as lost, but she weeps; she weeps for having lost him whom she loved; at first she mourned for the departure of his soul out of his body, and now she laments the taking his body out of the grave.

(3.) “And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.” She did so weep as she did seek withal; her weeping hindered not her seeking: she sought, to what purpose? that Christ is not in the tomb, her own eyes have seen, the disciples’ hands have felt; and yet for all this she will be stooping down, and looking in; she would rather condemn her own eyes of error, she would rather suspect all testimonies for untrue, than not to look after him whom she had lost.

4. For the manner how he appeared; it was first by his angels, and secondly by himself.

(1.) There was an apparition of angels: she seeth “two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.” The apparition of angels was only a preparation to Christ’s apparition.

In this apparition we see further, a question and answer: the angels question Mary, “Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Here was the cause of Mary’s tears; she knew not whither to go to find any comfort; her Lord is gone, his life is gone, his soul is gone, his body is gone; yea, gone, and carried she knows not whither.

(2.) After this, Christ himself appears, but first as unknown, and then as known. 1. As unknown, “She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she supposing him to be the gardener,” &c. In this apparition of Christ unknown, I shall only take notice of Christ’s question, and Mary’s inquisition; his question is

in these words: “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” 1. “Why weepest thou?” As if he had said, There is no cause of weeping now; lo, I am risen from the dead, and become the first-born of them that sleep!

(3.) “Whom seekest thou?” She seeks Christ, and Christ asks her, “Woman, whom seekest thou?” A shower of tears comes betwixt her and him, and she cannot see him, or it may be, “her eyes were holden that she should not know him”; or it may be he appeared in some other shape, such as resembled the gardener, whom she took him for.

(4.) For Mary’s inquiry: “she, supposing him to be the gardener, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

Her words to Christ are not much unlike the answer she gave the angels; only she seems to speak more harsh to Christ, than she did to the angels: to them she complains of others; “They have taken away my Lord”; but to Christ she speaks as if she would charge him with the fact. But pardon love; as it fears where it needs not, so it suspects very often where it hath no cause: when love is at a loss, he, or any that comes but in our way, hath done it, hath taken him away.

Something she spoke now to Christ, which she had not mentioned to the angels. She said unto them, “Tell me where he is, and I will take him away”: there is no essay too hard for love; she speaks without fear, she promises without condition, she makes no exception, as if nothing were impossible that love suggesteth.

5. Christ appears as known: “Jesus saith unto her, Mary; she turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.” – “Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” She that hitherto had sought without finding, and wept without comfort, and called without answer, even to her Christ now appears; and at his apparition these passages are betwixt them: first, he speaks unto her, “Mary”; and then she replies unto him, “Rabboni, which is to say, Master.”

1. He speaks unto her; “Mary!” it was but a word, but O what life! what spirit! what quickening and reviving was in the word! the voice of Christ is powerful; “If the Spirit of Christ come alone with the word, it will rouse hearts, raise spirits, work wonders.” And at this word her tears are dried up; no more tears now, unless they be tears for joy. Observe the way how you may know the voice of Jesus Christ: if it be effectual, it usually singles a man out; yea, though it be generally spoken by a minister; yet the voice of Christ will speak particularly to the very heart of a man, with a marvellous kind of majesty and glory stampd upon it, and

shining in it. Take a broken, drooping spirit, he hears the free offer of grace, the precious promises of God in Christ; but he casts by all promises; but when the Lord comes in, he speaks particularly to his heart, he meets with all his objections, that he thinks, -- this is the Lord, and this is to me.

2. “She said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.” As she was ravished with his voice, so, impatient of delay, she takes his talk out of his mouth; and to his first and only word, she answered but one other, “Rabboni, which is to say, Master.” A wonder that in this verse but two words should pass betwixt them two; but some give this reason, that a sudden joy rousing all her passions, she could neither proceed in her own, nor give him leave to go forward in his speech.

3. For the consequents after this apparition, 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 to your Father, and to my God and your God.”

“Touch me not.” Mary is not satisfied to see her Lord, nor is she satisfied to hear her Lord, but she must touch him, embrace his feet; but on a sudden he checks her forwardness; as if he had said, O Mary, fix not thy thoughts so much upon my present condition, inasmuch as this is not the highest pitch of my exaltation; I am

not as yet attained to that, nor shall I attain to it until I ascend; the degrees of my exaltation are, 1. My resurrection. 2. My ascension. 3. My session at God's right hand; but that is not yet.

4. "But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God": this was the command of Christ; instead of touching him, she must go with a message to his apostles, and this was more beneficial both to her and them.

But what means he to speak of the ascension, when us yet we are but upon the resurrection? I suppose this was to prevent their mistake, who might have thought, if Christ be risen, then we shall have his company again, as heretofore: No, saith Christ, I am not risen to make any abode with you; my rising is in reference to my ascending.

But whither will he ascend? "To his Father and our Father; to his God and our God." O blessed message! This is the voice of a father to his son; "all that I have is thine." Now if this Father be also God, and if all that is God's be also ours, what can we desire more? But here's the question, whether his Father and God, be also ours? That he is Christ's Father, and Christ's God, is without all question: but that

his Father should be our Father, and that his God should be our God; this were a gospel indeed. O then what a gospel is this! “Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, that our relations and interests are all one; the same Father that is mine, is theirs; and the same God that is mine, is theirs.”

Sect. VI. -- Of Christ's Apparition to his ten Disciples

On this day some reckon five apparitions; but I shall now only take notice of the last. “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you; and when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his feet.” In these words we have the apparition of Christ, with all its circumstances.

As, 1. When he appeared.

2. Where he appeared.

3. To whom he appeared.

4. How he appeared.

So necessary was it to confirm this point, that not a needful circumstance must be wanting. And first is laid down the time; “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.”

1. It was the same day, that is, the very day of rising; the same day that he appeared to Peter, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, to the woman coming to the sepulchre, and to Mary Magdalen; the very same day he appears to the ten.

2. It was the same day at evening: both at morn, noon, and evening, Christ shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs. Early in the morning he appeared to Mary, and presently after to the three Marys, who touched his feet, and worshipped him. About noon he appeared to Simon Peter: in the afternoon he travelled with two of his disciples almost eight miles, to the castle of Emmaus; and in the evening of the same day, he returned invisible from Emmaus to Jerusalem. At all times of the day, Christ is prepared, and preparing grace for his people.

3. It was the same day at evening, “being the first of the week.” When Joseph showed himself unto his brethren, he would not do it at first, and yet he dealt very kindly with them: but Christ’s kindness is far above Joseph’s; for on the first day of the week, the very same day that he rose from the dead, he appears unto them.

4. The place is laid down in this passage, “where the disciples were assembled.”

The evangelist Luke speaks expressly, it was in Jerusalem; but in what house in Jerusalem, it is unknown; only some conjecture, that it was in the house of some disciple, wherein was an upper room; this upper room, according to the manner of their buildings at that time, was the most large and capacious of any other, and the most retired and free from disturbance. Christ came in when the doors were shut, either causing the doors to give place, the disciples not knowing how; or else altering the very substance of the doors, that his body might pass through them without destruction. I know not but he that thickens the waters to carry his body, might also attenuate the doors, to make way for his body.

5. The persons to whom he appeared, were his disciples; they that were shut up, not daring to step out of doors, for fear of the Jews. It is Christ’s usual course to appear to them who are full of fears and griefs, and most in dangers: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”

6. For the manner how he appeared: 1. “He stood in the midst.” 2. “He said, Peace be unto you.” 3. “He shewed them his hands and his side.”

(1.) “He stood in the midst.” O what comfort is here, to see Jesus Christ stand in the midst; now may the disciples behold him as their blessed peace-maker, their mediator, as one that hath slain the enmity; not only that enmity betwixt men and men, Jews and Gentiles, but also betwixt God and men. This he did by his death, and now he declares it at his resurrection; “having slain the enmity by his cross, he came and preached peace: Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.”

(2.) “He said, Peace be unto you.” A seasonable salutation; for now were the disciples in fear and trouble: they had no peace with God, or man, or with their own consciences; and therefore a more welcome news could not have come.

[1.] It speaks their peace with God. Sin was it that brought a difference betwixt God and man: now this difference Jesus Christ had taken away by his death: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This was the great design of Christ’s coming, to make peace betwixt God and man; his Father imposed this office upon him, and Jesus Christ undertook it, and discharged it, and he proclaims it, in the first place, to his disciples, “Peace be unto you.”

[2.] It speaks their peace with man. I know no reason why we should exclude civil peace out of Christ's wish; many a promise and precept we have in the word, scattered here and there, to this purpose: "And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid." – "Follow peace, and holiness, without which no man shall see God." "Orbem pacatem," was ever a clause in the prayers of the primitive church, that the world might be quiet; I am sure it is Christ's command. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

[3.] It speaks their peace among themselves, peace one with another; such is, or should be, the condition of the church. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is at unity within itself: the apostle dwells on this unity: "There is one body, and one spirit, and one hope, and one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." The church is a court, whose very pillars are peace. The building, or Christianity, knows no other material to work upon. If we look upon the church itself, "there is one body": if upon the very soul of it, "there is one spirit": if upon the endowment of it, "there is one hope": if upon the head of it, "there is one Lord": if upon the life of it, "there is one faith": if upon the door of it, "there is one baptism": if upon the father of it, "there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and

in you all.” It was sometimes Christ’s command unto his apostles, “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.” And as a blessed effect of this salutation, (for I look upon them as words full of virtue,) the apostles and churches of Christ kept a most sweet harmony: “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.”

[4.] It speaks peace within, peace of conscience. The apostles had exceedingly fallen from Christ; one betrayed him, and another denied him, all left him alone in the midst of his enemies; and yet to them he speaks, “Peace be unto you.” I know not a better ground for comfort of poor humbled sinners than this is: it may be you have dealt very unkindly with Jesus Christ, you have forsaken him, denied him, forsworn him; O but consider, all this hindered not Christ’s apparition to his apostles; he comes unexpected, and quiets their spirits: he stays not till they had sued to him for mercy, but of his, mere love he stills the waves, and calms their troubled spirits, working in them according to his word, “Peace be unto you.”

(3.) “He showed unto them his hands and his side.” I look upon this as a true and real manifestation of his resurrection; Christ’s body yet remaining on earth was not entered into that fullness of glory; and therefore he might then retain some scars or blemishes, to manifest the truth of his resurrection to his disciples. O the wonderful

condescensions of Christ! what helps doth he continually afford to beget in us faith! If we are ignorant, he instructs us; if we err, he reduceth us; if we sin, he corrects us; if we stand, he holds us up; if we fall, he lifts us up again; if we go, he leads us; if we come to him, he is ready to receive us; there is not a passage of Christ between him and his, but is an argument of love, and a means either of begetting or increasing faith.

CHAP. II

Sect. I. -- Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Resurrection

That in all respects we may look on Jesus, -- 1. Let us know Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his resurrection, and during the time of his abode upon the earth after his resurrection. This is worth the knowing: on it depends our justification, salvation; “for if Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins, and our faith is in vain, and our hope is in vain.” O my soul, study this point; many take it up in gross, they can run over this article of their creed, “The third day he rose

again from the dead"; but for a particular understanding of it, in respect of the time, or the end, or the manner, or the certainty, how many are to seek; I shall appeal to thyself; are not many discoveries already made, which before thou never tookest notice of? and if thou wouldst but study this point, how much more might yet appear! especially to thine own good; it is not enough to know Christ's resurrection, unless thou know it for thyself. Be sure thou hast this mind, that Christ rose again; but what is that to me? Saving knowledge is ever joined with a particular application; if Christ be my head, then he could not rise, but I rose with him, and in him: and thus, O my soul, look on Christ; and thus search into every particular of Christ's resurrection: come study when he rose; study the arguments that make out Christ's resurrection sure and certain; study all the apparitions of Jesus Christ; O what delightful studies are these! Hadst thou been with them to whom Christ appeared, would not thy heart have leaped with joy! Come, study it closely, for the benefits of these apparitions extend to thee. Know this for thyself.

Sect. II. -- Of considering Jesus in that respect

Let us consider Jesus carrying on this work of our salvation in his resurrection.

1. Consider the time when Christ rose again. As Christ had his three days, and no more; so must thou have the same three days like unto his: the first day was called the day of preparation; the second was the sabbath-day; and the third day was the resurrection day: so thy first day is a day of preparation, a day of passion, wherein thou must strive against sin and Satan, wherein thou must suffer all their darts until thou diest; and thy second day is a day of rest, wherein thy body must be in the grave, and thy flesh rest in hope; wherein thou shalt enter into peace, and rest in thy bed, until the trumpet sound, and bid thee arise, and come to judgment; and thy third day is a day of resurrection.

2. Consider the reasons why Christ arose; was it not to confound the Jews? They could not endure to hear of Christ's resurrection, and therefore when Peter and the other apostles spoke on that point, "they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them." Again, was it not to confirm the faith of Christ's followers? Until he was risen, their faith was weak; but after he had shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs, they could then cry out, My Lord and my God! Again, was it not to evidence that he had fully satisfied all our debts? The apostle tells us, that Christ was our surety; at his death he was arrested, and cast into prison, whence he could not come till all was paid; and therefore to hear that Christ is risen, is a clear evidence that God is satisfied. Again, was it not to conquer sin, death, and the

devil? Now he took from death his sting, and from hell its standard; now he seized upon the handwriting that was against us, and nailed it to his cross; now he spoiled principalities and powers, and carried away the keys of death and hell; now he came out of the grave as a mighty conqueror, saying, as Deborah did in her song, “O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength, thou hast marched valiantly.” Again, was it not to become the first-fruits of them that slept? Christ was the first that rose again to die no more; and by virtue of his resurrection (as being the first-fruits) we must rise again: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”; -- “every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, and afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Again, was it not that he might be declared to be the Son of God? Was it not that he might be exalted and glorified? This is the main reason of all; see thou to this! O give him the glory of his resurrection; so meditate, and consider on this transaction, as to ascribe to his name all honour and glory. What, is he risen from the dead? Hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name? O then let every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. Consider the manner of Christ’s resurrection. 1. He arose as a common person; in which respect his resurrection concerns us no less than himself. We must not think that when Christ was raised, it was no more than when Lazarus was raised;

his resurrection was the resurrection of us all; it was in the name of us all, and had in it a seed-like virtue, to work the resurrection of us all. -- 2. He rose by his own power; and so did none but Jesus Christ from the beginning of the world. O my soul, he was able to raise himself, much more is he able to raise thee up, 3. He rose with an earthquake: O the power of Christ! What ailed thee, O earth, to skip like a ram! "The Lord reigneth, and therefore the earth is moved." O what a rocky heart is mine! How much harder than that rock that moves not, melts not, at the presence of God, the presence of the God of Jacob.

4. An angel ministered to him at his resurrection: "An angel came, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Angels were the first ministers of the gospel, the first preachers of Christ's resurrection; they preached more of Christ than all the prophets did: they first told the women that Christ was risen; and they did the first service to Christ at his resurrection, in rolling the stone from the door's mouth. O my soul, that thou wert but like these blessed angels! How is it that they are so forward in God's service, and thou art so backward? One day thou expectest to be equal with the angels, and art thou now so far behind them? -- Many of the bodies of the saints arose out of their graves at his resurrection; as the angels ministered, so the saints waited on him; look upon them as the fruit of Christ's resurrection, and as an earnest of thy own. -- Christ rose again with a true and

perfect body, with an incorruptible and powerful body, with a spiritual and agile body, with a glorious body, brighter than the sun in his utmost glory; and he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. O consider of it, until thou feelest the influence, and comest to the assurance, of this blessed change.

1. Consider the several apparitions of Jesus Christ.

2. Muse on his apparition to Mary Magdalen: O the grief before he appeared! and, O the joys when he appeared! -- 1. Before, she apprehended nothing, but that some or other had taken away her Lord: these were all the words she uttered; "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." -- 2. After he appeared, she was filled with joy: when nothing else would satisfy, Jesus himself appears. At first he is unknown, she takes him for the gardener; but within a while he utters a voice that opens both her ears and eyes: "And Jesus saith unto her, Mary." It was the sweetest sound that ever she heard; hereby the cloud is scattered, and the Sun of righteousness appears; this one word lightens her eyes and cheers her heart.

I know not in all the book of God a soul more depressed with sorrow, and lifted up with joy: O meditate on this! if Christ be absent, all is night; but if Christ appear, he turns all again into lightsome day.

3. Muse on his apparition to the ten disciples. “When the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, then came Jesus, and stood in the midst, saying to them, Peace be unto you.” Before his apparitions, sorrow and fear had possessed all their spirits; sometimes they walked abroad, and were sad; and sometimes they kept within, and shut the doors upon them, as being exceedingly afraid: in this condition Jesus Christ (that knows best the times and seasons of grace and comfort) comes and stands in the midst of their assembly; he comes in, they know not how; and no sooner is he in, but he salutes them, “Peace be unto you.”

This was the prime of all his wishes; no sooner is he risen, but he wisheth peace to all his apostles; no sooner meets he with them, but the very opening of his lips was with these words: they are the first words, at the first meeting, on the very first day. A sure sign that peace was in the heart of Jesus Christ; howsoever it is with us, peace or war, there is the commonweal where Christ is King, and there is nothing but peace. Come, examine: art thou, O my soul, a member of this body? a subject of this commonweal? Hath the influence of Christ’s peace (wrought and declared

at his resurrection) any force on thee? hast thou peace with God -- and peace within -- and peace without? Dost thou feel that ointment poured upon Aaron's head, and running down the skirts of his garments? Doth the spirit assure thee, that Christ the Prince of peace hath made peace and reconciliation betwixt God and thee? "O how beautiful upon the mountains would the feet of him be, that should publish peace, that should bring these good tidings, that thou art a citizen of that Jerusalem where God is King, and Christ the Prince of peace! where all the buildings are compact together, as a city that is at unity within itself."

Sect. III -- Of desiring Jesus in that respect

Let us desire Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his resurrection.

But what is there in Christ's resurrection, that should move our souls to desire it?

I answer, 1. Something in itself. 2. Something in reference to us.

1. There is something in itself. Had we but a view of the glory, dignity, and excellency of Christ, as raised from the dead, it would put us on this heavenly motion; we should "fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat." The more excellent and

glorious any good is, the more eager should our desires be: now Christ raised from the dead is an excellent object; the resurrection of Christ is the glorifying of Christ; yea, his glorifying took its beginning at his blessed resurrection; now it was that “God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name.”

2. There is something in reference unto us; as, 1. He rose again for our justification. I must needs grant, that Christ’s death, and not his resurrection, is the meritorious cause of our justification; but on the other side, Christ’s resurrection, and not his death, is for the applying of our justification: as the stamp adds no virtue, nor matter of real value, to a piece of gold, but only it makes that value, which before it had, actually applicable and current unto us; so the resurrection of Christ was no part of the price or satisfaction which Christ made to God, yet is it that which applies all his merits, and makes them of force unto his members. “If Christ be not risen again, ye are yet in your sins, and your faith is in vain.”

Remission of sin (which is a part of our justification) though purchased by Christ’s death, yet could not be applied to us, or be made ours, without Christ’s resurrection; and in this respect, O how desirable it is!

3. He rose again for our sanctification. So the apostle, “He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together with Christ.” If you would

know how you that were blind in heart, uncircumcised in spirit, utterly unacquainted with the life of God, are now light in the Lord, affecting heavenly things, walking in righteousness; it comes from this blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ: “we are quickened with Christ,” it is Christ’s resurrection that raised our souls. Whence “reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the end of Christ’s resurrection, that we should be new creatures, of new lives, new principles, new conversations; he rose again for our sanctification.

4. He rose again for our resurrection to eternal life: Christ is the pattern, and pledge, and cause of the resurrection of our bodies; “for since by sin came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” There is a virtue flowing from Christ to his saints, by which they shall be raised up at the latter day: not but that all the wicked shall be raised again by the power of Christ, as he is a Judge; for “all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and they shall come forth”; yet with this difference, “they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

5. He rose again for the assurance of our justification, sanctification, and salvation. This is the reason why the apostle useth these words to prove the resurrection of

Christ, “I will give you the sure mercies of David”: none of God’s mercies had been sure to us, if Christ had not risen again from the dead. But now all is made sure; his work of redemption being fully finished, the mercy which thereupon depended, was now made certain, (and as the apostle speaks) “sure unto all the seed.”

Methinks a thought of this object, in respect of itself, and in respect of us, should put our souls into a longing frame. Is it not a desirable thing to see the King in his beauty? If Christ incarnate was the desire of nations, how much more is Christ in glory! If it was Augustin’s great wish to have seen Christ in the flesh, how should we wish to see Christ risen from the dead? In this consideration we cannot fathom the thousand thousandth part of the worth and excellency of Jesus Christ. Or if Christ’s resurrection in itself will not stir up our desires, is it not desirable in reference unto us? What, that he should rise again for our justification! That by virtue of his resurrection, thy soul should appear righteous before the judgment-seat of God! O my soul, that thy portion may be with theirs who have right and title to this blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ! O that thou wert on the wing in thy desires after Christ! O that feelingly thou knewest him, and the power of his resurrection! that thou wert resolved to give no sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, until thou couldst say, Christ’s resurrection is mine!

Sect. IV. -- Of hoping in Jesus in that respect

Let us hope in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his resurrection. We may examine the firmness of our hope in Christ's resurrection by these signs:

1. If Christ's resurrection be mine, then is Christ's death mine; the fruits or effects of Christ's death and resurrection cannot be severed; "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

2. If Christ's resurrection be mine, then is Christ's spirit mine, yea, then I am quickened by the Spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his": -- "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies," (and I may add, your immortal souls,) "by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Christ's Spirit (if Christ's resurrection be ours) will have the same effect in our souls, that it had in his body; as it raised up the one, so it will raise up the other; as it quickened the one, so it will quicken the other: but how shall we know whether

we have received this quickening Spirit? Many pretend to the Spirit, but how may we be assured that the Spirit is ours? I answer,

(1.) The Spirit is a Spirit of illumination; here is the beginning of his work, he begins in light; as in the first creation, the first-born of God's works was light.

“And God said, Let there be light, and there was light”; so in this new creation, the first work is light; “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.” There is a light in the mind, and a light in the heart, of those who have the Spirit of Christ; not only to know the truth, but to love it, believe it, embrace it. Consider whether any of this new light of Jesus Christ hath shined into thy heart; take heed, deceive not thyself, thou mayest have a great deal of wit and knowledge, and yet go to hell; this light is a light shining into thy heart; this light is a Christ-discovering light; this light is a sin-discovering light; this light will cause thee to find thy hypocrisy, deadness, dullness in spiritual duties; if thou hast not this light, thou art near to eternal burnings: darkness is one of the properties of hell, and without this light, inward darkness will lead to utter darkness, where is “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

(2.) Thy quickening spirit is a spirit of sanctification; such was the Spirit whereby Christ was raised. “He was declared mightily to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection from the dead.” That Spirit which raised up Jesus Christ, was the same Spirit which sanctified his human nature: and such is that quickening Spirit to all in whom it dwelleth; it is a Spirit of holiness, and it works holiness, changing the heart, and turning the bent of it from sin to holiness. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” O my soul, try thyself by this sign; dost thou find such an inward change wrought in thy soul? Dost thou find the law of God a law of holiness written on thy heart? Dost thou find a law within thee contrary to the law of sin, commanding with authority that which is holy and good? If so, surely this is no other “but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”; or the law of this quickening Spirit, communicated from Christ unto the soul.

(3.) If Christ’s resurrection be mine, then am I planted together in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection; then I am made conformable to Christ in his resurrection: now if we would know wherein that resemblance is, the apostle tells us, “That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Our mortification is a resemblance of Christ’s death, and our vivification is a resemblance of Christ’s resurrection. In this ground

of our hope concerning our interest in the resurrection of Christ, I shall propound these questions:

1. Whether our souls are vivified?

2. Whether we grow in our vivification?

For the first, the truth of our vivification will appear by these rules:

(1.) True vivification is general, both in respect of us, and in respect of grace.

In respect of us, it is diffused throughout the whole man: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly,” saith the apostle. And, in respect of grace, it is in every grace. Indeed, some Christians are eminent in some graces; and some in others; some have more love, and some knowledge, and some more patience, and some more self-denial: but all that are true Christians have each of these graces in some measure: if vivification be true, there is a whole work of grace both in heart and life; as the light in the air runs through the whole hemisphere, so does grace run through the whole man.

(2.) True vivification is a new life acting upon a new principle of faith. “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Paul’s life is a spiritual life, and the spring of his life is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is essentially, fundamentally life itself; and by his incarnation, passion, resurrection, he is life for his saints; they live by him, and in him, and for him, and through him; he is the heart of their spiritual life. O my soul, dost thou live this life of faith on the Son of God? canst thou make use of Christ in every condition? dost thou look up to Jesus, and desirest no more good name, repute, or honour, than Christ will afford thee? or, in case of death, dost thou, like Stephen, resign thy soul to Christ? dost thou see death conquered in the resurrection of Christ? dost thou look beyond death? dost thou over-eye all things betwixt thee and glory? O the sweet of this life of faith on the Son of God! If thou knowest what this means, then mayest thou assure thyself of thy vivification.

(3.) True vivification is a new life acting upon a new principle of hope of glory. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” By Christ’s resurrection we have a lively hope of our resurrection unto glory: is not Christ our head? and if he be risen

to glory, shall not his members follow after him? Certainly there is but one life, one Spirit, one glory of Christ and his members: “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given unto them,” said Christ, The soul that is vivified, hath a lively hope of glory on several grounds. As, 1. Because of the promises of glory set down in the word; now on these promises hope fastens her anchor; if Christ hath promised, how should I but maintain a lively hope? 2. Because of the first-fruits of the Spirit; there are sometimes foretastes of the glory, drops of heaven poured into a soul; whence it comfortably concludes, -- if I have the earnest and first-fruits, surely in his time Jesus Christ will give the harvest. 3. Because of Christ’s resurrection unto glory: now he arose as a common person, and he went up into heaven as a common person; whence hope is lively, saying, Why should I doubt, seeing I am quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Christ, and am made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places? Try, O my soul, by this sign: art thou lively in the hope of glory? doth thy heart leap within at the thought of thy inheritance in heaven? In a lively fountain the waters will leap and sparkle; so if thy hope be lively, thou wilt have living joys, living speeches, living delights: amidst all thy afflictions thou wilt say, These will not endure for ever; I myself shall away ere long, glory will come at last. O the sweet of this life of hope! If thou feelest these stirrings, it is an argument of thy vivification.

(4.) True vivification acts all its duties upon a new principle of love to Christ; men not enlivened by Jesus Christ may do much, and go far in outward service, yea, they may come to suffering; and yet without love to Christ, all is lost, all comes to nothing. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels,” – “though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge,” – “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt, and have not love,” – “it profiteth me nothing.” But how may we know that all our actings are out of love to Jesus Christ? I answer,

1. If we act by the rule of Christ, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” – “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” – “If any man love me, he will keep my commandments.” He that loves Christ, will look upon every act, every service, every performance, whether it be according to the rule of Christ, and then on he goes with it.

2. If we act to the honour of Christ. We may pray, and hear, and preach, and act for ourselves, more than for the honour of Jesus Christ: while Christ showed miracles, and fed his followers to the full, they cried up Jesus, and none like Jesus; but when he pressed sincerity upon them, and preparation for suffering, “from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” It is no news for

men to fall off when their ends fail; only they that love Christ, look not at these outward things: and hence it is that in all their actings, they will carry on the design of the Father, in advancing the honour of the Son, whatever it cost them. O my soul, apply this to thyself; if thou livest the life of love, if in all thy actings, duties, services, thou art carried on with a principle of love to Jesus Christ, it is a sure sign of thy vivification.

For the second question, Whether we grow in our vivification? We may discover it thus:

1. We grow, when we are led on to the exercise of new graces; this the apostle calls adding one grace unto another: “Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” At first a Christian doth not exercise all graces; though all graces be planted in him, yet the exercise of them is not all at once: but, as wicked men are led on from one sin unto another, and so grow worse and worse; so good men are led from one grace to another; and so increase, tribulation working patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.

2. We grow when we find new degrees of the same grace; as, when love grows more fervent, when knowledge abounds, and hath a larger apprehension of spiritual things, when faith goes on to plerophory, or full assurance of faith. When godly sorrow proceeds from mourning for sin, as contrary to God's holiness, to mourn for it, as contrary to him who loves us; when obedience enlargeth its bounds, and we abound more and more in the work of the Lord. "I know thy works," said Christ to the church of Thyatira. "I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first."

3. We grow, when the fruits and duties we perform grow more ripe, more spiritual, and more to the honour of Christ: it may be we pray not more nor longer than sometimes we used; it may be our prayers have not more wit, or memory, than sometimes they had; yet they are more savoury, more spiritual, and more to Christ's honour, than sometimes they were. Now we must know, that one short prayer, put up in faith, with a broken heart, and aiming at the honour of Christ, argues more growth in grace, than prayers of a day long, and never so eloquent, without the like qualifications. In every duty we should look at their ends and aims; for if we debase ourselves, in the sense of our own vileness, and emptiness, and inability, and if we aim at God's honour, and praise, and glory, it is a good sign of

growth: we call this the spiritual part of duty, when it is from God, and through God, and to God.

4. We grow, when we are more rooted in Christ: so the apostle describes it, “a growing up unto him in all things.” Growth of grace, is usually expressed by the growing into Christ: “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” As if to grow in grace without him, were nothing, as indeed it is not. Philosophers, moral men, and others, may grow in virtues, but not in Christ. Come then, search and try whether we are more rooted in Christ: when a young plant is new set, the roots are a small depth in the earth, one may pull them up with his hands; but as the tree shooteth up in height, so it strikes the root deeper and deeper: so it is with us; we have not so firm and near a conjunction with Christ, at our first union; but the more we live with him, like good trees, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, the more we strike root downwards.

O my soul, try the growth of vivification by these few signs: Art thou led on to the exercises of new graces, adding grace to grace? dost thou find new degrees of the same grace? is thy love more hot, thy faith more firm? all thy boughs more laden and filled with the fruits of righteousness? are all thy duties more spiritual? are thy ends more raised to aim at God, to sanctify him, and to debase thyself? art thou

more rooted in Christ? in all thy duties, graces, and gracious actings, hast thou learnt habitually to say, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me? dost thou interest Christ more and more in all thou dost? dost thou know and affect Christ more and more? Come, search, try: it may be little winds have formerly shaken thee; but thy root is struck lower into Christ; and now thou art not so soon shaken with every wind; surely thy hope is well grounded, thou hast a part in Christ's resurrection.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

Let us believe in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his resurrection.

Scrupulous souls! throw not away your confidence; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? Was not satisfaction and justification, payment of debt, and discharge of bonds, required of him, and of necessity, for us! O believe! and that I may persuade to purpose, I shall lay down, as before; 1. Some directions; and, 2. Some encouragements of faith.

1. For directions of faith, in reference to Christ's resurrection, remember

(1.) Faith must directly go to Christ.

(2.) Faith must go to Christ, as God in the flesh.

(3.) Faith must go to Christ, as God in the flesh, made under the law.

(4.) Faith must go to Christ, not only as made under the directive part of the law by his life, but under the penal part by his death.

(5.) Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh, made under the directive and penal part of the law, and as quickened by the Spirit. “He was put to death in the flesh,” saith Peter, “and quickened by the Spirit.” And accordingly must be the method and order of our faith. After we have looked on Christ as dead in the flesh, we must go on to see him as quickened by the Spirit: “If Christ was not raised, or quickened,” saith the apostle, “your faith were in vain”; as if he had said, To believe in Christ as only in respect of his birth, life, death, and to go no farther, were but a vain faith; therefore all the sermons of the apostles represented Christ, not only as crucified, but as raised. This was the way of the apostles’ preaching; they told a history (I speak it with reverence) of one Jesus Christ, that was the Word of God, and that was become man, and how he was crucified at Jerusalem,

and how he was raised from the dead; and all this in a plain, simple, spiritual manner: and while they were telling those blessed truths, the Spirit fell upon the people, and they had faith wrought in them. Faith is not wrought so much in the way of ratiocination as by the Spirit of God coming upon the souls of the people, by the relation or representation of Jesus Christ to the soul. And this our Lord himself hints: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Come then, set we before us Christ raised; and in that respect, we must look up to Jesus.

(6.) Faith in going to Christ, as raised from the dead, is principally and mainly to look to the end of Christ in his resurrection; the very devils may believe the history of Christ’s resurrection, “they believe and tremble”; but the people of God are to look at the meaning of Christ, why he rose from the dead. 1. The supreme end was God’s glory, and that was the meaning of Christ’s prayer, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee”; with which agrees the apostle, “He rose again from the dead, to the glory of the Father.” 2. The subordinate ends were many: as, 1. That he might tread on the serpent’s head. 2. That he might destroy the works of the devil. 3. That he might be the first-fruits of them that sleep. 4. That he might assure our faith, that he is able to keep that which

we have committed to him against that day. 5. That he might be justified in the Spirit; as he was begotten in the womb by the Spirit; led up and down in the Spirit, offered up by the eternal Spirit, so he was raised from the dead by the Spirit, and justified in his spirit at his resurrection. Christ was under the greatest attainder that ever man was, he stood publicly charged with the guilt of a world of sins; and therefore he was raised up from the power of death, that he might be declared a righteous person. 6. That he might justify us: “As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all for condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came on all men unto justification.”

(7.) That he might beget us anew by his resurrection: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again” – “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And this he doth two ways: 1. As our pattern; “Like as Christ was raised from the dead,” – “even so we also should walk in newness of life”: and “likewise reckon ye yourselves to be alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” 2. As the efficient cause thereof: “For when we were dead in sin, he hath quickened us together with Christ; and ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” O the power of Christ’s resurrection! If we saw a man raised from the dead, how should we admire at such a wondrous power; but

the raising of one dead soul, is a greater work, than to raise a church-yard of dead bodies.

(8.) That he might sanctify us, which immediately follows the other: “But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” In our regeneration we are risen with Christ, it is the apostle’s argument: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above”; -- “set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.” As the death of Christ hath a special influence upon our mortification, so the resurrection of Christ hath a special influence on our vivification: “He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together with Christ.”

But how should I manage my faith, to draw down the virtue of Christ’s resurrection for my vivification? I answer: --

Go to the well-head; look into the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This one act contains in it these particulars; As, 1. That I must go out of myself, to something else; this is that check that lies upon that work of grace, to keep out pride, that faith sees the whole good of the soul in a principle extraneous, even the springs of Jesus.

2. That I must attribute wholly, freely, joyfully, all that I am, to Jesus Christ, and to the effectual working of his grace. “By the grace of God I am what I am; and I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” The life of grace springs only from the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and therefore, as I must deny myself, so I must attribute all to him from what it comes. 3. I must lie at his feet with an humble dependence upon him, and him alone, for the supplies of grace; this was the apostle’s practice: “O that I may be found in him! O that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection! O that by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead!” Christ is the fountain of life; faith is the means of life; the power and original of life is entirely reserved to Jesus Christ; but faith is the band on our part, whereby we are tied unto Christ, and live in Christ; and thus saith Christ himself, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Is that all? No, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” And, “I am the bread of life.” Is that all? No; “He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.”

Therefore pray for an increase of faith; complain to Christ, tell him that thou canst not believe as thou wouldest, thou canst not get in so much of Christ into thy soul as thou desirest.

And act thy faith vigorously on Christ's resurrection, for a farther degree of quickening. Christ is an overflowing fountain, and he would have believers to partake abundantly of what is in him; he cannot abide that any should content themselves with a present stock of grace: Christ is not as a stream that fails, or as a channel that runs dry; no, Christ is the fountain of life, he is the chief ordinance of life that ever God set up. I know there are other means of Christ's appointment; but if thou wilt live at the spring, drink in there, yea, drink abundantly, according to the overflowing of this fountain.

Thus for directions: now for the encouragements of our faith, to believe in Christ's resurrection.

1. Consider of the virtue and influence of this object, into all that golden chain of privileges; "If Christ be not raised, you are yet in your sins"; -- "then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." From the resurrection of Christ flow all those privileges, even from justification to salvation. The first is clear, and therefore all the rest.

2. Consider that Christ's, resurrection, and the effects of it, are nothing unto us, if we do not believe. It is faith that brings down the particular sweetness and

comforts of Christ's resurrection unto our souls: it is faith that puts us in the actual possession of Christ's resurrection; whatsoever Christ is to us before faith, yet really we have no benefit by it, until we believe it: it is faith that takes hold of all that Christ has done for us, and gives us the actual enjoyment of it; O let not the work stick in us! What! is Christ risen from the dead? and shall we not eye Christ, and take him home to ourselves by faith? The apostle tells us, "that he that believeth not, hath made God a liar, because he believeth not the record that God hath given of his Son." Unbelief belies God in all that he hath done for us. O take heed of this; without faith, what are we better for Christ's resurrection?

3. Or, if we are dazzled, hear his voice, "Fear not, I am the first and last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen." As if he had said; Come, cast your souls on me; it is I that have conquered sin, death, and hell, for you. It is I that have broke the serpent's head, that have taken away the sting of death, that have cancelled the bond of the hand-writing against you, that have in my hands a general acquittance of your sins. Come, take it, take me, and take all with me; only believe in him who is risen again for your justification.

Sect. VI. -- Of loving Jesus in that respect

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation:

1. In his apparition to Mary, Jesus saith unto her, “Woman why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” Were not these kind words from Jesus Christ? How often hath thy heart sighed out complaints, O where is he whom my soul loveth? “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love.” And then, was not Christ seen in the mount? was not thy extremity his opportunity? did he not bespeak thy comforts with these words, “Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” What wouldest thou have, that I can give thee? And what dost thou want, that I can give thee? If anything in heaven or earth will make thee happy, it is all thy own; wouldest thou have pardon? thou shalt have it, I freely forgive thee all the debt: wouldest thou have myself? Behold I am thine, thy friend, thy Lord, thy husband, thy head, thy God. Were not these thy Lord’s reviving words? Were not these healing, quickening passages of Christ’s love.

2. In his apparition to the ten. “Jesus stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” Lo here more words of love; in the midst of their trouble Christ stands in the midst, speaking peace to their souls; and hath not Christ done the like to thee? Hast thou not many and many a time been in troubles, that thou knowest not which way to turn thee? And even then, hath not Christ come to thy spirit with

an olive branch of peace? hath he not wrought wonders in the sea of thy restless thoughts? hath he not made a calm? and more than so, hath he not filled thee with joy and peace in believing? hath he not sent thee away from thy prayers and complaints, with a piece of heaven in thy soul?

I might thus go on to consider other passages, in other apparitions; but are not these enough to draw thy love? O what love was this! O what humility was this! that Christ after his resurrection should converse with men forty days! worthy he was, after so many sorrows, sufferings, reproaches, after so cruel, ignominious, and bitter a death, immediately to have gone to glory. And for the confirmation of his disciples' faith, he might have commanded the angels to have preached his resurrection; no, he himself would stay in person, he himself would make it out by many infallible proofs; he himself would by his own example learn us a lesson of love, of meekness, and patience, in waiting after suffering for the reward.

Methinks a few of these passages should set all our hearts on a flame of love; if Christ be risen, set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. O if the love of Christ were in us, it would make us wholly to despise this world; it would make us to forget it, as worldly love makes a man forget God; nay, it would be so strong and ardent, that we should not be able freely to think on anything else

but Jesus Christ; we should not then fear contempt, or care for disgrace, we should not fear death, or the grave, or hell, or devils, but we should sing in triumph, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” – “Thanks be to God, which gave us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his resurrection. This is the great gospel duty; we should rejoice in the Lord, yea, rejoice evermore. A Christian estate should be a joyful and comfortable estate, and have such cause of joy as the children of Zion: “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Jerusalem; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.” A thousand reasons might be rendered; but here is one, “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.” A commemoration of Christ’s resurrection hath ever been a means of rejoicing in God.

What can be the condition of thy soul, wherein thou mayest not draw sweet from Christ’s resurrection?

1. Is thy conscience in trouble for sin? The apostle tells thee, “The answer of a good conscience towards God, is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

2. Art thou afraid of condemnation? The apostle tells thee, “He was delivered for our offences, and he was raised again for our justification.”

3. Dost thou question thy regeneration? The apostle tells thee, “He hath begotten us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

4. Art thou distressed, persecuted, troubled on every side? The apostle tells thee wherein now consists thy confidence, comfort, courage; to wit, in the life of Christ, in the resurrection of Christ. “We always bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus might also be made manifest in our body; for we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

5. Art thou afraid of death, hell, and the power of the grave? Why, now remember that Christ is risen from the dead, and by his glorious resurrection, death is swallowed up in victory. Job was so transported with this, that he eminently breaks

out, “O that my words were now written, O that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock, for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.” No man ever since Christ did speak more plainly of Christ’s resurrection and his own, than Job did here. Observe in it, O my soul. Job’s wish, and the matter wished; his wish was, that certain words which had been cordial to him, might remain to memory. 1. That they might be written. 2. That they might be registered in a book; enrolled upon records, as public instruments. 3. That they might be engraven in stone, and in the hardest stone, the rock; records might last long, yet time might injure them, and these words he would have last forever. Moses and Job are said to have lived at one time; now Moses writ the law in stone, and considering that these words were gospel, there was no reason that the law should be in tables of stone, and the gospel on sheets of paper; no, it were fit that this should be as firm and durable as that: “O that my words were now written, O that they were printed in a book.”

The matter wished, or the words he would have written, are these; “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall live again.” Here is, first, his Redeemer rising. 2.

His own rising, and his seeing God. This was the matter of his joy, his Redeemer must rise again; and he must rise too, and see his Redeemer. As Christ said of Abraham, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” So it appears of his servant Job, he saw Christ’s day, both his first day and his latter day, and he rejoiced and was glad.

Away, all doubtful thoughts; consider what joys were of old, at the foresight of Christ’s resurrection; but, especially, what joy was all the world over, when he rose again from the dead: then came the angels from heaven, and appeared in white; the disciples were exceeding glad when they saw the Lord; all the primitive saints rejoiced at this news, and, because of it, loved the very day on which Christ arose. Certainly the Lord’s day was in high esteem with the ancient church; and the principal motive was, because of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. O that on these days we could rejoice in the Lord, and again rejoice! O spend more of this day in spiritual rejoicing, especially in commemoration of Christ’s resurrection, (yea, and of the whole work of redemption,) or else you will not answer the institution of our Lord.

Sect. VIII. -- Of calling on Jesus in that respect

Let us call on Jesus:

1. Let us pray that Christ's resurrection may be ours, and that we may be more and more assured of it. Let us say with the apostle, "O that I may know him and the power of his resurrection." O that the Spirit of holiness, which quickened Christ from the dead, would by the same glorious power beget holiness, and faith, and love, and all other graces, in my poor soul. O that Christ would, by his resurrection, apply his active and passive obedience to me; O that he would be to me the Lord of the living, and the Prince of life; that he would overcome in me the death of sin, and that he would regenerate, quicken, renew, and fashion me, by the power of godliness, to become like himself!

2. Let us praise God for Christ's resurrection, and for all the privileges flowing from it into our souls. Christ is risen; by his resurrection he hath justified, sanctified, quickened, saved our souls; and therefore, ("blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,") surely God requires a thousand hallelujahs, and that we should bless him upon a thousand- stringed instrument. Here is fuel enough; the Lord kindle a great fire in every one of our hearts, to burn out all our lusts, and to inflame all our hearts with a love to Jesus Christ! Can we ever too much praise him for all his actings in our behalf? Are not all God's creatures called

upon to rejoice with us, and to bless God for his redeeming of us? “Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” This is the duty we shall do in heaven, and I believe we are never more in heaven (whilst on earth) than when we are in this exercise of praising God, and blessing God for Jesus Christ.

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

Let us conform to Jesus in respect of his resurrection.

In this particular, I shall examine these queries: 1. Wherein we must conform? 2. How this conformity is wrought? 3. What are the means of this conformity?

For the first. Wherein we must conform? I answer in a word. In vivification.

Christ’s resurrection was to newness of life; it was a new life, a life different from that which he lived before: and so is our vivification a new life; it is a life from a new principle, of a new income, and of a new kind.

1. It is a life from a new principle: before vivification our principle was the flesh; but now we have a new principle, the Spirit of God; even as the soul dwells in the body, so doth the Holy Ghost dwell in the soul of a regenerate person, animating, and actuating, and enlivening it.

2. It is a life of a new income; I mean of grace, power, and light. Before vivification there was no such income: a man before his conversion might hear, pray, and do all duties; but, alas! he feels no power, no communication, with Christ. But after this, thou wilt, in the use of ordinances, frequently feel the saving incomes of God. In prayer thou wilt feel the Spirit carrying thy soul above itself: in hearing the word, thou wilt see the windows of heaven set open, and all manner of spiritual comforts showered down upon thee. In meditation of the promises, or of divine love, thou wilt find quickenings, encouragings, filling thy heart with gladness, and thy mouth with praises and songs of rejoicing. O what fountains of life are the promises to a living man! What food! what strength! what life! is a thought of Christ, of heaven, and of God's love? Whereas all these glorious things of the gospel are, to the natural man, but as a withered flower, a sealed book, a dry and empty cistern; he hath no use of them.

3. It is a life of another kind. Before vivification, we were dead in sin whilst alive: but after vivification we live a spiritual life, a heavenly life, an immortal life. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness”: the body indeed is subject to corporal death through the remainders of sin; but the spirit is life here, and shall be hereafter, even for ever. I shall answer only to the vivification usually wrought: First, in the understanding. Secondly, in the will.

First, the understanding lets in the truth of what the gospel hath recorded; and thence inferreth as to a man’s own self, that by the assistance of the Spirit of holiness, who raised up Jesus from the dead, it is possible for him to attain this life.

Then it has yet some brighter believing beams; it confidently closeth with this truth, that it is the will of the Lord that he should come, and live, and believe, and lay hold on Christ; that God doth particularly call, and bid him come to Christ, the fountain of life.

2. And now the answer to this call is wrought in the will.

(1.) The will summons all its confidences, and calls them off from every other bottom, to bestow them wholly upon Christ; and this consists in our voluntarily renouncing all other helps, excepting Jesus Christ alone; now it renounceth its own righteousness; it calls home dependence from every other object.

(2.) Hereupon there is a willing and cheerful receiving of Christ, and resignation of ourselves to his actual disposal, to quicken us, and save us in his own way.

(3.) Upon this follows the soul's confidence, and dependence upon Jesus Christ for life and for salvation; a clear beholding of God in Christ, and Christ in the promises, doth present such variety and fullness of arguments, to bear up hope and affiance, that the heart is resolved, and so resolved that we commit ourselves, and give our souls in charge, to Christ: "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.

That union which thereby comes to be enjoyed with Christ, is such a union as is fruitful in begetting a quickening power in the heart. Justification and sanctification are twins of a birth; and hence it is, that vivification (which is one part of sanctification) is wrought in the soul after the self-same manner. First, the

understanding is enlightened. 2. The will is changed. 3. All the affections are renewed. 4. The internals being quickened, there ensueth the renewing of the outward actions, life, and conversation. And immediately upon this, joy is made in heaven by the angels, God himself applauded it: “for this my son was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”

For the third question; What are the means of this conformity, or vivification, on our parts?

1. Wait upon God in the ministry of the word; this is a means whereby Christ ordinarily effecteth this vivification: and by this means it is that dead souls are quickened; the ministry of the word is the trumpet of Jesus Christ; when that sounds, who knows but he may quicken the dead! Hearken therefore to this word of God.

2. Exercise faith upon the Lord Jesus, as to justification. As is the clearness of our souls in bottoming ourselves on Christ for righteousness, so will be our quickness, and successful progress, in the work of holiness.

3. Trace every ordinance and every duty for the appearings of the Son of God. Be much in prayer, hearing, reading, fellowship with saints, the sacraments; be much in secret conversings with God, in meditation, inquiries, searchings; and (which is a precious work) be much in diligent watching of, and hearkening to, the movings, workings, intimations, of the Spirit of God; be much in observing the methods and interpreting the meanings and language of God in all his secret dispensations with the soul. Certainly there will be abundance of the life of God conveyed to him that walks in these paths. O for a spirit of prayer and meditation; O for a spirit swallowed up in communion with God! “Thou meetest him that worketh righteousness, and those that remember thee in thy ways.”

4. Look much at Christ raised, Christ glorified; Christ’s resurrection was the beginning of his glory; and therein is comprehended both the glory that draws desires towards Christ, and the grace and power that establisheth faith in its dependence. Could we keep our hearts in a more constant view and believing meditation of the glory of Christ, our faces would certainly bring some beams of divinity with them from the mount; the very beholding of Christ hath a mighty virtue to leave the impressions of glory upon our spirits.

5. See our own personal vivification bottomed upon the resurrection of Christ; when we can by faith get a sight of this, it is not to speak how courageously and successfully the soul will grapple in the controversies of the Lord against the devil and our own deceitful hearts: O that I could act my faith more frequently on Christ's resurrection, so that at last I could see it by the light of God to be a principle of my vivification in particular! What a blessed means would this be!

6. Walk, as we have Christ Jesus for an example. This example of Christ yields much to our vivification; who can deny, but that acting with the pattern ever in one's eye, is very advantageous? Come then, and if we would live the life of God, let us live as Christ lived after his resurrection.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
IN HIS ASCENSION, SESSION,
AND MISSION OF HIS SPIRIT.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

Sect. I. -- Of Christ's Ascension

Thus far we have traced Jesus in his actings for us, until the day in which he was taken up. That which immediately follows, is his ascension, session at God's right hand, and mission of his holy Spirit; in prosecution of which, as in the former, I shall first lay down the object; and secondly, direct you how to look upon it.

The object threefold. 1. He ascended into heaven. 2. He sat down at God's right hand. 3. He sent down the Holy Ghost.

1. For the ascension of Christ; this was a glorious design, and contains in it a great part of the salvation of our souls. In prosecution of this, I shall show: -- 1. That he ascended. 2. How he ascended. 3. Whither he ascended. 4. Why he ascended.

(1.) That he ascended. [1.] The prophets foresaw it: "I saw 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 before him; and there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom." [2.] The evangelists relate it: "He was received up into heaven," – "He was carried up into heaven." [3.] The eleven

witness it: “For while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.” [4.] The holy angels speak it: “For while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

(2.) How he ascended. [1.] He ascended blessing his apostles: “While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” It is some comfort to Christ’s ministers, that though the world hate them, Christ doth bless them; yea, he parted with them in a way of blessing: as Jacob, leaving the world, blessed his sons; so Christ, leaving the world, blessed his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of Christ unto the end of the world.

[2.] He ascended visibly in the view of the apostles: “While they beheld, he was taken up”; he was not suddenly snatched from them, as Elijah was, nor secretly and privily taken away, as Enoch was; but in the presence of them all, both his apostles and disciples, he ascended up into heaven.

[3.] He ascended principally by the mighty power of his godhead: thus never any ascended up into heaven but Jesus Christ; for though Enoch and Elijah were assumed into heaven, yet not by their power, nor by themselves; it was God's power by which they ascended, and it was by the help and ministry of angels.

[4.] He ascended in a cloud: "While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Hereby he shows that he is Lord of all the creatures; he had already trampled upon the earth, walked upon the sea, vanquished hell or the grave, and now the clouds receive him, and the heavens are opened to make way for this King of glory to enter in.

2. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (1.) He led them captive, who had captivated us. Death was led captive without a sting; hell was led captive as one that had lost her victory; the serpent's head being bruised, was led before him in triumph, as was Goliath's head by David, returning from the victory. (2.) He gave gifts unto men; this was as the shutting up Christ's triumph, in his ascension up to heaven: what these gifts were, we shall speak in the mission of the Holy Ghost.

(3.) Whither he ascended, the gospel tells us, into heaven; only Paul saith, “that he ascended far above all heavens.” But the meaning is, he went above all those visible heavens, into those heavenly mansions, where the angels and the spirits of the just have their abode.

(4.) Why he ascended; the reasons are, 1. On Christ’s part, that through his passion he might pass to glory. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?”--

2. On our part:

1. That in our stead he might triumph over sin, death, and hell. In his resurrection he conquered, but in his ascension he led sin, death, and the devil in triumph, at his chariot wheels. And the meaning of the psalmist, and of the apostle, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive,” is, he vanquished and triumphed over all our enemies; he overcame the world, he bound the devil, he spoiled hell, he weakened sin, he destroyed death, and now he makes a public triumphal show of them in his own person. It is to the same purpose that the apostle speaks elsewhere, “Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in himself”; it is a manifest allusion to the manner of triumphs, after victories, amongst the Romans: first, they spoiled the enemy upon

the place, ere they stirred off the field; and this was done by Christ on the cross: and then they made a public triumphal show; they rode through the streets in the greatest state, and had all their spoils carried before them; and the kings and nobles whom they had taken, they tied to their chariots, and led them as captives: and this did Christ at his ascension; “then he openly triumphed in himself,” that is, in his own power and strength.

2. That he might lead us the way, and open to us the doors of glory.

3. That he might assure us that now he had run through all those offices which he was to perform here on earth for our redemption. First, he was to act as our surety, and then he was to ascend as our head, our advocate, as the first-fruits, the captain, the prince of life, the author of salvation, the forerunner of his people.

4. That he might thoroughly convince believers, of their perfect righteousness.

“The Spirit, when he comes,” saith Christ, “shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment”: -- “of sin, because they believe not on me”; -- “of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” If Christ had not fulfilled all righteousness, there had been no going to heaven for him, nor remaining there; but his ascension to heaven proclaims openly -- 1. That he hath

completely finished the work he had to do for us here. 2. That God was well pleased with Jesus Christ, and with what he had done and suffered for us. 3. That we have our share in heaven with him; he went not up as a single person, but virtually, or mystically, he carried up all believers with him into glory. 4. That he hath a new design to be acted in heaven for us: he is taken up into glory, that he may act gloriously the second part of our righteousness; I mean that he might apply it, and send down his Spirit to convince us of it. Three great things, Christ acts for us now in glory. First, he is in place of an advocate for us, he liveth to intercede for us. Secondly, he is the great provider for us; he is laying in a stock of glory for us against we come there: “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” – “I go to prepare a place for you.” Thirdly, he sends down his Spirit to convince us, that Christ’s righteousness is ours. Indeed the means of procuring this, was the life and death of Christ; but the means of applying this righteousness, are those following acts of Christ’s resurrection, ascension, session, intercession. By his death he obtained righteousness for us, but by his ascension he applies righteousness to us.

Sect. II. -- Of God’s Right Hand and of Christ’s Session there

For the session of Christ at God's right hand, I shall examine, --I. What is God's right hand? 2. What is it to sit there? 3. According to what nature doth Christ sit there? 4. Why is it that he sits at the right hand of God?

1. What is this right hand of God? I answer, The right hand of God is the majesty, dignity, dominion, power, and glory of God. "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." – "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

2. What is it to sit at the right hand of God? I answer, it is not any corporal session at God's right hand; which Stephen contradicts, saying, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The words sitting or standing, are both metaphorical, and borrowed from the custom of kings, who place those they honour, and to whom they commit the power of government, at their right hand; more particularly, this sitting at God's right hand implies two things: 1. His glorious exaltation. 2. The actual administration of his kingdom.

(1.) Christ is exalted: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." This

session is the supreme dignity and glory given by the Father unto Christ, after his ascension; this session is the peerless exaltation of the Mediator in his kingdom of glory. But how was Christ exalted? I answer: 1. In the regard of his divine nature; not really, or in itself. Impossible it was that the divine nature should receive any intrinsical glory, because all fullness of glory essentially belonged unto it; but declaratory, or by way of manifestation; so it was, that his divinity, during the time of his humiliation, lay hidden and overshadowed: but now, in his session, that divinity and glory which he had always with the Father, was shewed forth and declared: “He was declared to be the Son of God with power,” both at his resurrection and at his session. 2. In regard of his human nature; and yet that must be understood soberly, for I cannot think that Christ’s human nature was at all exalted in regard of the grace of personal union, or in regard of the habitual perfections of his human soul, because he possessed all these from the beginning; but in regard of those interceptions of the beams of the godhead and divine glory, and in respect of the restraints of that sense and sweetness, and feeling operations of the beatifical vision, during his humiliation: in these respects Christ was exalted in his human nature, and had all the glory from the Deity communicated to it, which possibly in any way it was capable of.

(2.) Christ reigns, or actually administers his glorious kingdom; and this is the principal part of Christ's sitting at God's right hand. So the psalmist: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool: the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, rule thou in the midst of thy enemies." The apostle is yet more large: "God set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Some describe this session at God's right hand, to be all one with his reigning in equal power and glory with the Father; but the Son hath always so reigned, and the Holy Ghost hath always so reigned, who yet is not said in scripture to sit at the right hand of the Father: I believe therefore there is something in this session or reign of Christ, which doth difference it from that reigning power and glory of the Father, and of the Son as only God, and of the Holy Ghost; and if we would know what that is, I would call it an actual administration of his kingdom, or an immediate executing of his power and glory over every creature as Mediator. And this made Christ say, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," as Mediator. You may object, Christ was Mediator immediately after his incarnation, but he did not actually administer his

kingdom then. I answer, it is true; Christ for a time did empty himself, and laid aside the actual administration of his kingdom; but immediately after his ascension, the Father, by a voluntary dispensation, resigned it to the Son again: “Come now,” saith the Father, “and take thou power over every creature, till the time that all things shall be subdued under thee.” This right the one relinquished in the time of that humiliation of himself, and this right the other conferred at the time of the exaltation of his Son.

3. According to what nature is Christ said to sit at the right hand of God? I answer, according to both natures: first, he sits at God’s right hand as God; hereby his divinity was declared, and his kingdom is such, that none that is a poor creature can possibly execute. 2. He sits at God’s right hand as man too; hereby his humanity was exalted, and a power is given to Christ as man: “He hath given him power to execute judgment, in as much as he is the Son of man.”

Sect. III. -- Of the Reasons why Christ doth sit on God’s Right Hand

Why doth Christ sit at the right hand of God? I answer: 1. On Christ’s part, that he might receive power and dominion over all the creatures. “All power is given unto

me in heaven and in earth”: he speaks of it as done, because it was immediately to be performed; Christ at his session received a power imperial over every creature.

2. On our part, many reasons might be given:

1. That he might be the head of his church; in a strict sense, as the head is conjoined with the body and members, so is Christ the head of his church. To this purpose he sits at God’s right hand, that having now fullness of grace and glory in himself, he might be ready to communicate the same to his church, who are as the members of his body, that he might give them grace here, and glory hereafter; when he shall deliver up his kingdom to his Father, and be all in all.

2. That he might be the object of divine adoration; then especially it was said and accomplished, “Let all the angels of God worship him: and let all men honour the Son, as they honour the Father.” After Christ’s session, Stephen looked up into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and then he worshipped; and called upon God, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” It is true, the ground of this divine adoration, is the union of the two natures of Christ, and therefore the Magi worshipped him at his birth; and as soon as ever he came into the world, the angels of God worshipped him; but because by his session at God’s right hand, the divine nature was manifested, and the human

nature was exalted to that glory which it never had before; therefore now especially, and from this time, was the honour and dignity of worship communicated to him as God and man. “God highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

3. That he might intercede for his saints. “Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” He is set on the right hand of God, as an high priest or minister to intercede for us: “for as Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

4. That true believers may assuredly hope, by virtue of Christ’s session, to sit themselves in the kingdom of glory. Christ living in heaven is the very figure of us; Christ’s person is the great model and first draught of all that shall be done to his body, the saints: therefore he is said to be the captain of our salvation, that leads us

on; he is said to be our forerunner into glory. He breaks the clouds first, he appears first before God, he sits down first, and is glorified first, and then we follow.

5. That he might defend the church against her enemies; and at last destroy all the enemies of the church.

6. That he might send down the Holy Ghost: to this purpose Christ told his disciples whilst he was yet on earthy that he must ascend into heaven, and reign there: “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him to you.” Christ is now in heaven, and sits at God’s right hand, that he may send us his Spirit, by whose forcible working we seek after heaven, and heavenly things, where now Christ sits.

Sect. IV. -- Of the Time when, and the Persons to whom, the Holy Ghost was sent.

No sooner was Christ set down at God’s right hand, but he sends down the Holy Ghost. It was an use amongst the ancients, in days of great joy and solemnity, to give gifts and to send presents unto men: thus Christ, in the day of his majesty and inauguration, in that great and solemn triumph, when he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

“And when the day of the Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.” Out of these words I shall observe these particulars: The time when -- the persons to whom -- the manner how -- the measure what -- and the reasons why, the Holy Ghost was sent.

1. For the time when the Holy Ghost was sent, it is said, “When the day of Pentecost was fully come.” This was a feast of the Jews, called *πεντηκοστη*; because it was ever kept on the fiftieth day after the second of the passover. Fifty days were the appointed time of the Jews’ harvest: their harvest being bounded, as it were, with two remarkable days, the one being the beginning, and the other the end thereof: the beginning was the second of the passover; the end was the fiftieth after, called Pentecost; upon the beginning they offered a sheaf of the first-fruits of their harvest. Upon the Pentecost they offered two wave loaves; the sheaf being offered, all the after-fruits throughout the land were sanctified; and the two loaves being offered, it was a sign of the harvest being ended; and now we find, that as

there were fifty days betwixt the beginning and the Pentecost, so there were fifty days betwixt Christ's resurrection, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost. As on the day of Pentecost, the Israelites came to mount Sinai, and received the law; so the very same day is accomplished that prophecy, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem": now was the promulgation of the gospel, called by James, the royal law, as given by Christ our King, and written in the hearts of his servants by this Holy Ghost; it seems to shadow out the great difference betwixt the law and the gospel; the law is given with terror, in lightning and thunder; but the gospel is given without terror, there was no lightning and thunder now; no, the Holy Ghost slides down from heaven, and with joy sits on the heads, and in the hearts, of his saints.

2. For the persons to whom the Holy Ghost was sent; it is said, "To all that were with one accord in one place": who they were, it is not here expressed; yet from the former chapter we may conjecture, they were the twelve apostles, together with Joseph, called Barsabas, and the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren; these all continued with one accord in one place, for so was Christ's command, "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." It was the great promise of the Old Testament, that Christ should partake of our human nature; and it was the great

promise of the New Testament, that we should partake of his divine nature; he was clothed with our flesh according to the former, and we are invested with his Spirit according to the latter promise. For this promise the apostles and others had long waited, and for the accomplishment they were now fitted and disposed. 1. They had waited for it from the ascension day, till the feast of Pentecost; he told them at the very instant of his ascension, that he would send the Holy Ghost, and therefore bid them stay together until that hour; upon which command they continued waiting until the day of Pentecost was fully come. “He that believeth shall not make haste,” saith Isaiah. But, 2. As they waited for the Spirit, so they were rightly disposed to receive the Spirit, for they were all with one accord in one place. To those that accord, is the Spirit given; where is discord, jars, divisions, factions, there is no Spirit of God; for the Spirit is the author of concord, peace, unity, and amity: and can we imagine that essential unity will enter but where there is unity? Can the Spirit of unity come, or remain, but where there is unity of spirit? Verily there is not, there cannot be, a more certain disposition to make us meet for the Spirit, than that quality in us that is likest to his nature; and that is unity, love, concord. Do we marvel that the Spirit doth scarcely pant in us? Alas, we are not all of one accord; the very first point is wanting to make us meet for the coming of the Holy Ghost upon us.

Sect. V. -- Of the Manner how the Holy Ghost was sent.

For the manner how he was sent, or how he came to these apostles; we may observe these particulars: --

He came suddenly; which either shows the majesty of the miracle that is gloriously done, which is suddenly done; or the truth of the miracle, there could be no imposture or fraud in it, when the motion of it was so sudden; or the purpose of the miracle, which was to awake and affect them to whom it came; usually sudden things startle us, and make us look up. We may learn to receive those holy motions of the Spirit, which sometimes come suddenly, and we know not how; I am persuaded the man breathes not amongst us Christians, that sometimes feels not the stirrings, movings, breathings, of the Spirit of God; O that men would take the wind while it blows, and the water while the angel moves it; as not knowing when it will, or whether ever it will blow again.

2. He came from heaven. The place seems here to commend the gift: as from earth, earthly things arise; so from heaven, heavenly, spiritual, eternal things.

3. He comes down from heaven like a wind; the comparison is most apt. Of all bodily things, the wind is least bodily; it is invisible, and comes nearest to the nature of a spirit: it is quick and active as the spirit is. But more especially the Holy Ghost is compared to a wind in respect of its irresistible workings; as nothing can resist the wind, so nothing can resist the Spirit of God. Again, the Holy Ghost is compared to wind, in respect of its free actings; the wind bloweth where it listeth, and so the Spirit bloweth where it listeth: grace makes no gain of man's work; free-will may indeed move and run, but if it be too good, it must be moved, and driven, and breathed upon by God's free grace.

4. He came like a rushing mighty wind: as the wind is sometimes of that strength, that it rends in sunder mountains and rocks, it pulls up trees, it blows down buildings; so are the operations of the Holy Spirit; it takes down all before it, it made a conquest of the world, beginning at Jerusalem, and spreading itself over all the earth.

5. He filled all the house where they were sitting; there were none there that were not filled with the Holy Ghost; all the men and women (an hundred and twenty) in this room were visited from on high, for the Holy Ghost came upon them, and dwelt in them; it filled all the house where they were sitting, to signify that all the

other houses of Jerusalem felt none of this mighty rushing wind: have we not sometimes experience of this in our very congregations? One sound is heard, one breath doth blow, and it may be one or two, and no more hears the sound, or feels the breath inwardly, saving; it may be one here, and another there, shall feel the Spirit, shall be touched with it sensibly; but twenty on this side them, and forty on that side them, all becalmed, and go their way no more moved, than when they came into God's presence. O that this Spirit of the Lord would come daily and constantly into our congregations! O that it would blow through them and through! O that it would fill every soul in the assembly with the breath of heaven! Come, Holy Spirit; "awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon our gardens, that the spices thereof may flow out."

6. He came down in the form of tongues. The apostles were not only inspired for their own benefit, but they had gifts bestowed on them, to impart the benefit to more than themselves. But why did the Holy Ghost appear like tongues? I answer, the tongue is the sole instrument of knowledge, which conveys the same from man to man: though the soul be the fountain from whence all wisdom springs, yet the tongue is that channel whereby this wisdom and knowledge is communicated. In the like manner the Holy Ghost is the sole teacher of all truth; though Christ be the

wisdom of God, yet the Holy Ghost is the teacher of this wisdom to men; and hence it is, that the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of tongues.

And yet not merely in the form of tongues, but, 1. They were cloven tongues, to signify that the apostles should speak in divers languages: if there must be a calling of the Gentiles, they must needs have the tongues of the Gentiles wherewith to call them: if they were debtors not only to the Jews but to the Grecians, nor only to the Grecians but to the Barbarians also, then must they have the tongues not only of the Jews, but of the Grecians and Barbarians, to go and teach all nations. 2. They were fiery tongues; to signify that there should be an efficacy or fervour in their speaking; the world was so overwhelmed with ignorance and error, that the apostles' lips had need to be touched with a coal from the altar: tongues of flesh would not serve the turn, nor words of air, but there must be fire put into the tongue, and life into the words they speak: O that we of the ministry had these fiery tongues! O that the Spirit would put live coal into our speeches! may we not fear that the Spirit is gone while the people are dead, and we are no more lively in our ministry? It is said of Luther, that when he heard one preach very faintly, "Cold, cold," says he, "this is cold preaching, here's no heat at all to be gotten." O, when the Spirit comes, it comes with a tongue of fire; instead of words, sparks of fire will fall from us on the hearts of hearers.

3. These cloven tongues sat upon each of them, to signify their constancy and continuance; they abode still, they continued steady, without any stirring or starting.

Sect. VI. -- Of the Measure of the Holy Ghost now given, and the Reasons why he was sent.

For the measure, what or how much of the Spirit was now given? This question is necessary, because we bring in the Spirit's mission after Christ's ascension, as if the Holy Ghost had not been given before his time. That this was the time of the coming of the Holy Ghost, is very plain; but that the Holy Ghost was not given before this time, we cannot say; certainly the prophets spake by him, and the apostles had him, not only when they were first called, but more fully when "he breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost." So that if ye study the reconciliation of these things, I know not any way better, than to put it on the measure or degrees of the Spirit: here was the difference; before this the Spirit was but sprinkled, as it were, upon them, but now they were all blown upon with a mighty wind.

3. At first he was sent only in drops and dew, but now he was poured out in showers and abundance: “The Holy Ghost,” saith Paul, “was shed on us abundantly.” As there are degrees in the wind -- a breath, or a blast, or a stiff gale; we cannot deny degrees in the Spirit, -- the apostles at Christ’s resurrection received the Spirit, but now they were filled with the Spirit of Christ.

4. For the reasons why the Holy Ghost was sent, they are several.

1. That all the prophecies concerning this mission be accomplished. Isaiah speaks of a time when “the Spirit should be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness should be a fruitful field.” And Zachary prophecies, that “in that day I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication.” And Joel prophecies yet more expressly: “It shall come to pass, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.” But of all the prophecies concerning the mission of the Holy Ghost, our Saviour gives the clearest and most particular: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. Behold, I send the promise of

my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” It was of necessity that all these prophecies and promises must be accomplished, and therefore was the Holy Ghost sent amongst us.

2. That the holy apostles might be furnished with gifts and graces suitable to their estates, conditions, stations, places. To this purpose, no sooner was the Spirit sent, but “they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” They were filled with the Holy Ghost; not that they were before empty, but now they were more full of the Spirit than ever, and they spake with other tongues, other than they had learned; probably they understood no tongue but the Syriac, till this time, but now on a sudden they could speak Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Parthian, and what not! the wisdom and mercy of God is very observable herein, that the same means of divers tongues, which was the destroying of Babel, should be the means conferred on the apostles, to work the building of Sion; that confusion of tongues would be united to God’s glory.

3. That he might fill the hearts of all the saints, and make them temples for the Holy Ghost: “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God: and ye are not your own?” It is said, that after the mighty rushing wind and cloven fiery tongues, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues.” First, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and when they spake with other tongues: the Holy Ghost begins inward, and works outward: it first alters the mind, before it changes the speech; it first works on the spirit, before on the phrase of utterance; this was the first work of the Spirit, it filled them. And thus for the daily ministration, such must be appointed as were full of the Holy Ghost. And Stephen is said to be full of the Holy Ghost; and Barnabas is called a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is usually said to fill the saints: only whether it be the person of the Holy Ghost, or the impressions of the Holy Ghost, is a very great question; for my part, I am apt to incline to their mind, who say, not only the impressions of the Spirit, the qualities of holiness, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, or as some think habitual; the Holy Ghost himself doth fill, and dwell, and reign, in the hearts of all regenerate men.

CHAP. II.

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Ascension, Session, and Mission of the Spirit.

Let us know Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation in his ascension into heaven, in his session at God's right hand, and in his mission of the Holy Ghost: these are points of great use; if these transactions had not been, where had we been? Here is an object of admiration indeed; the very angels at the sight of it stood admiring and adoring; it took up their heart, astonished their understanding. Come then, and, O my soul, do thou take a view of that which they admire, the design concerns thee in particular; and therefore study close this argument, and know it for thyself. Study first the ascension of Christ, how, and whither, and why he ascended. Secondly, study the session of Christ at God's right hand: O the riches of that spiritual, heavenly knowledge!

3. Study the mission of the Holy Ghost; not a circumstance in it, but deserves thy study: what endeavors have there been to dive into the secrets of nature! what volumes have been written of physic, metaphysics, mathematics! and is not this subject Christ? Is not every of these subjects, Christ's ascension, Christ's mission

of the Holy Spirit, of more value and benefit than all those! Come, study that piece of the Bible, wherein these are written; there is not a line or expression of Christ in the Scripture, but 'tis matter enough for a whole age to comment on; thou needest not to leave old principles for new discoveries, for in these very particulars thou mightest find successive sweetness unto all eternity.

Sect. II. -- Of considering Jesus in that respect.

Let us consider Jesus, carrying on this work of our salvation in these particulars:

And to take them in order, --

1. Consider Christ's ascension into heaven. What, shall he ascend, and shall we not in our contemplations follow after him? Gaze, O my soul, on this wonderful object; thou needest not fear any check from God or angel, so that thy contemplation be spiritual and divine. No sooner had Christ finished his work of redemption here on earth, but on the mount called Olivet he assembles with his disciples, where having given them commands, he begins to mount; and being a little lifted up into the air, presently a cloud receives him into her lap. Herein is a clear demonstration of his godhead; clouds are usually in scripture put for the house, or temple, or receptacle

of God himself. How often is it said, that “the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud”? and that “he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud”? and that “the Lord descended in the cloud”? is not the clouds God’s own chariot? “Behold, the Lord rideth on a swift cloud! And O my Lord my God, thou art very great,” saith David; great indeed, and he proves it thus, who maketh the clouds his chariot. Jesus Christ in his ascension to heaven enters by the way into a cloud; this was his chariot, led by ten thousands of his angels. “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them in Sinai in the holy place: thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men.”

But stay not thy contemplation in the cloud, he ascends yet higher, through the air, and through the clouds, and through that heaven of fixed stars, nor stood he still till he came to the heaven of heavens. In all this triumphant march, some tell us of an heavenly harmony made by the blessed angels; and that this is the meaning of the psalmist: “God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.” In this meditation pass not over thy duty, which immediately follows: “Sing praises unto God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises”; -- “sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the heavens, by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.” Thou hast cause, O my soul, to praise him, and to

rejoice before him, especially if thou considerest that Christ ascended not for himself, but for thee; it is God in our nature that is gone up to heaven, Christ as a public person ascended up to heaven; thy interest is in this very ascension of Jesus Christ, and therefore dost thou consider thy head as soaring up? O let every member praise his name!

And yet stay not by the way, but consider further; Christ being now arrived at heaven doors, those heavenly spirits that accompanied him began to say, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift up yourselves, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!" To whom some of the angels that were within, not ignorant of his person, but admiring his majesty and glory, said again, "Who is the King of glory?" And then they answered, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle"; and thereupon those "twelve gates of the holy city of New Jerusalem" opened of their own accord, and Jesus Christ with all his ministering spirits entered in. O my soul, how should this heighten thy joy, and enlarge thy comforts, in that Christ is now received up into glory! every sight of Christ is glorious, and in every sight thou shouldest wait on the Lord Jesus Christ for some glorious manifestations of himself. Come, live up to the rate of this great mystery; view Christ as entering into glory, and thou wilt find the same sparkles of glory on thy heart.

2. Consider Christ's session at God's right hand: no sooner was Christ entered into heaven, but he is brought before his heavenly Father; and a dominion was given him above all creatures, above the hierarchy of all the angels: O the glory of Christ at his first entrance into glory! immediately all the angels fell down and worshipped him, immediately his Father welcomed him with the highest grace that ever was shown. "Come," said he, "sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." O my soul, meditate on this session of, Christ at God's right hand, and thence draw some virtue into thyself: what! was Christ exalted? had he a name given him above every name? walk then as becomes those that have so glorious ahead: O defile not that nature which in thy Christ was so highly honoured!

3. Consider the mission of the Holy Ghost: "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." He gave gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost: O my soul, consider this princely gift of Christ! Such a gift was never before, but when God gave his Son: "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son"; and Christ so loved the world, that he gave his Spirit. But consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; the application of the gift is the very soul of thy meditation: "Unto us a Son is given," said the prophet; and, "unto us the

Holy Ghost is given,” saith the apostle. And yet above all, consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself; was it not to make thee a temple of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while on this! admire, O my soul, at the unspeakable love of Christ in this! It was infinite love to come down into our nature; but this is more, to come down into thy heart by his Holy Spirit: he came near to us then, but he comes nearer now, for now he unites himself unto thy person, now he comes and dwells in thy soul by his Spirit; come! here’s that which will content thy vast desires: “Christ is in thee by his Spirit”; will not this content the utmost capacity of an heart? surely he is too covetous whom God himself cannot suffice: if thou hast Christ, thou hast all things; and if thou hast the Spirit of Christ, thou hast Christ himself, not notionally, but really, essentially, substantially, by his Spirit; it is the very Spirit of Christ, the Spirit itself, the Holy Ghost itself in his own person, that is united to thee, and dwells in thee; nor only comes he in person, but he brings along with him all his train: hath he not endowed thee with gifts? hath he not divided a portion to thee in thy place and calling? observe it, and be thankful, if thou hast a gift of prayer, of prophecy, of wisdom, of knowledge, it flows from this Holy Spirit: “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ,” or according to the measure of the Spirit, who is the gift of Christ. And, “all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” But besides a gift, hath he not endowed thee with his grace? hath he not planted in

thy soul the power, the principle, of grace? hast thou not felt the quickenings, stirrings, of the Spirit of God, commanding thy faith, love, zeal, and other graces? hath he not many a time, at some mighty streight, at some prevailing temptation, when thou wast even ready to yield to Satan, come in as betwixt the bridge and water, and given thee grace to help in time of need? O the sweet incomes of the Spirit of God! as he is a holy Spirit, so he makes holy hearts; and if there be holiness in thy heart, what is it but an emanation of the Spirit of God? hast thou not sometimes felt the joy unspeakable and full of glory? a drop of heaven's joy, as the earnest of thy inheritance? why, all these are but the workings of the promised Comforter: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Another effect is, the seal of the Spirit stamped on thee. I will not say this is absolutely necessary, but hast thou not sometime been assured of thy salvation, by an irradiation of the Spirit on thy graces? Sometimes the Spirit is pleased to shine with its bright, and glorious, and heavenly beams into our souls, and then we are assured: hence the apostle prays for the Ephesians, "that they might have the Spirit of revelation." If the Spirit shine upon our graces, then it seals: O consider this shining-sealing work, and leave not till the Spirit dart in a spiritual light, and give thee a revelation, knowledge, and persuasion, of thy effectual calling.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect.

Let us desire Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in these particulars: who seeing Christ ascending into heaven, would not be glad to ascend up with him? seeing Christ, to sit down with him? Who seeing Christ scatter his gifts and spirit amongst his saints, would not cry, “Come, Holy Spirit; O Christ, give me thy Spirit; thou that givest gifts unto men, come, and bestow these gifts on me! even upon me!” The believing soul cannot hear of Christ in any true discovery of his grace and glory, but it must needs send out many breathings after him. – “O that Christ were mine! O that I had any interest in this transaction!” It is true, these transactions are past, but the virtue of them continues still; and accordingly the virtue, power, and influence of these transactions must be the object of our desires; now what is the virtue of Christ’s ascension, but that we might ascend? And what the virtue of Christ’s session, but that we might sit down with him in his throne? And what the virtue of the mission of his Spirit, but that we might partake of the Holy Ghost? O let these be the objects of our desires; let us pant and breathe after these things.

1. Let us see Christ ascending, and so desire to ascend with him: when Christ ascended, it was not merely for himself, but also in our stead: he ascended as a

common person; as the high priest ascending into the holy of holies, he carried all the names of the twelve tribes on his breast; so Jesus Christ ascending into heaven, carried the names of all believers in the world on his breast, thereby showing that they were likewise to come after him: in this case how should we long after him, and cry after him, as Elisha after Elijah when he saw him ascending, “My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” How should we cry after him, “O my Lord and my God! see that my name be written on thy breast! O that virtually I may ascend with thee, and that really and bodily I may at last ascend after thee!” A desire after Christ, and his ascension is the way to heaven; if thou wilt ascend after Christ, set thy desires upon Christ; if thou wilt arrive at true glory, breathe after Christ ascending up into his glory. O when will it once be, that by the virtue of Christ’s ascension I shall ascend!

2. Let us see Christ sitting down at the right hand of God, and so desire to sit with him; when Christ sat down, it was not in his own right simply, as it is his inheritance, but with relation to his members: “He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” He sat down as a common person, thereby showing that we were to sit down with him in our proportion: “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.” O my soul, desire this, for this is worthy of thy desire: this is a great thing, an high exaltation, another manner of honour than any this world affords; only take heed of apprehending it after a carnal way. This very exaltation consists in the image of God, and communion with God; whatever thou givest or deniest. Lord, give me this, and I have enough for ever.

3. Let us see Christ’s mission of his Holy Spirit, and desire a share in that gift. We cannot expect to sit with Christ, but we must first have the spirit of Christ.

Consider, O my soul, all things here below are either temporal or spiritual; and of things spiritual this is the sum, “the indwelling of the Spirit.” O Lord, give me thyself, and that contains all gifts; O give me thy Spirit, and thou canst not but with him give me all things. O what longings! O what pantings and gaspings should there be in thy spirit after this Spirit! Come, Holy Spirit, O come and dwell in my soul! I know thou wilt make the place of thy feet glorious; if I have but thy presence, I shall be all glorious within.

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect.

Let us hope in Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation in these particulars; this was the apostle’s prayer: “Now the God of hope fill you with all

joy and peace in believing; that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost”: could we abound in hope that Christ’s ascension, session, and mission of his Spirit did belong to us, we should never be ashamed: O then let us look to our hope, and be sure that it be of the right stamp! which in reference to every of these passages, we may examine thus:

1. If Christ’s ascension be mine, then am I ascended with Christ: for we may ascend into heaven by faith and love, though for the present we are on earth: “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.” If Christ our head be ascended, then we that are his members must follow after him in our affections. Christ tells us, “where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.” If Christ our treasure be ascended into heaven, our loves, our affections, our hearts, will follow after him; and if our hearts be in heaven, no question but we ourselves, both souls and bodies, shall at last ascend.

2. If Christ’s session be mine, then am I set down with Christ in heavenly places; I mean not bodily, but by faith, which faith makes it as sure to my soul as if I had a foot already in heaven: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” By faith I now sit in heavenly places, in that I verily

believe I shall do it one day; my hope is now certain, in that I am as sure of that I look for, as I am of that I have already received. The apostle said of Christ, “We see not yet all things put under him”; but he presently answers, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour”: and so we may be sure the thing is as good as done; for if he be above, all must come under; in like manner we see not ourselves in present possession, but we see Christ crowned, and ourselves sitting with him virtually; and therefore at last we shall see ourselves actually crowned, and sitting together with Christ in heavenly places.

3. If Christ’s Spirit be mine, and sent to me, then have I both the person and train of the Spirit of Christ. It is the having the Spirit, and the working of the Spirit in me, that is my evidence of the Spirit’s mission: I look upon this as the greatest question, and the weightiest case of conscience, that can be propounded -- whether the Spirit of Christ doth reside in us? or whether we have a well-grounded hope to say of ourselves, that we have the indwelling of the Spirit of God? “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,” saith the apostle, “and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” And again, “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?” In this he seems to put it out of question, that true Christians know the Spirit of God dwells in them; if we know not this, we cannot know that we have any part in Christ, because the Holy Spirit is the principal bond of our union;

if we know not this, we cannot know that we are justified, for we have nothing to do with Christ's righteousness, by which we are justified, until by our spiritual union Christ is made ours; if we know not this, we cannot know that we are the adopted children of God, for it is the Spirit of adoption, whereby "we cry in our hearts, Abba, Father": if we know not this, we cannot know that we are sanctified, for it is the Spirit which is the beginner and perfecter of our sanctification: if we know not this, we cannot know that our prayers are heard, for it is "the Spirit that helps our infirmities, and that makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered": if we know not this, we cannot know whether we are in error or truth, or whether our religion be true or false, for it is the Spirit who enlightens, and leads us into all truth: if we know not this, we cannot know our own comforts, for he is the only true comforter. Come then, and put we ourselves to the trial; let us search whether we have the Spirit of Christ; which we may resolve, (if we will not deal deceitfully with our own hearts,) by these following signs: --

1. The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of illumination. If he dwell in us, he will enlighten our eyes, reveal to us those saving truths of God as they are in Jesus: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." – "But ye have an unction from the Holy

One, and ye know all things.” – “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any men teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things”; and hence it is that this Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.”

2. The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of prayer. “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication.” – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.” It is not said that the Spirit teaches us words, and fluent phrases, but it teaches us to pray in the heart with sighs and groans.

3. The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of sanctification. The apostle having told the Corinthians that they had been notorious sinners, saith further, that “they were washed and sanctified by the Spirit of God.” Hence the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of holiness,” because he makes us holy. If we have this Spirit, it inclines our hearts to things above, it mortifies our lusts, it brings us nearer to God: the spirit therefore that is impure, and encourages men in sin, and cries up carnal liberty, is certainly none of the Spirit of Christ; and by this one sign many carnal pretenders of our times may be convicted.

4. The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of love. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him”: as the Spirit is love, so it begets love in the hearts of his people: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” All these graces are the fruits of the Spirit, but the first grace in the link is love: by his Spirit we are taught to love God, not only for his benefits, but in respect of his nature; for his goodness, justice, holiness; by his Spirit we are taught to love anything that hath the stamp and image of God upon it: “but as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”

5. The Spirit of Christ is a witnessing Spirit. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”: and “every one that believeth hath the witness in himself.”

The witnessing of the Spirit is an office of the Spirit, whereby it works the soul into a knowledge, persuasion, or conclusion of its acceptance with God in Christ.

2. How doth the Spirit thus witness? I answer, 1. Immediately. 2. Mediate.

1. Concerning the immediate testimony of the Spirit there is some controversy: Antinomians would have no other testimony but this; all other evidences (say they) are deceiving evidences; or if not deceiving, yet to make use of them were but to light a candle to the sun; for what are the graces of the Spirit in comparison of the Spirit's own testimony? and it may be the running into this extreme hath caused others absolutely to deny any such testimony, or at least to say, --for these enthusiasms or inspirations, let them boast of them that have them, we know no such thing. Methinks a middle betwixt these is most consonant to truth, for neither can I reject the graces of our assurance, neither dare I deny but there is something of the work of the Spirit's testimony which is an immediate work.

Certainly there is a work, wherein the Spirit acts as in illumination; and infusion of good motions into us, wherein by a secret influence upon the heart, he quiets and calms the troubled soul concerning its condition by his own immediate power, without any grounds from scripture without, or graces within.

There is a threefold work of the Spirit, saith Mr. Caryl:

1. To convey and plant grace in the soul. 2. To help us to exercise the graces which are planted there. 3. To shine upon and enlighten those graces: this last work the

Spirit fulfils two ways; 1. By arguments and inferences, which is a mediate work, 2. By presence and influence, which is an immediate work; this the apostle calls, “witness-bearing”; “there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and water, and blood”: the Spirit brings in the witness of water and blood, which is a mediate work: but besides and above these, he gives a distinct witness of his own, which is his immediate work, and is, in a way of peculiarity and transcendency, called the witness of the Spirit. As it is with the motions of the Spirit, many a time the Spirit excites a man to such or such duties, by laying his hand immediately upon the heart, and thereby inclining it to obey those motions: so in this case, when a poor soul sits in darkness, and sees no light, sometimes it is, as it were, taken up into the third heaven; and this is in such a way, that though the spirit of a man is immediately calmed by it, yet it cannot tell how it came to pass.

But for fear of mistakes, in this case observe we these rules:

1. That although the Spirit may immediately testify without express or formal application of a word, yet he never testifies but according to the word. If a man that never felt sin a burden, that throws away all duties of religion, that never prays, reads, hears, or meditates, shall say, that he is filled with joy, peace, and the assurance of God’s word, it is certain the holy Spirit is not the author of this,

because the promise of peace belongs to none of his stamp; see Mat. xi. 28. Isaiah lvii. 15. Mat. v. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

2. That ordinarily the Spirit brings in his testimony either in duty, or after duty: “I have seen his ways, and I will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners: I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.” I know there may be a case of grievous temptations, and at such time the Spirit of God may come in by a sudden irradiation, and cheer the soul wonderfully, though it knows not how; yet usually the Spirit brings in his testimony either in duty, or not long after duty.

3. That such testimonies of the Spirit beget only an actual assurance during the present exigency, or in order to some present design that God is working thereby.

2. The Spirit witnesseth immediately; and that either without, or with argumentation, -- but both from the word.

1. Without argumentation; and that is when the Spirit applies some suitable word to the soul, and without more ado enables the soul to close with that word. As for

instance; thou art burdened for sin, and thou hast prayed earnestly for pardon of sin, and even then a secret whisper of the Spirit casts that word into thy heart, “I will heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely”; or such a voice as that, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Now this is a direct testimony; only I dare not leave it without a caution. Some can relate extraordinary passages of providence attending the coming in of such and such a word: as, that they did not know there was any such scripture, nor did they know where it was; and yet in opening the book, it was the very first place they cast their eye upon; or they wanted a book, and in the use of some other means unexpectedly a word was spoken, or remembered, so pat to the case, as if it had been a message from heaven: certainly the Spirit’s hinting of words thus is very observable; yet a bare giving in of a word is no warrant that it comes from the Spirit, unless the soul come up to some end which the word itself pointeth at; for the ends it aimeth at, as quickening, comforting, supporting, acting of some graces, or such like; and by this we may know that the testimony is true, and proceeds from the Spirit of God.

2. With argumentation; and that is, when the Spirit brings in the testimony of blood and water: I may call it a testimony of graces, written in our hearts, and brought out by the Spirit in a way of argument; as thus – “He that believeth hath everlasting

life: but I believe, therefore I have everlasting life.” The first proposition is the gospel; and in this way it is the first work of the Spirit to open our eyes for the understanding thereof. The second proposition is thy case, or my case; and here the Spirit enlightens the soul to see itself under that condition. But I believe --

In all cases, the assurance that the Spirit gives, maintains a soul in a way of reliance and dependence, when it sees no reason why he should do so; or it may be, when he sees reason why it should not be so: as it is said of Abraham in another case, that “he believed in hope against hope”; faith told him there was hope that he should be the father of many nations, when reason told him there was none. Again, the assurance that the Spirit gives, is attended with an high esteem of prayer, duties, ordinances; and in the issue (which is the most sure mark) it purifies the soul; “he that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure”; he is ever washing himself from sin, and watching against sin, and taking all possible care to keep himself pure and unspotted in this world; it keeps the soul humble and lowly, it being impossible that such a testimony of the Spirit, and so intimate a converse with God, and the light of his countenance, should not reflect low thoughts upon a man concerning himself; such a man cannot but say, “Lord, what am I that thou hast brought me hitherto? What, for such a peevish, unbelieving, impatient soul as

mine, to be carried in thy arms, and cheered with thy smiles, and to enjoy the comforts of thy Spirit? O what a wonderful, merciful, gracious God have I?”

O my soul, try now the hope of the Spirit’s indwelling by these several signs: Art thou enlightened savingly in the knowledge of God, and of Christ? Hast thou a spirit of knowledge and supplication? a spirit of sanctification? a spirit of love? Hast thou ever had the immediate testimony of the Spirit? Hast thou ever had the mediate testimony of the Spirit without any argumentation? Hast thou unexpectedly lighted on some places of scripture that hath satisfied thy soul as with marrow and fatness? Or if not so neither, hast thou the immediate testimony of the Spirit with argumentation? Canst thou argue thus; “He that believeth shall be saved: but I believe, therefore I shall be saved.” Or if any doubt be made of the assumption; canst thou prove it by such other graces as accompany faith, and are the fruits of faith? Canst thou say, by the help and shinings of the Spirit, that these and these graces are in me, I love God and Christ, I repent of my sins: -- surely then thy hope is well grounded; thou hast the indwelling of the Spirit; it is thine; even thine.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in this respect.

Let us believe on Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in these particulars. Many scruples are in many hearts: “What! is it possible that I should have any share in Christ’s ascension, Christ’s session, Christ’s mission of his Spirit! Was it ever in God’s heart that I should partake with Christ in all these glories? What is this, that earth should go up to heaven, that men should ascend to God? yea, that my soul with Christ, and by Christ, should ascend to God, and sit down with God in heavenly places? that my soul should have for its inmate the very same Spirit that Christ himself hath? O, I cannot, I dare not believe.”

Scrupulous souls, be not faithless, but believing; there is none of these particulars for which we have not a warrant out of the word of God; and therefore believe: I shall lay down, 1. Some directions, and 2. Some encouragements of faith.

1st. For directions of faith, observe, as before, these particulars.

1. Faith must directly go to Christ.
2. Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh.
3. Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh made under the law.
4. Faith must go to Christ, not only as made under the directive part of the law by his life, but under the penal part of the law, by his death.

5. Faith must go to Christ, not only as put to death in the flesh, but as quickened by the Spirit.

6. Faith must not only go to Christ as quickened by the Spirit, but as going into glory, as sitting down at God's right hand, and as sending the Holy Ghost. Faith should eye Christ as far as he goes: if he be ascended, so should faith; if he go into glory, and sit down there, and act there for his people, so should faith; and so should we in a way of believing follow after him, and take a view of all his transactions where he is: we have heard before how faith should go to Christ as dying, and as rising again; but yet faith is low, while it doth not go within the vail, and see him in glory; it is not enough to have only a faith of justification, but of glorification. O come let us see Christ in heaven, and we can have no less than a glorious faith! how many are there that never yet came to Christ as a glorified Christ! We are still in the lower form; many of us take in no more of Christ than what was done on the cross, we seldom follow Christ into heaven, to see what he is doing for us. O my soul! O my faith! mount up, and be upon the wing: Christ is gone up to heaven, Christ is sat down at God's right hand; Christ hath sent down his holy Spirit. He gave the gift of gifts, even the gift of the Holy Ghost himself. What! art not thou a partaker of this gift? O then look up unto Jesus in reference to all this, set him before thee: Christ in all these particulars is a right object for thy faith.

7. Faith in going to Christ, his ascension, session, and mission of the holy Spirit, is principally to look to the design of Christ, in each of these particulars: Christ did nothing, but he had an end in it for our good; and here is the life of faith, to eye the meaning of Christ in all his doings. Now the ends of Christ's ascension, session, and mission of his Spirit, were several; I shall instance only in these few.

1. Christ ascended, that we might ascend. Look, whatever God acted on Christ's person, that he did as on our behalf, and he means to act the same on us. Was Christ crucified? So are we. Is Christ risen again? So we are risen with him. Is Christ gone up into glory? So are we: heaven is now opened and possessed by Jesus Christ for us, and at last we shall ascend even as he ascended. How should faith pry into this? As we must go through all ordinances and creatures till we come to Christ, so through all conditions of Christ until we come to glory.

2. Christ sat down, that we might sit with him in heavenly places: what is the end of Christ's session, but that he might invest all his saints with the same privilege? In this height of glory, Christ is the pattern of what we shall be; surely this is the very top of heaven; Christ is exalted above the heavens, that we might in our measure be exalted with Christ: it was Christ's prayer, that his Father, and he, and we, might be one, "as thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be

one in us.” O how should faith stand, and gaze on Christ in that respect? What! is he on God’s right hand? and is he there preparing a mansion for my soul? What, shall I sit at the right hand of Christ? Admire, O my soul, this aim of Christ, the meaning of his exalting himself, it was to exalt thee; and the meaning of his exalting thee on this manner, is to manifest to all the world, what the Son of God is able to do, in raising so poor a creature to so rich a glory.

3. Christ sent down the Holy Ghost, that he might dwell in our souls, endow us with gifts and graces; that he might comfort us, seal us unto the day of redemption; fit us for glory. Amongst the many ends for which Christ sent down his holy Spirit, I shall insist only on these two --

1. That he might help us to “cry, Abba Father”; and make us come boldly to the throne of grace, as children to a father. It is the Spirit that takes us by the hand and leads us to the Father, when others stand at a distance, and cannot come near.

Though others are kept out, yet the adopted child, who hath received the Spirit of adoption, can say, “Let me come to my Father; guards are appointed to keep out strangers, but not sons.”

2. That he might guide us into all truth; I mean into all necessary, fundamental, saving truths: In this respect we have need of the Spirit. He it is that dictates to us which is the true religion; he it is that transcribes upon our hearts that which was before only written in our books; he it is that not only reveals truth from without, but imprints it also upon the soul, as a man doth a seal by impressing it on the wax; as the written word is the testimony without us, so are these impressions of the Spirit the testimony within us, by which we may know every necessary truth as it is in Jesus: unbelievers have a testimony without them, but believers have a double testimony, one without, and one within; and this witness within us will go with us and accompany us through all streights and difficulties. Men may take from us our bibles, teachers, friends, or imprison us where we cannot enjoy them; but they cannot take from us the Spirit of Christ; this witness; O what an excellent help is here to a poor Christian, beyond all the furniture of the most learned men, that want this testimony of the Spirit of Christ! surely this advantage will exceedingly furnish us against all temptations to any error, that is plainly contrary to the essentials of religion.

2d. For the encouragement of our faith to believe in Christ in reference to his ascension, session, and mission of his Spirit.

1. Consider the excellency of this object. What is it but Christ? Christ in his ascendant, regnant power? Christ in his marching, conquering, triumphing postures? in his free, and large, and magnificent gifts? “When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” O the glory, O the excellency, of Christ in these respects; I believe this is the top of heaven’s glory, to see and wonder at the virtues of him that sits on the throne at the right hand of God; to be filled, but never satiated, with the glory of Christ.

2. Consider the power, virtue, and influence of this object unto our souls’ salvation. O what a stately tower have we here erected to see heaven on? Faith may stand, as it were, on this mount, and see itself in glory; O the flowings, the rich emanations of grace and glory that come from hence! O why do we toil ourselves in gathering sticks, when to-morrow we shall be out of this world, and go to Christ.

3. Consider of the suitableness of these objects to our several conditions; “Behold he comes leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills,” Cant. ii. 8. Gregory, that measured his leaps, thus gives them: he first leaps from his Father’s mansion to his mother’s womb; from her womb to the manger; from his manger to his cross; from his cross to his grave; from his grave up again to heaven: great leaps indeed, that showed both his readiness to love, and willingness to save. O

believe! believe thy part in Christ's ascension, Christ's session, Christ's mission of his holy Spirit, and thou mayest go singing to thy grave! a lively faith in such particulars would set a soul in heaven, even whilst on earth.

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect.

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in these particulars. Much has been said already of Christ's conception, birth, life, death, resurrection; such arguments of love as are enough to swallow up souls in love; but as if all those were not enough for God, see here new mines, never known in the world before, opened in Jesus Christ. See! Christ for us and for our salvation is gone up to heaven, is set down at God's right hand, and hath sent down the Holy Ghost into our hearts. In the pouring out of these springs of heaven's love, how should our souls but open the mouth wide, and take in the streams of Christ's honey and milk; I mean his precious love breathings?

Two things I shall instance in, which may be as the loadstones of our love to Christ; the first is his glory, and the second his bounty.

1. For his glory: No sooner was he ascended, and sat at God's right hand, but John the divine had a sight of him, and O what a glorious sight! "He was clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as aflame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters; and he had in his right-hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun that shineth in his strength:" when John saw him thus, he swoons at his feet. But Christ, for all his glory, holds his head, "saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen, and have the keys of hell and death." A glorious Christ is good for dying sinners: would sinners but draw near and come and see this King in the chariot of love, and come and see his beauty, he would certainly draw their souls unto him: nay, say that all the damned in hell were brought up with their fiery chains to the door of heaven; could we let them look in, and behold the throne, and the Lamb, and the troops of glorified spirits clothed in white, with crowns of gold upon their heads, and palms in their hands, singing the eternal praises of their King; O how would they be sweetened in their pain, and ravished with those joys that are in Christ's face for evermore! O who can think of the glory that is in this delightful one, and not be swallowed up in love? Who can think of Christ's sitting at God's right hand, and

sparkling in his glory round about, and casting out beams of glory through east, and west, and north, and south, through heaven, and earth, and hell, and not love him with a whole heart? I remember one dying, and hearing some discourse of Jesus Christ: “O (said she) speak more of this, let me hear more of this; be not weary of telling his praise; I long to see him, how should I but long to hear of him!” Surely I cannot say too much of Jesus Christ: O the loveliness, beauty, and glory of his countenance! can I speak or you hear of such a Christ? and are we not all in a burning love? O my heart! how is it thou art not love-sick? how is it thou dost not charge the daughters of Jerusalem as the spouse did; “I charge ye, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love?”

2. For his bounty: No sooner was he ascended, and sat down at God’s right hand, but “he gives gifts unto men”; and he sends down the Holy Ghost. I shall only weigh two circumstances in this gift, either whereof both dignifies, and casts a beam of bounty from the giver, into the heart of the receiver, to move him to love.

(1.) One circumstance is, the greatness of the giver: O my soul, how shouldest thou but love Christ, the great emperor of heaven and earth: It was he that gave thee his Spirit, it was he that took of the Spirit which is upon him, (so is the expression of God to Moses, and put it upon thee; and doth not the person of Christ, the dignity

of Christ,) enhance the value of the gift? As all gifts are signs of love, so the love of a great personage, and the gifts issuing from such a love, ought more to be accounted than any gifts of any meaner person whatsoever.

(2.) Another circumstance is, the greatness of the gift: this argueth the greatness of the good will; and consequently deserveth a correspondence of affection. Now, what greater gift had Christ in store, than to give his own Spirit? The Spirit proceedeth from him, and is the same essence with himself; the Spirit is the third Person of the true and only Godhead, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and co-eternal, co-equal, and consubstantial with the Father and the Son; this appears by those divine attributes and properties which are attributed to the holy Spirit: as 1. Eternity; “In the beginning God created heaven and earth, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” 2. Omnipotency; because he, together with the Father and the Son, createth and preserveth all things: “By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; the Spirit of God hath made me; and all these things worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” 3. Omniscieny, or the knowledge of all things; “For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” I might add miracles, and the institution of sacraments, and prophecies, and gifts, and graces, as the effects of his divinity: “I cast out devils (saith Christ) by the Spirit of God; and baptize in the name of the

Father, and of the Holy Ghost.” “And the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.” “And we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” See now how the holy Spirit is God, co-eternal, co-equal, consubstantial with God the Father, and God the Son; is not this a great gift? Yea, as great a gift as possibly can be given; what can he do more, than to give himself, and to give his Spirit? O the bonds of love that are upon man towards Christ in this respect!

Come, my soul, and take a view of The glory and bounty of Jesus Christ! if thy heart be not all brass and iron, how shouldest thou but choose to love? If either beauty or bounty, if either majesty or magnificence, can draw thy affection, Christ will have it; for in him is all: O let him be thy all! surely if thou hast anything besides himself, he is the donor of all, he is the beauty of all, the sum of all, the perfection of all, yea, is the author, preserver, and finisher of all.

SECT. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect.

Let us joy in Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in these particulars; there is not a particular under consideration, but it is the object of a Christian's joy. --

1. How should it heighten my joys, and enlarge my comforts, when I consider that Christ is ascended into glory! By this it is clear that Christ is accepted of the Father for me, or otherwise he should never have been received into heaven: O what joy is in this!

2. How should it heighten my joys, and enlarge my comforts, when I consider that Christ is set down at God's right hand. Now he hath the keys of heaven delivered into his hands; "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth," and now he can do what he will: God the Father hath given away (as it were) all his prerogative unto Jesus Christ: "All judgment is committed to the Son, for the Father judgeth no man." Now he is in a capacity of acting all his love to me in the most glorious way; he is highly advanced, and thereby he hath the advantage to advance me, and to glorify me: O what joy may enter into this poor, dark, disconsolate soul of mine, whilst I think over these glorious passages of Christ in glory!

3. How should it heighten my joys, when I consider that Christ hath sent down his holy Spirit into my heart! O what comfort is this, to know that the Spirit of Christ is my inmate! that my soul is the temple, the house and dwelling, of the Spirit of God! that Christ is in me of a truth, and that not only by the infusion of his grace,

but by the indwelling of his Spirit! Christ in his bodily presence went away, but Christ, in his Spirit continues still: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”: He is with us, and, which is more, he is in us; “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Not Christ in sermons which we hear, nor Christ in chapters which we read, nor Christ in sacraments which we receive, but Christ in our hearts by his Spirit, is unto us “the hope of glory.”

And now, O my soul, spread thyself on this great good, Christ’s ascension, Christ’s session, and Christ’s mission of his holy Spirit. There is not any particular here before thee, but it is fuel for joy. O what joy was in heaven when Christ ascended, and when Christ sat down at God’s right-hand, and when Christ sent down the Holy Spirit! Suppose thyself to have been in heaven, when he first entered into it, and when he first sat down at God’s right hand, and sent down the Comforter to his saints; was not heaven full of joy? Methinks the very thought of Christ’s bright face, and white throne, and Christ’s harpers, and heavenly troop, surrounding the throne, and Christ’s welcome to his Father, both for himself and all his saints, and his carrying thy name upon his breast before his Father, should fill thy soul as full of joy, as possibly it can hold. O the first-fruits of Emmanuel’s land, that lies beyond time and death? O the joys that were in heaven at Christ’s first entrance into heaven! O my soul, why dost thou not check thyself, and lay aside thy sad

complaints, and forget this earth, and earthly troubles! Why dost thou not look up to Jesus Christ, and rejoice in him who hath done all this for thy salvation? Either the Spirit of God is not thy comforter, or thou canst not but receive comfort in these passages.

Sect. VIII. -- Of Calling on Jesus in that respect.

Let us call on Jesus: I mean --

1. Let us pray that we may have our part in these transactions; or let us pray for more and more assurance thereof unto our souls, for though we do believe, yet may we not be without our doubts; and in case of doubts, if once we are but assured, what better means than prayer?

2. Praise God for these great transactions of his Son! Are they not mercies, like mountains, lying one upon another, and reaching up to the very heavens? Did not love break out first in a direct line, and as it went along, hath it not wound up itself in such a variety of unthought of discoveries, as that it amazeth men and angels? What! that Jesus Christ should not only act for us here on earth, but also ascend for us into heaven, and sit down there at God's right hand, above the heavens; that all

this should be done for us and our salvation, and to that purpose that he should send down his Spirit into our hearts, to prepare us for his glory? Now “bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name: bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect.

Let us conform to Jesus in the aforesaid respect. A serious beholding of Jesus in his ascension, session, mission of his Spirit, is enough to change us into the same image from glory to glory. It was the sweet saying of an experienced saint, “View a glorified Christ, see him as in that relation and condition, and you will soon have the sparkles of the same glory on your hearts.” Christ is now exalted; he is now in glory at the right-hand of God: O let all our actions be glorious, let all our walking, joys, breathings, be as in glory. I shall not in this transaction lay out many particular conformities to Christ, but gather all into one, which is, heavenly conversation; seek things above, set your affection on things above: Christ is gone up, and Christ is sat down at God’s right-hand; and herein if you will conform, let your hearts be in heaven, let your affections be in heaven, let your conversations be in heaven.

In prosecution of this, I shall examine,

- 1st. What do we mean by our conversation in heaven?
2. Why must our conversation be in heaven?
3. By what means must we come up to this conversation in heaven?

1. By our conversation in heaven, I mean our aim at heaven: as heaven is our home, so our eye is there; whatever we do, our end, our scope, is to fit us for heaven, and to lay in heaven: “We look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

By our conversation in heaven, I mean, our communion with Christ in heaven: “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” As it is among friends that converse together, they act mutually for the comfort one of another; there is a communion, or a mutual acting of the soul upon Christ, and of Christ upon the soul.

By our conversation in heaven, I mean, our affections on heaven, or on Christ in heaven: “Set your affections on things above,” that is, set your desires, loves,

hopes, joys, on heavenly things. Our affections are precious things, and are only to be set on precious objects. O what a shame is it to set our affections on the things in this life! Have we not a kingdom, a God, a Christ, a crown, in heaven, to set our affections upon? And shall we set them upon dross, and dung? Are not all our pleasures and vanities base in comparison of Christ? O be not we so base as to set our affections on earthly things, but rather on God and Christ, and this is our heavenly conversation.

By our conversation in heaven, I mean, we carry and behave ourselves in this life as free denizens of the city of heaven: our city, whereof we are citizens, and whereunto we have a right, is in heaven above: in this respect we trade not in trifles, as other men do, but we trade for great things, for high things; we merchandise for goodly pearls, even for God, and for Christ, who sitteth at the right-hand of God. We see now what is meant by our conversation in heaven.

2. Why is the conversation of the saints in heaven?

1. Because they know that the original of their souls came from God in heaven: the body indeed was of the dust of the ground, but the soul was the breath of God; so it is said of the first man, “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man

became a living soul.” The soul had a more heavenly original than any of the other creatures that are in the world; and when God works grace in the soul, and it begins to know itself, it looks on all things here below as vile and contemptible; it then looks upward, and begins to converse with things suitable to its original.

2. Because their best and choice things are already in heaven. As their Father is in heaven, and their Saviour in heaven, their husband is in heaven, their elder brother is in heaven, and their king is in heaven, their treasure is in heaven, their inheritance is in heaven, their hope is in heaven, their mansion is in heaven, their chief friends are in heaven, their substance is in heaven, their reward is in heaven, their wages are in heaven: and all these things being in heaven, no marvel their conversations be in heaven.

3. Because they are going towards heaven even whiles yet they are on earth. If the nobleman do once know his condition, and begin his travel homeward towards his father’s court, will he not, every morning that he rises, converse with them that come from his father to conduct him home? Doth it not do him good to hear any man speak of his father’s country? Is it not in his thoughts, in his talk, in his eye, at every step? O my soul, if thou art indeed travelling towards heaven, how shouldst thou but have it in thy motions, affections, and conversations?

3d. By what means should we come to have our conversation in heaven?

1. Let us watch opportunities for heavenly exercises. God now by his ministers calls, “Come ye to the waters, come buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money; come to me, and your souls shall live.” Why, “now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation”: whilst ministers call, and we live under the droppings of the word; these are opportunities from heaven: O then, he that never prayed, let him pray; and he that never heard, let him hear: the Lord is now near to us, Christ Jesus is calling, and mercy is entreating, and love is beseeching, and wisdom is crying after us; O lay hold on these opportunities for heavenly exercises, and then we shall come to heavenly conversations.

2. Take heed of resting in the formality of duties. Many souls that have enlightenings of conscience, dare not but take opportunities for heavenly duties; but then comes in the temptations of the devil, and corruptions of their own hearts, and then they say, “Now the duty is done, and what needs more?” Alas! It is not “what have we done?” but, “where have we been?” What, have our souls been in heaven, with God and with Christ? Have we had communion with the Father, and with the Son, in our duties? O take heed of formality; it will exceedingly hinder

our conversation in heaven! O keep our eye still upon our heart! ask in duty, what affections have been? How much are we got nearer heaven thereby? And by this means we shall come to an heavenly conversation.

2. Look up unto Jesus as hanging on the cross, and as sitting on the throne; this is the apostle's rule: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God." These two are the objects of a Christian's look, who studies an heavenly conversation, viz. Christ's cross, and Christ's session: by the cross he is author, and by the throne he is the finisher, of our faith; in the first is set down his love to us, in the second is set down our hope of him: come then, and settle your thoughts and looks on this blessed object; a sight of Christ's cross, but especially of Christ's throne, is a blessed means to wean us from the world, and to raise our affections to things above, yea, to form our conversation towards heaven.

4. Let us wait for the appearing of Jesus Christ: "Our conversation is in heaven (saith the apostle) from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Where his expectations are, there a man's conversation will be; if we expect ere long that the Lord Jesus will appear in glory, and that we shall see him,

not with other, but with the same eyes, the very waiting for these things will help our conversation to be heavenward. Certainly the day is coming, when Jesus Christ shall come with his angels in his glory, and then shall the bodies of the saints shine gloriously before the face of God, and Jesus Christ: O the wonder of this day! the glory of Christ shall then darken the glory of the sun, and moon, and stars; but my body shall not be darkened, but rather it shall shine like the glorious body of Christ Jesus.

5. Let us observe the drawings and movings of the Spirit, and follow his dictates: to this purpose Christ ascended, and sat down at God's right-hand, and sent down the holy Spirit, that the Holy Ghost being come down, he might do his office, in bringing our souls towards salvation; and if ever our souls get above this earth, and get acquaintance in heaven, it is the Spirit of God that must be the chariot of Elijah, yea the very living principle, by which we must move and ascend; O then take heed of quenching its motions, or resisting its workings. Take we heed of grieving our guide, or of knocking off the chariot wheels of his Holy Spirit. We little think how much the life of grace, and the happiness of souls, doth depend upon our ready and cordial obedience to the Spirit of God: when he forbids us, and we will go on, when he tells us which is the way, and we will not regard; no wonder if we are strangers to an heavenly conversation; if we will not follow the Spirit, how

should it lead us to heaven, or bring our hearts unto the presence of God? O learn we this lesson, and let not only the motions of our bodies, but the very thoughts of our hearts, be at the Spirit's beck! if we cherish these motions, and hearken to the Spirit, O what a help should we find to this heavenly conversation!

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, IN HIS INTERCESSION.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

Sect. I. -- What the Intercession of Christ is.

We have spoken of Christ's entrance into heaven, and of his immediate actings after his entrance there; that transaction which yet remains, and will remain until his coming again, is, his intercession for the saints. In these actings of Christ in heaven, if we follow him, we must go from glory to glory: no sooner come we out of one room of glory, but presently we step into another. One would think enough had been said already of the glory of Christ, and our glory in Christ; who would

not willingly sit down under the shadow of this happiness, and go no further? But yet this is not all; so thick and fast doth the glory of Christ break in upon us. O what a blessed thing is it to be looking up to Jesus Christ! Saints might do nothing else but ravish their hearts with the diversity of heavenly light and comfort, which breaks forth from the bosom of Jesus Christ. Here is now another mystery, as great and amazing as the former, which springs out before our eyes in this transaction of Christ's intercession.

And in prosecution of this, as in the former, I shall first lay down the object, and secondly direct you how to look upon it. The object is Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his intercession: In ordering of which, I shall examine these particulars:--

1. What is this intercession of Christ?
2. To whom is Christ's intercession directed, and for whom?
3. What agreement betwixt Christ's intercession, and the intercession of the high priests of old, and what difference?
4. What are the properties of this intercession?
5. Wherein it doth more especially consist?
6. How powerful Christ's intercessions are with God?

7. What are the reasons of this great transaction of Christ's intercession for his people?

1. What is the intercession of Christ? Some define it thus: "Christ's intercession is that part of his priestly office, whereby Christ is advocate, and entreater of God the Father, for the faithful." I shall give it thus: "Christ's intercession is his gracious will, fervently and immoveably desiring, that for the perpetual virtue of his sacrifice, all his members might, both for their persons and duties, be accepted of the Father." 1. I call the intercession of Christ his own gracious will; for we must not imagine that Christ, in his intercession, prostrates himself on his knees before his Father's throne, uttering some submissive form of words; that is not befitting the majesty of him that sits at God's right-hand: when he was but yet on earth, the substance of his request for his saints ran thus, "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am"; and much more, now he is in heaven, is this the form of his intercession – Father, I will this. 2. The foundation of Christ's intercession, is the death of Christ; and hence we make two parts of Christ's oblation; the one expiatory, when Christ suffered upon the cross: the other presentatory, when he doth appear in heaven before God for us: the one was finished on earth, when Christ suffered within the gate; the other is performed in heaven, now Christ is within the city; the one was a sacrifice indeed, the other is

not so much a sacrifice as the commemoration of a sacrifice; the first was an act of humiliation, this latter is an act of glory: the first was performed once for all, this latter is done continually; the first was for the obtaining redemption, and this latter is for the application of redemption.

The matter interceded for, is, that all the saints and their service might find acceptance with God: first, Christ's intercession is for our persons, and then Christ's intercession is for our works; by Christ's intercession is Christ's satisfaction applied to our persons, and by consequence the defect of our duties is covered and removed; and both we and our works are approved and accepted of God the Father.

Christ intercedes, according to both natures. 1. According to his humanity; partly by appearing before his Father in heaven, and partly by desiring our salvation.

Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: --

And I say not unto you that I will pray, or desire the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you. 2. According to his Deity; partly by applying the merit of his death, and partly by willing the salvation of his saints; and as the effect thereof, by making requests in the hearts of the saints with sighs unspeakable. Elect, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; -- this

sprinkling is the applying of the blood of Jesus, and that is an act of intercession. Again, Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: he desires as man, but he wills as God; and as the effect of this, he gives the Spirit. The Spirit itself makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. But what are the intercessions of the Spirit, to the intercessions of Christ? I answer, much every way; the Spirit's intercessions are as the effect, and Christ's intercessions are as the cause; the Spirit's intercessions are as the echo, and Christ's intercessions are as the first voice; the Spirit intercedes for men in and by themselves, but Christ intercedes in his own person; there is a dependence of the Spirit's intercession in us, upon Christ's intercession in himself. First, Christ by his intercession applies his satisfaction made, and then sends down his holy Spirit into our hearts, to help our infirmities, and to teach us what to pray, and how to pray as we ought. Now this he doth as God, for who shall give a commission to the Spirit of God, but God himself?

Sect. II. -- To whom is Christ's Intercession directed, and for whom?

To whom is Christ's intercession directed? I answer. Immediately to God the Father; "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In the work of intercession, are three persons: a party offended, a party

offending, and the intercessor distinct from them both: the party offended is God the Father; the party offending is sinful man; and the intercessor, distinct from them both, is Jesus Christ. I deny not but Christ's intercession is made to the whole Trinity, but yet immediately and directly to the first person, and in him to the rest, - - i.e. "three persons, and but one God."

This intercession is made, in one sense, for the world: so Christ, upon the cross, prayed for the bloody Jews; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But in a particular manner for all and every faithful man. As the high priest went into the sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, so Christ entered into the holiest of all, with the names of all believers upon his heart, and still he carries them upon his breast, and presents his will and desire unto his Father for them; nor doth he only intercede in general, but whatever thy name is, John, Peter, Thomas, Mary, Martha, if thou art a believer, Christ prays for thee: it is our common practice to desire the prayers one of another; but O, who would not have a share in the prayers of Jesus Christ? Why, certainly, if thou believest in Christ, Christ prays for thee.

Sect. III. -- What Agreement there is betwixt Christ's Intercessions and the Intercessions of the High-priests of old, and what Difference.

What agreement is there betwixt the intercessions of Christ, and the intercessions of the high-priests of old? Among the Jews, in the times of the old Testament, they had an high-priest, who was in all things to stand betwixt God and them. Now as the Jews had their high-priest to intercede for them, so the Lord Jesus was to be the high-priest of our profession, and to intercede for us; it will therefore give some light to this doctrine of intercession, if we compare these two: and first, consider what agreement betwixt Christ and the high-priests of old; betwixt Christ's intercession, and the high-priest's intercessions?

1. Christ, and the high-priests of old, agreed in name; not only they, but Christ himself is called an High-priest: "We have such an high-priest, who is set; down at the right-hand of the majesty on high."

2. They agreed in office; that consisted of two parts, oblation and presentation: first, they offered a sacrifice; and secondly, they presented it in the holy of holies, with prayer and intercession, unto God; the one was done without, the other within the holy of holies; and in answer thereunto, there are two distinct parts of Christ's priesthood. (1.) The offering of himself a sacrifice upon the cross. (2.) The carrying of himself, and of his blood, into the holy of holies, or into the heaven of heavens;

where he appears and prays in the force of that blood: and indeed this part of his priesthood is of the two the more eminent; and therefore it is held forth to us in the types of both these two orders of priesthood that were before him, and figures of him, both that of Aaron and Melchisedech. [1.] This was typified in that Levitical priesthood of Aaron and his fellows: the highest service of that office, was the going into the holy of holies, and making an atonement there; yea, this was the height of the high-priest's honour, that he did this alone, and it constituted the difference betwixt him as he was high-priest, and other priests; for they killed and offered the sacrifices without, as well as he; but only the high-priest was to approach the holy of holies with blood, and that but once a year. [2.] This was typified by Melchisedech's priesthood, which the apostle argues to have been much more excellent than any of Aaron's, in as much as Levi, Aaron's father, paid tithes to this Melchisedech in Abraham's loins; now Melchisedech was his type, not so much in respect of his oblation, or offering sacrifice, as in respect of his continual presentation and intercession in heaven; and therefore the same clause, "for ever," still comes in when Melchisedech is named; "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech." Here then is the agreement betwixt Christ, and the high-priests of old: in respect of name, both were priests and in respect of office, both had their oblations, and presentations, or intercessions with God in glory.

3. In the point of intercession, they agree in these particulars: --

1. The high-priests of old, usually once a year, went into the most holy place within the veil; and so is Christ, our great high-priest, passed into the heavens within the veil, even into the holy of holies.

2. The high-priests of old had a plate of pure gold upon their foreheads, which was “to bear the iniquity of the holy things, that they might be accepted before the Lord”; and so doth Christ bear the iniquity of our holy things. Spiritual Christians! here is your comfort, you are not able to perform any duty to God, but there is a great deal of sin in the same; you cannot hear, nor pray, nor confer, nor meditate, without much sin; but Christ bears all these sins, even the iniquity of your holy things, and he presents your persons and prayers, without the least spot, to the Father; he is “the angel of the covenant, that stands at the altar, having a golden censer with much incense, to offer it with the prayers of his saints,” and so they are acceptable before the Lord.

3. The Jewish high-priests “bore the names of the children of Israel on a breast-plate upon their hearts, for a memorial before the Lord”; and so doth Christ, our

great high-priest, bear the names of his people upon his heart before the Lord continually.

1. In presenting them to his Father without spot, as righteous in his own righteousness: “Christ loved the church, that he might present it to his Father, and, in him, to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

2. In remembering them; The righteous shall be had in continual remembrance; this is the soul’s comfort in a time of desertion, or in an evil day; if any cry out, as sometimes David did, “How long wilt thou forget me, Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” Let such a one remember, that Christ’s redeemed ones are upon his heart, and he cannot forget them. But Zion said, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me”: O no! “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee.”

3. In loving them: they are near and dear unto him, he hath set them as a seal upon his heart; so was the prayer of the spouse, “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm”; and then it follows, “for love is strong as death.” Christ hath

an entire love to his saints, he died for them, and now he intercedes for them; he keeps them close to his heart, and there is none shall pluck them out of his hand. Thus far of the agreement betwixt Christ's intercessions and the high-priests, of old.

The difference betwixt Christ and them, and betwixt Christ's intercessions and their intercessions, may appear in these particulars: --

1. The high-priests then were but for a time, but Christ is a "priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech." "Melchisedech (saith the apostle) was without father, without mother, without descent, neither having beginning of days, nor end of life"; that is, as far as it is known: and so is Christ without a father on earth, and without a mother in heaven; without beginning, and without end; he abides a priest perpetually, even to the end of the world; yea, and the virtue of his priesthood is infinitely beyond all time, even for ever and ever.

2. The high-priest then entered only into that place that was typically holy, but Christ is entered into that place which is properly holy; he is entered into the heavens.

3. The high-priests then did always intercede for the people; only once a year the high-priest entered into the holy of holies, but our great high-priest is ascended into the holy of holies, never to put off his princely, priestly garments. Nor does he only once a year sprinkle the mercy-seat with his sacrifice, but every day; he lives for ever to intercede. O what comfort is this to a poor dejected soul! He intercedeth ever, till he shall finish thy salvation; the smoke of his incense ascends for ever without intermission.

4. The high-priests then interceded not for sins of presumption: If a man sinned ignorantly, there was indeed a sacrifice and intercession for him, but if a man sinned presumptuously, he was to be cut off from among his people; no sacrifice, no intercession, by the high-priest then: but we have such an high-priest as makes intercession for all sins; every sin, though it boil up to blasphemy, (so it be not against the Holy Ghost,) shall, by virtue of Christ's intercession, be forgiven: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," (i.e.) for sins of all sorts: "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men" (i.e.) scarlet sins, or crimson sins; sins of the deepest dye, shall by Christ's intercession be done away; the voice of his blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel; it intercedes for the abolition of bloody sins.

5. The high-priests then interceded not without all these materials, viz. a temple, an altar, a sacrifice, a censer of burning coals taken off the altar, a putting the incense upon the fire, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat, a sprinkling the mercy-seat with the blood of the bullock and of the goat: but Jesus Christ in his intercessions now needs none of these materials; but rather he himself, and his own merits, are instead of all: as, 1. He is the temple; “Destroy this temple, (saith Christ) and I will build it again in three days”: it was destroyed; and God found it an acceptable sacrifice, and smelt in it a sweet savour, as in a temple. 2. He is the altar, according to his Deity; for as the altar sanctifies the gift, so doth the God-head sanctify the manhood. 3. He is the sacrifice properly, according to the manhood; for although, by communication of properties, the blood of the sacrifice is called the “blood of God,” yet properly the human soul and flesh of Christ, was the whole burnt-offering roasted in the fire of his Father’s wrath.

6. His merits are the cloud of incense, for so the angel; Christ is said “to have a golden censer, and much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before 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”: the merits of Christ are so mingled with the prayers of his saints,

that they perfume their prayers, and so they find acceptance with God his Father.

We see now the difference betwixt Christ's intercessions and the intercessions of the high-priests of old.

Sect. IV. -- What the Properties of this Intercession of Christ are?

What are the properties of this intercession of Jesus Christ? I answer: --1. It is heavenly and glorious; and that appears in these particulars: --

1. Christ doth not fall upon his knees before his Father, as in the days of his humiliation; for that is not agreeable to that glory he hath received; he only presents his pleasure to his Father, that he may thereto put his seal and consent. 2. Christ doth not pray out of private charity, as the saints pray one for another in this life, but out of public office of mediation: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." 3. Christ prays not out of humility, but out of authority, which is the desiring of a thing, so as withal he hath a right of bestowing it, as well as desiring it. 4. Christ prays not merely as an advocate, but as a propitiation too; Christ's Spirit is an advocate, but only Christ is advocate and propitiation: Christ's Spirit is our advocate on earth, but only Christ in his person applies his merits in heaven, and furthers the cause of our salvation with his Father

in heaven. In every of these respects we may see Christ's intercession is heavenly and glorious.

2. It is ever effectual and prevailing: as he hath a power to intercede for us, so he hath a power to confer that upon us for which he intercedes: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." If Christ prayed on earth, he was ever heard; but if Christ prayed in heaven, we may be sure the Father ever heareth and answereth there: when Christ as man prayed for himself, he was heard in that which he feared; but now Christ as mediator, praying for us, he is ever heard in the very particular which he desireth.

3. It is, of all other the transactions of Christ till the very end of the world, the most perfect and consummate; without it all the other parts of Christ's mediatorship would have been to little purpose. As the sacrifices under the law had not been of force, had not the high-priest entered into the holy place to appear there, and to present the blood there unto the Lord; so all that ever Christ did or suffered upon earth, had been ineffectual unto us, had he not entered into heaven, "to appear there in the presence of God for us." In his life and death Christ was the meritorious cause, but by his intercession Christ is the applying cause, of our souls' salvation.

Sect. V. -- Wherein the Intercession of Christ consists?

Wherein more especially doth the intercession of Jesus Christ consist? I answer, In these particulars:

1. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of his person for us: he himself went up to heaven, and presented himself; the apostle calls this, "an appearing for us: Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." I believe there is an emphasis in the word appearing for us. But how appears he for us? I answer; 1. In a public manner: whatsoever he did in this kind, he did it openly and publicly; he appears for us in the presence of God the Father; he appears for us in the presence of his saints and angels; heaven's eyes are all upon him in his appearing for us. 2. He appears for us a mediator, he stands in the middle betwixt God and us; hence it is, that he is God-man, that he might be a mediator betwixt God and man. 3. He appears for us as a sponsor and a pledge: surely it is a comfort for a man to have a friend at court, that may own him, and appear for him; but if this friend be both a mediator and surety, a mediator to request for him, and a surety to engage for him, O what comfort is this! thus Christ appeared in every respect; he is a mediator to request for us; and

he is a surety to engage for us; as Paul was for Onesimus, a mediator, “I beseech thee for my son Onesimus”; and a sponsor, “if he hath wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on my account, I will repay it.” So is Jesus Christ for his saints: he is “the mediator of a better covenant,” Heb. viii. 6. And he “is a surety of a better testament,” Heb. vii. xii. 4. He appears as a solicitor, to present and promote the desires and requests of his saints, in such a way as that they may find acceptance with his Father. --5. He appears as an advocate: “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” An advocate is more than a solicitor; an advocate is one that is of council with another, and pleadeth his case in open court; and such an advocate is Jesus Christ unto his people. 1. He is of counsel with them; that is one of the titles given him by the prophet Isaiah, “Wonderful Counsellor”; he counsels them by his word and Spirit. 2. He pleads for them, and this he doth in the high court of heaven, at the bar of God’s own justice; there he pleads their case, and answereth all the accusations that are brought in by Satan, or their own consciences. But of this anon. --6. He appears as a public agent, or ambassador: what that is, some tell us in these particulars; 1. His work is to continue peace; and surely this is Christ’s work. “He is our peace,” (saith the apostle,) that is, the author of our peace; he purchased our peace, and he maintains our peace with God; to this purpose he sits at God’s right-hand, to intercede for us, and to maintain the peace and union betwixt God and us; “therefore being justified

by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2. His work is to maintain intercourse and correspondency; and surely this is Christ’s work also: “By him we have an access unto the Father.” “In him we have boldness, and access with confidence.” The word access doth not only signify coming to God in prayer, but all that resort and communion which we have with God, as united by faith to Jesus Christ; according to that, “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” This benefit have all believers, in and by Christ; they come to God by him, they have free commerce and intercourse in heaven. -- 3. His work is to reconcile and take up differences; and this is Christ’s work also: “he maketh intercession for the transgressors”; he takes up the differences that our transgressions make betwixt God and us. -- 4. His work is to procure the welfare of the people or state where he negotiates; and this is no less Christ’s work, for he seeks the welfare of his people, he sits at God’s right-hand to intercede for them, and, commending their estate to his Father, he makes it his request, that his members may have “a continual supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” that they may be strengthened in temptations, confirmed in tribulations, delivered from every evil work, enabled to every good duty, and finally preserved unto his heavenly kingdom.

2. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of his wounds, death, and blood, as a public satisfaction for the debt of sin, and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.

We read in the law, that "when the high-priest went within the veil, he took the blood of the bullock, and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat, he sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times." Surely these were "patterns of things to be done in the heavens." "Christ, that was slain without the gate," carried his own blood into the holy of holies, or into the heaven of heavens, for, "by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us": And thither come, he sprinkles it, as it were, upon the mercy-seat, (i.e.) he applies it, and obtains mercy by it. By the blood of Christ, God's mercy and justice are reconciled in themselves, and reconciled unto us. Christ's blood was shed upon earth, but Christ's blood is sprinkled now he is in heaven; heaven is all besprinkled, as the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was; the earth is all besprinkled, as the altar out of the holy of holies was. Heaven and earth are all besprinkled with the blood of Jesus; so that the saints, and the people of God, are nowhere, but their doors, and their posts, and their houses, (I mean their bodies and souls,) are all besprinkled with the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: why, this is that "blood of

sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Mark that: Christ’s blood hath a tongue; it speaks, it cries, it prays, it intercedes; -- Christ’s blood crieth out, it makes a loud cry, it fills heaven and earth with the noise; yea, the Lord’s ears are so filled with it, that it drowns all other sounds, and rings continually in his ears.

I will not say, that the very blood which Christ shed on the cross, is now in heaven, nor that it speaks in heaven; these cryings are merely metaphorical; yet this I maintain as real and proper, that the power, merit, and virtue of Christ’s blood is presented by our Saviour to his Father, both as a public satisfaction for our sins, and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.

3. Christ’s intercession consists in the presenting of his will, his request, for us, grounded upon the virtue of his glorious merits: “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.” This was a piece of Christ’s prayer while yet he was on earth; and it is a summary of Christ’s intercession, which now he makes for us in his glory; he prayed on earth, as he meant to pray for us when he came to heaven; he hints at this in the beginning of his prayer, for he speaks as if all his work had been done on earth, and as if then he were beginning his work in heaven: “I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and

now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

4. Christ’s intercession consists in the presenting our persons, in his own person, to his Father; so that now God cannot look upon the Son, but he must behold the saints in his Son; and this was shadowed out by that act of the high-priest, who went into the holy of holies, with the “names of all the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders, and upon his breasts”; and this the apostle speaks yet more plainly; “by him we have an access unto the Father, and in him we have boldness and access with confidence.” We find in the law, “that Aaron was to put two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and so Aaron was to bear the names before the Lord upon his two shoulders, for a memorial.” And again; “Aaron was to bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he went into the holy place for a memorial before the Lord continually.” Here we find the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven in stones, which the high-priest usually took with him into the holy place, when he appeared before the Lord; a lively type of Christ’s intercession, who being entered into the heavens, there appears in our behalf, and he presents our persons to his Father, bearing them (as it were) upon his shoulders, and upon his heart; thus Christ takes our persons into heaven, and represents them

in his own person to his Father. Secondly, we find in the gospel a gracious promise, that “by Christ we have access unto the Father, and in Christ we have access with confidence.” Where the word for access, signifies properly a manuduction, or leading by the hand to God; an introduction, or bringing into God; alluding to the custom in princes’ courts, where none may come into the presence chamber, unless they be led, or brought in, by some favourite or courtier there; thus none may have access into the presence of God, unless they are brought in by this favourite of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose very office it is to bring men unto God; he takes us by the hand, and leads us to the Father.

5. Christ’s intercession consists in the presenting our duties unto God. Not only doth he take our persons, and leads them into the presence of God, but together with our persons he presents all our services in his own person. Alas! “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” but Christ draws out the evil of duty, and failings in duty, before he will present them unto God. And he observes what good there is in any of our duties or performances, and with that he mingles his own prayers and intercessions, and presents all as one work interwoven or mingled together to God the Father. It is Jesus, and only Jesus, that presents our prayers, and sanctifies our prayers, and mingles our prayers, with his merits, and so makes them penetrate sweetly before his God.

6. Christ's intercession consists in presenting our plea, or answer, in heaven, to all those accusations that are brought in against us. And this I take to be the meaning of the challenge, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Christ intercedes; and who shall condemn? Christ takes off all accusations; and who shall charge? if sin, or Satan, shall dare to accuse, our Jesus is ready, at God's right-hand, to answer all. And in this respect he is truly called our advocate: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have an advocate that pleads for us, that answers for us; that in a way of equity (grounding all upon his own merits) calls for the pardon of our sins, and for the salvation of our souls.

Sect. VI. -- How powerful Christ's Intercessions are with God?

How powerful are Christ's intercessions with God? This will appear, if we consider: --

1. That Christ is our great high-priest to God; “We have such an high-priest, who is set down at the right-hand of the majesty on high”: now, it was the way of God to lend his ear in an especial manner to the high-priests; “Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day. And all the people said to Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God. And Samuel said unto the people, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.” Now such an high-priest as this, (though with far more eminency,) is Christ to God; he intercedes for his people, (“God forbid that he should ever cease to pray for his people,”) and he hath God’s ear in an especial manner; if ever God lend his ear to any one, it must needs be to this high-priest, because of his office to intercede betwixt God and his people. Christ stands next to God, as our great high-priest; and therefore he must needs prevail with God in every petition he puts up for us.

2. That Christ was called to this office by God, his Father: “Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high-priest”; no, no: but “he was called of God, as Aaron was”; it was God the Father that designed him to it, and that furnished him for it, and that invested him in it: “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech.” Now to what purpose should God call him to this office, but especially to intercede for them, to whom God was

willing to communicate salvation? Surely the Father is engaged to hear the Son, in that he is an high-priest to God, and called to his office by God.

3. That Christ is God's Son; and that is more than God's high-priest; he is his beloved Son, his Son that never gave him the least offence; sure then when he comes and intercedes for a man, he is most like to speed; if a child do but cry, "My Father, My Father," he may prevail very much, especially with a Father who is tender-hearted: Jesus Christ is the precious Son of God the Father; and God the Father is a dear and kind-hearted Father; how then should the intercessions of Christ but be most powerful with God? All the relations of son and father in the world, are but a shadow of this relation betwixt God and Christ; it is so near, that though they are two, yet Christ speaks of them as one, "I and my Father are one"; if then the Father should deny him anything, he should deny himself, or cease to be one with his Son; which can never be. Christ is God's Son, his natural Son, his beloved Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," saith God. O then how prevalent must Christ's intercession be with God!

4. That Christ is God himself: how powerful in this respect, must his intercessions be unto the Father: it is true, that Christ is another person, but one and the same God with the Father; Christ is the very essential, substantial representation of God

himself; Christ is the very self of God, both God sending and God sent; Christ is the fellow of God: “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow”; nay, Christ is God, and not another God, but one God; “God of God, light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” Can we imagine now that God himself should be denied any boon of God himself? If God sometimes spoke to his servants, “Ask of me, command ye me, concerning all the work of mine hands”; will not God much more say to Christ, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession?” We have brought it now so near, that if God be God; and God be omnipotent, that he can do, and can have, whatsoever he pleases; then Christ being one God with his Father, he must needs prevail.

Sect. VII. -- Of the Reason of Christ’s Intercession.

What are the reasons of this great transaction of Christ’s intercession for his people? I answer: 1. It is the Father’s will that it should be so; he called Jesus Christ to his office, the command of God is upon Jesus Christ; “Ask what thou wilt for thy redeemed ones, I willingly engage myself to grant, only it is my pleasure thou shouldest ask”: as sometimes he said to the house of Israel, “I the Lord have

spoken, and I will do it; notwithstanding, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them”: so saith God to Christ, “I the Lord have spoken, and will do it; only, my Son, I will be inquired of by thee.” I look upon this as the main reason of Christ’s intercession; “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.”

2. It is Christ’s own inclination to do this office. What is the will of the Father, is the will of Christ; so that what the Father would have Christ own, he cannot but own; for the same Spirit is in Christ, which is in the Father, and in the self-same measure. As God is captivated with love towards all captives, so am I, saith Christ. As God would have all be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, so would I too, saith Christ; the same bottomless sea of love that fluctuates in my Father’s breast is in my breast; “for I and my Father are one.”

3. It is Christ’s love to his saints; he intercedes for them for ever. They are in covenant with Jesus Christ, and therefore in nearer relation than any others; hence it is, that they are called the portion of God, the treasure of God, the peculiar people of God, those that God and Christ satisfy themselves in, those that God and Christ have set their hearts on, the children of God the Father, the very spouse and bride of God the Son, in some respect nearer than the angels themselves, for the

angels are not so married to Christ in a mystical union, as God's people are. Now, is it any wonder, that those who are so very dear to Christ, should be in the prayers of Christ? If they were so much in his heart, that he shed his blood for them, will he not now intercede for them? O yes! to this end he carries them on his breast or heart, as near as may be, that they may be in a continual remembrance before the Lord for ever; his very love compels him to intercede for them.

4. It is Christ's compassion that causeth intercession: "Christ is such an high-priest, (saith the apostle) as cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." When he was on earth, he felt our infirmities, frailties, miseries: and as a man that hath felt the stone, or gout, or fever, or especially that hath felt soul troubles, cannot but compassionate those that are in the like condition; so Christ having had the experience of our outward and inward sufferings, cannot but compassionate us; and hence it is (his very compassion is moving) that he intercedes to his Father in our behalf. It is observed, that the very office of the high-priest, was to sympathize with the people of God; only in the case of the death of his kindred, he was not, as others, to sympathize or mourn: but Jesus Christ goes beyond all the high-priests that ever were before him; he doth fully sympathize with us, not in some, but in all conditions; "In all our afflictions he is afflicted." I believe Christ hath carried a

man's heart up with him to heaven: and though there be no passions in him, as he is God; yet the flower, the excellency, of all these passions are infinitely in him, as he is God; he striketh, and trieth, and yet he pitieth; when Ephraim bemoaneth himself, God replies, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him." Surely there's a violence of heavenly passion in Christ's heart, as God-man, which makes him to break out into prayer to God, and into compassions towards men. O that tempted souls would consider this! It may be Christ is giving you a cup of tears and blood to drink, but who knows what bowels, what turning of heart, what motions of compassion, are in Jesus Christ all the while? Those who feel the fruit of Christ's intercession, know this; and cannot but subscribe to this truth. O ye of little faith, why do ye doubt of Christ's bowels? Is he not our compassionate high-priest? he is touched, saith the apostle, with the feeling of infirmities; it is an allusion to the rolled and moved bowels of God, in Jeremiah xxxi. 20. Christ in heaven is burning and flaming in compassion towards his weak ones; and therefore he pleads, intercedes, and prays to God for them.

CHAP. II.

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation, in his Intercession.

Let us know Jesus carrying on this great work of our salvation, in his intercession.

Ever since his ascension into heaven, he hath been doing this work; it is a work already of above sixteen hundred years; and summer and winter, night and day, Christ hath been still praying, still interceding; Christ's love hath no vacation, no cessation at all; yea, even now whilst you read this, Christ is acting as an advocate for you, Christ hath your names engraven, as a seal on his heart; and standing right opposite to the eye of his Father, the first opening of the eyelids of God, is terminated upon the breast of Jesus Christ; is not this worth the knowledge? O my soul, leave off thy vain studies; if they do not conduce to the right understanding of this, they are not worth the while; what is it for an Aristotle to be praised where he is not, and to be damned where he is? O the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Such a knowledge (if true) is no less than saving. Come, study his intercession in all the former particulars; only remember this, that in Christ's intercession are many secrets, which we must never know on this side heaven: O take heed of entering into this labyrinth, without the clew of the word; above all, desire the guidance of the Spirit to enlighten thy darkness, and whatever thou knowest, "know it still for thyself!"

Sect. II. -- Of Considering Jesus in that respect.

Let us consider Jesus carrying on this work of our salvation, in his intercession; is it not as incense, a sweet odour with God himself? And shall not each thought of it be sweet to us? Come, let us be serious in this duty; and that we may do it thoroughly, let us consider it in these particulars:

I. Consider the nature of Christ's intercession: what is it, but the gracious will of Christ, fervently desiring, that for the virtue of his death and sacrifice, thy person and performances might be accepted of God? As Christ on earth gave himself to the death, even to the death of the cross, for the abolition of sin; so now in heaven he prays the Father, "by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his death and sacrifice," that thy sins may be pardoned, thy service accepted, and thy soul saved. This is the will of Christ, even thy justification, sanctification, and salvation; accordingly he represents his will, "Father, I will that all those privileges flowing from my death, may be conferred on such a person; such a soul is now considering my intercession, and my will is, that his meditation may find acceptance with God." O what workings would be in thy heart and spirit, if thou

didst but consider that Christ even now were speaking his will, that thy person and duty may both find acceptance, and be well-pleasing with God!

2. Consider the person that intercedes for thee: it is Christ in both natures; it is thy mediator, one betwixt God and man: in this respect thou mayest consider him as one indifferent, and equally inclining to either party; “A mediator is not of one,” saith the apostle: Christ indifferently partook of both natures, god-head and manhood, that so he might be fit to stand in the gap between his Father and us.

3. Consider the person to whom Christ intercedes: is it not to his Father? Thou art sure to speed well, O my soul, for God is the Father of thy intercessor. If I had a suit to some majesty, and the prince would but mediate, I might hope to speed; Christ is God’s prince (as I may call him) and in respect of us, “the first begotten of many brethren”; and herein is thy rejoicing, that the party offended is Christ’s own Father, and fathers cannot be cruel to their own dear children.

4. Consider the persons for whom Christ intercedes: it is for all believers, and in particular for thee. O that ever the world, or flesh, or devil, should steal this meditation out of my heart! O that ever I should forget that Christ is gone to heaven, that he is entered into the holy of holies, and that he carries my name into

the presence of God the Father! I speak the same to thee that readest: if thou art a believer, there is no doubt but Christ is speaking to his Father in thy behalf; he can no more forget thee in his intercessions, than a mother can forget her sucking child. “Look up to Jesus,” and never leave looking, till thou spiest thy own name writ on his heart.

5. Consider the agreement and difference between Christ’s intercessions, and the intercessions of the high-priests of old: they did both intercede, but Christ is more faithful than ever high-priest was; Christ is more compassionate than ever high-priest was; and hence it is that he hath the title of *πολυπλαγχνος*, “One of many commiserations”: all is mercy, and love, and sweetness, and more than motherly affection, that comes from Christ. O my soul, why shouldest thou say with Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over by my God?” as if Jesus Christ had left thee out of the count of his people, and out of the roll of those whom he is to look after. No, no; he is a faithful and merciful priest; far above all the high-priests of the old testament; and if they were so careful not to leave out of their breast-plate one name of all the twelve tribes, how much more careful is Christ not to leave out thy name in his intercession?

6. Consider the properties of Christ's intercession: is it not heavenly and glorious, effectual and prevailing? O give me the intercession of Christ above all the intercessions of men or angels. I know the saints on earth pray mutually one for another, but they pray not in their own names, or for their own merits, but in the name and for the merits of Jesus Christ: and as for the saints and angels in heaven, Cyprian and Jerome seem to grant, that they pray for the state of the church militant; but if so, they do it only out of charity, as brethren, not of office, as mediators; such an intercession as this, so heavenly, so effectual, is proper only for Christ. I would be glad of the prayers of every saint upon earth; but above all let me have a property in those prayers and intercessions that are proper only to Christ, such as are heavenly, glorious, and effectual.

7. Consider the particulars wherein more especially Christ's intercession consists: is it not in presenting of his person, blood, prayers? is it not in the presenting of our persons, performances, pleas or answers to the accusations of Satan? Men little think how busy our mediator, sponsor, solicitor, advocate, is now in heaven for us; men little think that Christ is appearing, and his blood is crying, and his prayers are ascending, and his robe of righteousness is covering us, and the iniquity of our holy things: O my soul, look up, consider Jesus thy Saviour in these respects! I am persuaded, if thou didst but know, if thou couldst but see, what a deal of work

Christ hath in hand, and how he carries it on for thy salvation, it would melt thy heart into tears of joy. O think on it, that Christ, and Christ's blood, and Christ's prayers, are all at work! that Christ pleads thy cause, and perfumes thy duties in this incense; and takes thy person to God his Father, and cries, "O my Father, be merciful to this sinner, pardon his sins, and save his soul, for the sake of Jesus": O blessed mediation! "O blessed is the man," that knows how to "meditate on this day and night"!

8. Consider the power of Christ's intercession with his Father. Is he not to this purpose a priest to God, and called thereto by God? Is he not the Son of God, yea, God himself? Is not the Father's heart as much towards us, as to our salvation, as Christ's own heart? As sure then as Christ is gone into heaven with thy name engraven on his heart, so sure shalt thou follow him, and be with him where he is.

9. Consider the reasons of Christ's intercession: many are given, but this may be sufficient, "It is God's own ordinance"; the very wisdom of God found out this way, that a high-priest should be appointed, who should die for sinners, and afterward present his death to his Father by way of intercession on their behalf. Now then, if God himself found out this way, and hath said, "This is my pleasure, that Christ my Son shall be a priest, and that he shall offer himself, and present

himself, and his offering, and his prayer, to me for his people”: O my soul, dispute not, but rest on this, admire the contrivance of God; say, “O the depth!” question no farther, only meditate, and ponder, and consider it, till thou feelest Christ’s intercession darting its influence and efficacy on thy sin-sick soul.

Sect. III. -- Of Desiring Jesus in that respect.

Let us desire Jesus carrying on this great work in his intercession. O my soul, rouse up, and set this blessed object before thy face! Take a full view of it, until thy affections begin to be warm, and thou beginnest to cry, “O for my part in Christ’s intercession! O I would not be left out of Christ’s heavenly prayers for ten thousand worlds!” Come and be serious! the object is admirably precious; long for it, pant after it! God understands the rhetoric of thy breathing, as well as of thy cry. But what is there in Christ’s intercession that is so desirable? I answer --

1. In Christ’s intercession lies the present transaction of our soul’s salvation. Such passages as hitherto we have spoken of, are done and past; the virtue and influence of all these transactions continue, and will continue forever and ever; but the several actings had their periods; and only Christ’s session, and mission of his Spirit, and his blessed intercession, both were, and now are, the present

employment of Jesus Christ. Now he prays, now he presents his person, merits, intercession. This is the present transaction of Jesus Christ, and therefore most desirable: me-thinks I long to know what Christ is now doing in heaven for my soul; and is it not this, is not all his time spent either in reading pardons for his redeemed ones, or in presenting petitions for them, and pleading for them? Surely he is still interceding every day, it is his present work for our souls, O desirable work!

2. In this present transaction lies the application of all Christ's former actings, whether of his habitual righteousness, or of his active and passive obedience. All these passages of Christ's incarnation, conception, birth, life, and death, which more especially we look upon as the meritorious causes of our salvation, had been nothing to us, if they had not been applied by Christ: Christ purchased salvation by those acts, but he possesseth us of our salvation by this consummate act of his intercession. But if Christ's intercession be the applying cause, if it bring home to my soul all the former transactions of Christ, saying, "All these are thine, even thine," O how desirable must this intercession be!

3. In this application lies that communion and fellowship which we have with the Father and the Son: "I pray for these, that as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,

they also may be one in us.” Understand this soberly: we cannot think that there should be that oneness in equality betwixt God and us, as betwixt God and Christ; no, but there is oneness in similitude, even in this life; by virtue of Christ’s intercession we have oneness with God and Christ, not only in comforts, but also in graces; I pray you mark this; when I speak of communion with God in this life, I mean especially the communion of grace between God and the soul; on God’s part there is a special influence of grace and favour to man, and on man’s part there is a special return of grace and honour to God. Some trembling souls are apt to think, that all communion with God and Christ consists only in the comfort of the holy Spirit; whereas Christians may as really have communion with God in secret conveyances of grace, inward supports, in the hidden drawings of the soul Godward, as in the more open and comfortable manifestations of God unto the soul: communion with God is a familiar friendship, (I speak it in an holy, humble sense;) now do we not as usually go to a friend for advice as for comfort? In a friend’s bosom we entrust our sorrows as well as our joys. Suppose a soul even overwhelmed, and ready to break, betaking itself unto God, and venting itself before the Lord; if after, the soul hath no more ease, than by the bare lancing of the sore, if God pours in no balm at all, but only gives support; shall we say that this soul in this case hath no communion with God? O yes! that soul lives, the sun shines, though a cloud interposeth; God smiles, though the soul doth not perceive

it; thou hast his strengthening presence, if not his shining: now, this is the fruit of Christ's blessed intercession; and this is the subject matter of Christ's intercession, "O my Father, that these may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me; I in them by the influence and power of my Spirit, and thou in me by the fullness and power of the Godhead." And is not this a most desirable thing?

4. In this communion lies the fruition of Christ in glory, grace brings to glory: if communion here, we shall have communion hereafter; and this also is a part of Christ's prayer and intercession, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." This communion with Christ is above all desirable; the communion which the saints shall have with Christ, never will wander after any other objects; O the intimacy that will be then betwixt Christ and Christians! O what communication of glory will there be to each other! "These shall walk with me, (saith Christ,) for they are worthy."

O my soul, if this be the business of Christ's intercession, if all these particulars are contained in the bowels of this one transaction, how is it that thou art not gasping, groaning, sick unto death, with the vehement thirst after thy portion in Christ's intercession? If there be such a thing as desire in this heart of mine, O that now it

would break out! O that it would vent itself with mighty longings, and infinite aspirings after this blessed object! Lord, I desire, but help thou my faint desires; blow on my dying spark, it is but little; and if I know anything of my heart, I would have it more; O that my spark would flame! Lord, I desire that I might desire; O breathe it into me, and I will desire thee.

Sect. IV. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in this respect.

Let us hope in Jesus carrying on this great work of our salvation in his intercession. O my soul, hope in Jesus, but rest not till thou canst give a reason of thy hope, till thou canst prove that they are the hopes which grace, and not only nature, hath wrought; that they are grounded upon scripture promises, and sound evidences; that they purify the heart; that the more thou hopest, the less thou sinnest; that they depend on sure and infallible causes, as on the truth, power, and mercy of God; on the merits, mediation, and intercession of Jesus Christ; is this among the rest the spring of thy hope? Canst thou follow the stream, till it brings thee to this fountain, that now thou canst say, "O this intercession is mine"? Come, search and try, it is worth the pains.

1. If Christ's intercession is mine, then is the Spirit's intercession mine: in this case we need not ascend up into heaven to learn the truth, rather let us descend into our own hearts, and look whether Christ hath given us of his Spirit, which makes us cry unto God with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered; O come and let us ransack our own consciences; let us search whether we feel the Spirit of Christ crying in us, "Abba Father": Certainly these two are as the cause and the effect: Christ's intercession in heaven, and his Spirit's intercession, are as twins of a birth! Or rather, Christ's intercession in heaven breeds another intercession in the hearts of his saints. It is the same Spirit dwelling in Christ and in all his members, that stirs them to cry, "Abba Father." Here then is my argument; if Christ hath put his Spirit into thy heart, and if the Spirit hath set thine heart on work to make incessant intercessions for thyself, then is Christ's intercession thine. O my soul, hath God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into thy heart? Hast thou the indwelling of the Spirit; and now by the help of the Spirit canst thou pray with earnestness, confidence, and an holy importunity? Canst thou cry, "Abba, Father"? Canst thou cry with earnestness, with confidence, Father? and "Abba, Father," (or Father, Father,) with an holy importunity? These are the signs of the Spirit's intercession. O that thou wouldst deal faithfully with thyself; canst thou by the help of the Spirit go to thy Father in the name of Christ? As Christ is gone before into the holy of holies to intercede; so canst thou with boldness follow after, "and enter into the

holiest by the blood of Jesus”? Canst thou say, God hath given me his Spirit, and his Spirit hath shown me Christ as my mediator at the right-hand of God; and now, under the wing of such a mediator, I can with the Spirit’s assistance go with boldness to speak anything in the ears of God? Surely this is the fruit, the effect, of Christ’s intercession, and therefore thou mayest comfortably conclude, “Christ’s intercession is mine.”

2. If I feel a holy disposition to pray and intercede for others, especially for the distresses of the church of God, then is Christ’s intercession mine. We should, as near as we may, in everything conform to Christ; and this conformity is an evidence of our interest in Christ: O my soul, go down into the inmost closet of thy heart, look what disposition there is in it towards the members of Christ; and thou mayest conclude; there is in Christ’s heart the very same disposition towards thee. Can I think that my narrow, straitened, sinful bowels, are larger than those wide, compassionate, tender bowels of Jesus Christ? As a drop of water is in comparison of the ocean, and as a gravel stone is in comparison of the sand; so is my heart to Christ’s, and my love to Christ’s, and my bowels to Christ’s. Come then, and try by this sign: “Hereby we know that we are translated from death to life, if we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.” – “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for the brethren.” Is not this

plain? if I love the brethren, Christ loveth me; if I feel in my heart an holy disposition to go to God, and to pray, and cry, and intercede for a saint in misery, surely the Lord Jesus hath as much bowels towards me, to go and intercede for me, and to present my prayers unto God the Father; his intercession is mine.

Sect. V. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect.

Let us believe in Jesus, as carrying on this great work of our salvation in his intercession: silence, unbelief! be not tyrannical to thyself, for Christ will not, sin shall do thee no hurt, nor Satan, no, nor God himself, for Jesus Christ can work him to anything; if he but open his wounds in heaven, he will so work his Father, that thy wounds on earth shall close up presently.

Go to Christ as interceding for his saints; this act of Christ is for the application of all the former acts on Christ's part: and our faith closing with it, is for the application of this, and all the other actings of Christ on our part. Now is our faith led up very high; it may at once see earth and heaven; it may see all that Christ hath acted for it here, and all that Christ doth act, and will act in heaven for it hereafter. It is not an ordinary, single, particular act of faith, that will come up to this glorious mystery; it is a comprehensive act, it is such an act as puts the soul

into a condition of glorious triumph; “And being made perfect, (saith the apostle,) he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him”: now therefore lead up thy faith to this blessed object, and thou hast under consideration the whole of Christ’s actings in this world from first to last; in respect of mediation this is the upshot, the period, the consummation, the perfection of all.

In going to Christ as interceding for us, look to the purpose, end, intent, and design of Christ’s intercession: now the ends of Christ, in reference to us, are these: --

1. That we might have fellowship with the Father, and the Son; “I pray for these, that as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, they also may be one in us.”
2. That we might have the gift of the Holy Ghost; “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.”
3. That we might have protection against all evil; “I pray (saith Christ) that thou wouldst keep them from evil.”

4. That we might have free access to the throne of grace; so the apostle, “Seeing then we have a great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, and come boldly to the throne of grace.” And again, “Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.”

5. That we might have the inward intercession of the Spirit, which is, as it were, the echo of Christ’s intercession in our heart: “The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” It is the same Spirit groans in us, which more distinctly in Christ prayeth for us. “These things I spake in the world, (saith our Saviour,) that they might have my joy filled in themselves.” I have made this prayer in the world, and left a record and pattern of it in the church, that they feeling the same heavenly desires kindled in their own hearts, may be comforted in the workings of that Spirit of prayer in them, which testifieth to their souls the quality of that intercession which I made for them in the heaven of heavens; certainly there is a dependence of our prayer on Christ’s prayer: as it is with the sun, though the body of it abide in the heavens, yet the beams of it descend to us here on earth; so the intercession of Christ, though it is made in heaven, yet the groans and desires of the touched heart, as the beams thereof, are on earth.

6. That we might have the sanctification of our services; of this the Levitical priests were a type, “For they bare the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel, that they might be accepted; and he is the angel of the covenant, who hath a golden censer, to offer up the prayers of the saints.” Some observe a three-fold evil in man, of every of which we are delivered by Christ: First, an evil condition under the guilt of sin: Secondly, an evil nature under the corruption of sin: Thirdly, an evil in all our services by the adherence of sin; for that which toucheth an unclean thing, is made unclean thereby. Now, Christ by his righteousness and merits justifieth our persons from the guilt of sin; and Christ by his grace and Spirit doth purify our faculties from the corruption of sin; and Christ by his incense and intercession doth cleanse our services from the adherence of sin, so that in them the Lord smells a sweet savour, and both we and our services find acceptance with God.

7. That we might have the pardon of all sin. It is by virtue of Christ’s intercession that a believer sinning of infirmity, hath a pardon of course, for Christ is his advocate to plead his case; or if he sin of presumption, and the Lord give repentance, he hath a pardon at the hands of God the Father by virtue of this intercession.

8. That we might have the salvation of our souls in the day of Jesus; “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” O to see the Lord Jesus Christ glorified, must be a glorious thing; what is it to see his glory, but to behold the lustre of his divinity through his humanity? We may be sure God shall appear through the humanity of Christ, as much as is possible for the divinity to appear in a creature; and therefore men and angels will be continually viewing of Christ. I know there is another glory of Christ, which the Father will put upon him; “Because he humbled himself, therefore God will exalt him, and give him a name above every name”; and we shall see him in this glory. O the ravishing sight! Christ is so lovely, that the saints cannot leave, but they must and will “follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes”; there shall be no moment to all eternity, wherein Christ shall be out of sight to so many thousand thousands of saints. Is not this a blessed end of Christ’s intercession? Hither tend all the rest; and for this above all Christ intercedes to his Father, “Father, I would have my saints with me.” “O that all the daughters of Zion may behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith thou hast crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.”

Let our faith then act dependently upon the intercession of Christ, in these very ends; this is the very nature of faith, it relies upon God in Christ, and upon all the promises of Christ: So then, is there a desirable end in Christ's intercession which we aim at? O let us act our faith dependently; let us rely, stay, or lean upon Christ to that same end! let us cast ourselves upon the very intercession of Jesus Christ: saying, "O Christ, there is enough in thee, and in this intercession of thine, and therefore there will I stick, and abide forever."

Faith also must ever and anon be crying, wrestling with God, that virtue may go out of Christ's intercession into our hearts. "I have heard, Lord, that there is an office erected in heaven, that Christ, as priest, should be ever praying and interceding for his people: O that I may feel the efficacy of Christ's intercession! and now in prayer, O that I could feel in this prayer, the warmth, and heat, and spiritual fire, which usually falls down from Christ's intercession into the heart! Lord, warm my spirit in this duty; give me the kisses of thy mouth; O that I may now have communion with thee, thy Spirit upon me, thy protection over me! O that my pardon may be sealed, my grace confirmed, my soul saved in the day of Jesus!"

Sect. VI. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect.

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on this great work of our salvation in his intercession. Now, two things more especially will excite our love. 1. Christ's love to us. 2. Our propriety in Christ. For the first, many acts of Christ's love have appeared before, and everyone is sufficient to draw our love to him again.

1. In the beginning of time he loved man above all creatures, for after he had made them all, he then spake as he never did before: "Let us make man after our own image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over all the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth"; and though man unmade himself by sin, Christ's love yet was not broke off, but held forth in a promise till the day of performance, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

2. In the fullness of time his love was manifest; the seed then blossomed, and the birth then came out in an high expression of love; the love of Christ was born, and saw the light: "After that," saith the apostle, "the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared." I shall not need sure to instance in succeeding passages; so far as we have gone, we have clearly seen Christ's life was a perfect mirror of his love: as there is no beam in the sun, in which there is no light; so

there was no act in the life of Christ, but to a spiritual eye it shines with the light of love.

3. At this time there is a coal of burning love in the breast of Christ: this fire was indeed from everlasting, but the flames are as hot this day as ever; now is it that Christ loves, and lives; and wherefore lives, but only to love us, and to intercede for us? Christ makes our salvation his constant calling; he is ever at work, “yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”; there is not one hour in the day, nor one day in a year, nor year in an age, wherein Christ is not busy with his Father in this heavenly employment of interceding for us. He loved us before he died for us, his love being the cause why he died for us; and he loves us still, in that now he intercedes for us: It is as much as to say, “Christ hath loved us, and he repents not of his love”: love made him die for us, and, if it were to do again, he would die over again; O the love of Christ towards our poor souls! how many thousands of particulars might I draw out of scripture, expressing Christ’s love to us in this respect.

2d. Another motive of our love to Christ is our propriety in Christ: “Ye are not your own,” said the apostle of us; “and he is not his own,” may we say of Christ: if any ask how this may be; I answer, that the soul in loving Christ is not her own,

and in regard of loving, Christ is not his own; everyone makes over itself to another; and propriety or interest to itself on both sides ceaseth; “My beloved is mine, and I am his,” saith the spouse; not as if Christ should leave off to be his own, or to be a free God, when he becomes ours; no, but he so demeans himself, in respect of love, as if he were not his own; he putteth on such relations, and assumes such offices of engagement, as if he were all for us, and nothing for himself; thus he is called a Saviour, a Redeemer, a King, a Priest, a Prophet, a Friend, a Guide, a Head, a Husband, a Leader, Ransomer, Intercessor; and what not, of this nature!

O my soul, come hither; if thou hadst as many hearts in one, as there are men and angels in heaven and earth, all these would be too little for Jesus Christ: only go as far as thou canst, and love him with that heart thou hast, yea, love him with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might; and as Christ, in loving thee, is not his own, so let thy soul in loving Christ be not her own: come, love thy Christ, and not thyself; possess thy Christ, and not thyself; enjoy thy Christ, and not thyself; live in thy Christ, and not in thyself; solace thyself in Jesus Christ, not in thyself; say with the apostle, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Certainly, if ever thou comest to love Christ truly, thou canst not but deny thyself and all created lovers. This love will screw up thy soul so high above

the world, and above thy flesh, and above thy life, and above all other lovers, that nothing on this side Christ, whether in heaven or earth, will come in competition with him. O for a soul filled with the fullness of God! O for a soul stretched out to its widest capacity for the entertainment of God! O my soul that thou wert but “able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge!”

Sect. VII. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect.

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on this great work of our salvation in his intercession.

O I am much opposed (says one:) “Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me”; they persecute, reproach, revile, so that I am killed all the day long. -- And what then? What matters opposition of men, so long as Christ doth intercede for thee in heaven? And tell me, hast thou no experience of this truth? Doth not relief come in strangely now and then? Why, write upon the forehead of such favours, “I have a merciful and compassionate Mediator in heaven.”

O I am much opposed (says another) that I cannot pray; alas! my prayers are dull, weak, and dry, and without spirit and life. If so, be humbled for it; and yet know this, that when thou canst not pray, Christ prays for thee, and he prays that thou mayst pray: and tell me, hast thou no experience of this truth? hath not sometimes thy spirit been enlarged in prayer? hast thou not sometimes felt thy heart warmed? hast thou not sometimes in prayer been lifted up above thyself, and above the world? Conclude then, my intercessor above hath sent me this gift; it is not I, but Christ's intercession, that by a secret operation hath given me the Spirit to help mine infirmity; these are the intercessions of the Spirit of Christ, and they are the very echo of the intercession of Christ in his own person.

Sect. VIII. -- Of Praying to, and Praising Jesus in that respect.

Let us pray, and praise our Jesus in that respect.

1. Let us pray or sue our interest in this intercession; call on Jesus, or on God the Father in and through Jesus, that Christ's intercessions may be ours, and that he would make it out to us in a way of assurance every day more and more.

2. Let us praise, let us bless God and Christ for every transaction in heaven for us.

Heaven is full of his praises; why should not earth ring with the sound thereof?

“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name.”

Sect. IX. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect.

Let us conform to Jesus in respect of his intercession. I cannot think but in every action of Christ there is something imitable of us. As to the present, I shall instance only in these particulars.

1. Christ appears in heaven for us; let us appear on earth for him. Is there not equity, as well as conformity to this duty? O my soul, consider what Christ is doing, consider wherein the intercession of Jesus Christ consists! is not this the first part of it? He appears in heaven before saints and angels, and before God and his Father in thy behalf; and art thou afraid of worms, mortals, dust and ashes, in his cause, or for his truth? Shall Jesus Christ own thee in heaven, and wilt thou not own Jesus Christ here in this world? O what a mighty engagement is here to stand to Christ, and to appear for Christ, and to own his cause in these backsliding times; in that Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, is ready to appear in person for us, both as a mediator, sponsor, solicitor, advocate, and ambassador!

2. Christ spends all his time for us and our salvation; let us spend all our time for him, and in his service. The apostle tells us, that “he ever lives to make intercession for us”; it is not for a day, or a month, or a year, but he lives forever upon this account; forever (*i.e.*) during all the time from his ascension, until the end of the world, he is still interceding; surely people do not think what Christ is doing in heaven for them. If you would but seriously consider, that Christ, without any weariness or intermission, is ever interceding; how would this engage you in his service? Ah Christians! if you should continue praying, praising, reading, hearing, all this day without any intermission; how would you say, “When will the day be done, when will the Sabbath be at an end?” Well, but Christ is not weary of serving you: when you have done your duties, he takes your persons and duties, and presents all unto his Father; he prays over your prayers, continues praying, and saying, “Lord accept of a short, poor, imperfect service done on earth, for my sake, and for those merits’ sake which I am continually presenting to thee in heaven.” O why do we not come up to this conformity? O why are we so uncomfortable to the actings of Christ? We cannot but judge this to be most equal, “that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who ever lives to make intercession for them.”

3. He prays for us, and for all believers, to his Father. Let us pray for ourselves, and for all our brethren, and for all sorts of men, though they be our enemies, for we were no better to Jesus Christ. “Learn of me,” saith Christ; and so far as he is imitable, let us follow him. Doth Christ pray? let us pray. Doth he pray for us and others? let us pray for ourselves, and then let us pray one for another.

4. Christ takes our prayers, and mingles them with his own prayers, intercessions, incense, and so presents all his own work unto God the Father. O let this be our care, to put up all our prayers to God in the name of Christ; and to stay ourselves upon the intercessions of Christ: When all is done, let us beg the acceptance of our prayers, not for our sakes, but for his sake, who perfumes our prayers, by interweaving them with his prayers. Many a poor soul is afraid to pray to God; for want of the due consideration of this conformity, such a one goes to prayer, and he looks upon it as it lies upon his own heart, or as it comes from himself, and then he cries, “O what a poor, weak, sinful, prayer is this?” Well, but if this weak prayer of thine be once mingled with the glorious and heavenly prayer of Jesus Christ, the weakness will soon vanish, and thy prayer will find acceptance with God. O conform to Christ in this point; he will not present thy prayers to God, but he will first mingle it with his own prayers; no more shouldst thou present a prayer to God,

but in Christ's name, considering that all thy prayers find acceptance in, for, and through the intercession of Jesus Christ.

5. Christ by his intercession, "saves us to the uttermost." O let us serve him to the uttermost; surely all we can do is too little to answer so great a love as this. O Christians! why should it be esteemed a needless thing to be rigorously and exactly circumspect? Christ paid our debt to the uttermost farthing, drank every drop of our bitter cup, and now presents all unto his Father, by way of intercession, and saves us "thoroughly to the uttermost"; why should not we labor to perform his service, and to fulfill every one of his commandments, thoroughly and to the uttermost also? Certainly there is a duty which concerns us, to be "hot in religion," Rev. iii. 16; to be "zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14; to "walk circumspectly," or "precisely," as the word carries it, Ephes. v. 15; to be "fervent in Spirit," Rom. xii. 11; to "strive to enter in at the strait gate," Luke xiii. 24; to "contend for the faith," Jude iii; with an holy kind of "violence to lay hold upon the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xi. 12. O that ever men should be afraid of taking God's part too much, or fighting too valiantly under the colours of Christ; of being too busy about salvation; of being singular (as they call it) in the duties of religion. I observe, men are content to be singular in anything, save in the service of God: you desire and labor to be singularly rich, and singularly wise, and singularly proud; but you can

by no means endure singularity or eminency in zeal, and the Lord's service; in matters of religion you are resolved to do as the most do, though in so doing you damn your own souls! O come and learn this lesson of Christ, he saves us to the uttermost; let us serve him with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our might.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, IN HIS SECOND COMING.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

Sect. I. -- Of Christ's preparing for Judgment.

And is not all done yet? O the unwearied patience, love, mercy, free grace of Christ, in carrying on this mighty work! He began it before the beginning of the world; since then he hath been laboring in it about six thousand years; and now the time of restoring being come, he will perfect what he hath begun. In this also, as in the former, we shall first lay down the object, and then give directions how to look upon it.

The object is Jesus carrying on that great work of our salvation, in his coming again to earth; and taking up with him all his saints into heaven. In this work I shall set before you these particulars:

1. Christ's preparing for judgment.
2. Christ's coming to judgment.
3. Christ's summons of the elect, to come under judgment.
4. Christ and the saints meeting at the judgment-day.
5. Christ's sentencing or judging the saints for eternal glory.
6. Christ and the saints judging the rest of the world.
7. Christ and his saints going up into heaven; when shall be the end of this world.
8. Christ surrendering up the kingdom to God, even the Father.
9. Christ's subjection to the Father, that God may be all in all.
10. Christ (notwithstanding this) being all in all to his blessed, saved, redeemed saints, to all eternity.

1. For his preparing for judgment. When once the number of his elect shall be completed, and the work of his intercession shall be at an end, then immediately will follow these particulars:

(1.) “A great voice comes out of the temple of heaven, saying, It is done.” It comes out of the temple of heaven, that we may understand it to be the voice of Christ. And if this speech be directed unto God, it is as if Christ had bespoke his Father thus: “And now, O my Father, I have done; that office of the priest-hood which we erected, is at an end; I have sat at thy right-hand, interceding- for my saints ever since my ascension; and now their number is completed, I am resolved to unpin the fabric of the world, and take it down; it stands but for their sakes, and therefore now let the seventh angel blow his trumpet, that the mystery of God may be finished: ‘I swear by him that lives for ever, that time shall be no longer.’”

(2.) No sooner is this said, but “the seventh angel sounds.” This seventh angel, saith Pareus, is the archangel that proclaims Christ’s coming, with a great and mighty shout; “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. The Lord shall descend with a shout!” But before he descends, and I believe upon the very discovery of his coming down, there will be a shout in heaven; for so it follows, “And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven; the voices of blessed souls, and blessed saints, and blessed angels in heaven”: no sooner Christ bids the angel sound, that is, summon all souls, and all angels, and bid them wait on me; now I

resolve to go down, and to judge the world. No sooner, I say, Christ bids the angel sound, but presently, at the joy of his command, all the voices in heaven give a shout: this is the long-looked-for day, the day of perfecting the number of the saints; the day of joining the souls and bodies of the saints together; the day of convening all the families both of saints and angels; the day of bringing up the bride unto the Lamb, and of completing the marriage solemnity; and therefore no wonder if, at this news, great voices and cries (such as are used by mariners, or gatherers of the vintage) were made in heaven. Now they shout, and sing a new song, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

(3.) After this shout, “The four and twenty elders, which sit before God on their seats, fall upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” By these we understand all God’s saints of the Old and New Testament, comprehended under the twelve patriarchs, and twelve apostles; first they praise, and then they pray. 1. They praise God for taking to himself his own power. 2. They pray Christ to go on to judgment.

(4.) God the Father is well pleased with Christ's purpose of judging the world:

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool." I know these words were spoken to Christ at his ascension into heaven, yet that hinders not, but that now God speaks them again to Christ; for as yet, saith the apostle, we see not all things put under him; and God's purpose was, that Christ should rule until he had put all things in subjection under his feet. There is a difference betwixt Christ's reign before, and his present reign; at the day of judgment Christ hath a double throne, wherein he sits and reigns: "To him that overcomes will I give to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." That kingly rule that Christ hath from his ascension, is upon his Father's throne; but the kingdom that Christ shall have at the day of judgment, and ever after, is the joint reign of him with the Father; he shall have a throne himself, and the saints shall sit with him in his own throne. And now, saith the Father, "Sit thou at my right-hand," sit on thy own throne by me; go on to judge the nations; I will not judge them, but only in thee, and by thee; "Lo, I have committed all judgment unto the Son"; and do thou judge them, until thou hast rewarded thy friends, and made thine enemies thy footstool.

Christians, I cannot but wonder at this joy in heaven, and that we have so little of this on earth; we say with cold lips, and frozen hearts, "Thy kingdom come, thy

will be done on earth, as it is in heaven”; but if our prayers were real and fervent, if we could but imitate those heavenly citizens, what longings would be in our hearts after Christ’s coming? How should we rejoice at the very thoughts thereof? Christ comforting his disciples in respect thereof, speaks these words, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” The fullness of our redemption is a ground of consolation; all the spirits above are sensible of this; God, and Christ, and the angels and saints, rejoice: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come”; and Christ himself saith, “Surely I come quickly”; O let us say “amen” to it; “even so come, Lord Jesus.”

Sect. II. -- Of Christ coming to Judgment.

No sooner is Christ prepared, and all in readiness, but he descends from his throne, to the judgment-seat. In this passage I shall observe these particulars:

1. He descends with his train. He comes with his royal attendants out of heaven:

“Behold, the Lord comes with mighty angels. Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment unto all.” Certainly a numberless number shall wait upon him. Daniel tells us of a thousand thousand, that this day minister unto Christ; “A thousand thousand ministered unto him, and ten thousand

times ten thousand stood before him”: Or, if heaven have more, I believe heaven will empty itself of all the saints, and all the angels; not one spirit shall stay when Christ descends: “The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.” O what a glorious day will this be: If one sun make the morning sky so glorious, what a glorious morning will that be, when so many thousands of suns shall shine over our heads, the glorious body of Christ surpassing them all in glory! Here’s a new heaven of suns and stars, such as this nether world never saw, “Lo, the Sun of Righteousness, with all his morning stars singing and shouting for joy.” Heaven now empties itself of all its created citizens, and cleaves asunder to make way for Christ and all his train.

2. In his descent through the heavens, he shakes the heavens. “And the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” The whole frame of heaven, the mighty bodies thereof, most mighty in their substance, motion, and operation, shall be shaken: “At his nod the pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished.” As yet they are subject to vanity, and therefore it is no wonder, if at the coming of Christ they tremble. In this shaking, the evangelist adds, that the glorious lights of heaven shall be altered: “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall.” The coming of Christ shall bring with him such a light, that the splendour of the sun and moon shall be obscured.

3. As he passes through the elementary world, a fire doth usher him: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” – “Behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind.” – “And the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” In which respect, “Daniel saw his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him.” And at last this fire shall have that effect, that the very “elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.” O Christians! What cause have we to make the apostle’s use of this point, “Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.”

He descends lower and lower, till he is inwrappt with clouds: “Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right-hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” When he went up into heaven, it is said that “a cloud received him out of their sight”; and the angels then said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come, in like

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” He went up in clouds, and he shall come down in clouds: “I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.” Here is the first sight of Christ to men on the earth; when once he is come down into the clouds, then shall they lift up their eyes, and have a full view of Jesus Christ: a cloud first received him out of their sight; and a cloud now discovers him to their sight; “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Is it not plain, that the first appearing and sight of Christ, at his second coming from heaven, is in the midst of clouds; “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” Shall not we, at the first view of him in the clouds, cry out, O yonder is he, whose blood redeemed us, whose Spirit cleansed us, whose prayers prevail for us, whose law did govern us: yonder comes he in whom we trusted, and now we see he hath not deceived our trust; yonder is he for whom we waited long, and now we see we have not waited in vain.

I verily believe, thus it will be with us one day; we shall have comfort then. O let us comfort ourselves with these words; and ever and anon cry, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! -- make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountain of spices.”

Sect. III. -- Of Christ's summoning of the Elect to come under Judgment.

No sooner is he in the clouds, but "he sends his holy angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to another."

1. He "shall send his angels." This was their office from their first creation; they were still sent of God this way, and that way; and indeed herein is one difference betwixt Christ and the angels, he was to sit at God's right-hand, but they were sent abroad, to minister to the saints and people of God.

2. The commission given the angels, immediately to sound the trumpet; so it follows, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet": some would have it to be a material trumpet, others more probably look upon this as a metaphor; or a sound formed in the air, like the sound of a trumpet. A voice it is, without all controversy; and, metaphorically, it may be called a trumpet, both from the clearness and greatness of the sound; so loud shall it be, that it will pierce into the ears of the dead in their graves; "it will shake the world, rend the rocks, break the mountains, dissolve the bonds of death, burst down the gates of hell, and unite

all spirits to their own bodies. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” In these words is showed the coming of Christ in three particulars; “with a shout, with a voice, and with a trumpet.” It is agreed by most, that the transactions at the giving of the law on mount Sinai, were a representation of the proceedings which shall be at the great day of judgment; now in that transaction we read of a three-fold voice, “the voice of God, the voice of thunder, and the voice of a trumpet,” (Exod. xix. 16 compared with Exod. xx. 1.) and accordingly we find the apostle speaking of a three-fold voice, “of the voice of Christ, of the voice of thunder, and of the voice of a trumpet.”

1. The Lord himself shall descend “with a shout.” Lyra and others think this to be the voice of Christ himself, saying, with a loud voice, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” Thus Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth”; and with such a voice will he call on the dead at the last day. So much Christ himself hath taught us; “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” The hour is, because by the voice he raised some at his first coming. And the hour is coming, because in the like manner he will raise up all men at the last day: “Marvel not at this,” (saith Christ,) “for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and they

shall come forth.” As at the creation of the world he said, “Let there be light, and there was light”; so at the dissolution of the world he will say, “Let the dead rise; let the sea give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them”; and it will be so.

2. The Lord shall descend, “with the voice of the archangel.”

Some argue this archangel to be Gabriel, others Raphael, others Michael. The Jews have an ancient tradition, that there are seven principal angels that minister before the throne of God, and therefore called archangels. The scriptures seem to speak much that way, calling them, “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne”; “and seven horns, and seven eyes of the Lamb”; “and the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth”; “and seven eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth”; and yet more plainly, “seven angels that stand before God.” Now, which of these seven is the archangel here spoken of, is hard to determine; only probably it is, that all the archangels, and all the angels, are hereby understood, as comprehended under that one.

But what is this voice of the archangel? I conceive that thereby we are to understand thunder. Here is a manifest allusion to the proceedings at the giving of

the law; now the voice there mentioned, besides the voice of God and the voice of a trumpet, is the voice of thunder: “And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, there were thunders.”

2. The Lord shall descend, “with the trumpet of God.” Such a voice was used also at the giving of the law; and so it will be now, when men are called to account for the keeping or breaking of it. For The understanding of this, our last translation tells us, that “Christ shall send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet”: in the margin of our translation it is read, that “Christ shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice”; that is, “with a great voice, like the voice of a trumpet.”

But why is this sound as of a trumpet, called the “trumpet of God”? I answer, for the greatness of it; for it is usual in the Hebrew language, for the setting forth of the greatness of a thing, to add the name of God to the word, whereby the thing is signified: as, Gen. xxiii. 6, “A prince of God,” that is, a mighty prince; Gen. xxx. 8, “with the wrestlings of God,” that is, with great wrestlings; Psal. xxxvi. 6, “mountains of God,” that is, great mountains; Psal. lxxx. 10, “cedars of God,” that is, very high cedars; so here, “the trump of God,” that is, a very great sound, like the sound of a trumpet. It is said in the law, there were “thunders and lightnings,

and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled”; and if there was trembling at the giving of the law, O what trembling will be at the general assize, when sinners shall be condemned for breaking of it?

3. No sooner is the shout made, but the saints arise; it is true, the saints that are alive need no resurrection, but upon them will this trumpet have its effect.

Something like death shall seize upon them, and they shall be changed. The order of this is given in by the apostle, from the Lord: “This we say unto you by the word of our Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and 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 him in the clouds.” The first that shall be called are the saints that sleep, and then the saints that are alive. O what a day will this be! What a strange sight to see all the dead, ever since the beginning of the world, rise out of their graves! The bodies of saints “were sown in corruption, but they are raised in incorruption; they were sown in dishonour, but raised in glory; they were sown in weakness, but raised in power; they were sown natural bodies, but raised spiritual bodies.”

4. No sooner are the saints raised, and their souls and bodies re-united with excellent majesty, but all the elect of God, from first to last, are gathered together; from the most hidden, inward, secret bosom of the earth, all shall be gathered; howsoever their dusts may be scattered into a thousand thousand parts, yet the power of Christ shall restore all those dusts, and bring them together into their several compacted bodies.

The elect must resort to Christ wheresoever he is; and the apostle is express, that Christ “is in the air, and in the clouds”: and therefore thither must the elect be gathered; they shall be caught up by the holy angels into the clouds, “to meet the Lord in the air.”

Is it possible that such a meditation should pass without some tincture on our spirits? If my ears shall hear that sound, and if my eyes shall see these sights, is it not time for me to lay these things to heart, that I may be found faithful and well-doing? As sure as I have this book in my hand, I must be one of those that shall hear the sound of the trumpet, and away I must go from the mouth of my grave, wherever I shall be buried, to the cloud where Christ doth sit! How would I rise? O

my God! set this home on my soul! O where is my lamp? and where is my oil? are all ready, and am I ready and prepared to meet the Lord in the air?

Sect. IV. -- Of Christ and the Saints meeting at the Judgment Day.

No sooner are the saints lifted up, and set before the Judge, but these things follow:

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1. They admire the infinite glory, and beauty, and dignity, and excellency, that is in Christ. So the apostle, “When he shall come, he shall be glorified in his saints, and shall be admired in all them that believe.” All that believe shall break out into admiration of Jesus Christ; they shall at the first sight observe such an excellency in Jesus Christ, as they shall be infinitely taken with it: here we speak of Christ, and in speaking we admire; but how will they admire, when they shall not only speak or hear, but see and behold him, who is the “express image of God, and the brightness of his Father s glory.”

2. They adore and magnify the grace and glory of Jesus Christ; as it is said of the twenty-four elders, that “they fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the

throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” So all the saints, now advanced to stand before the throne, fall down before Christ, and worship him that lives for ever, shouting and singing about Jesus Christ, and setting out his glory, grace, and goodness: “After this I beheld” (saith John) “and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb” – “and cried with a loud voice, Saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; and all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

3. Christ sets them on his right-hand; “Upon thy right-hand doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir.” When he himself ascended up into heaven, then said the Father to him, “Son sit thou down at my right-hand”; and no sooner the saints are ascended up to Christ, but he speaks the same to them, “Sit down at my right-hand”: Christ entertains them, as God the Father entertained him; he at the right-hand of God, and they at the right-hand of Christ. The Lord now puts upon his saints heaven’s

glory; he adorns them with all his ornaments for the marriage day, and indeed here is the beginning of the solemnity of the marriage of the Lamb; not but that the contract was before, but the solemnity was reserved for this day, and all the glory of this day is for nothing else but to set out the solemnity of the marriage.

Sect. V. -- Of Christ's Sentencing his Saints.

No sooner are they set on his right-hand, but he prepares for sentence.

1. The book must be opened. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another was opened which is the book of life." It is spoken after the manner of men, in whose public judgment are produced all the writings of the process, informations, depositions of witnesses, to show that all actions, even the most secret ones, shall then be rehearsed and made manifest. The books of the Old and New Testament, wherein all things either to be done, or omitted, are prescribed by God. And the books of our consciences, which now are shut up and concealed from men, but then shall be made manifest to all the world. Likewise another book, which is "the book of life": this book contains in it the names of all that are saved, from first to last.

2. All the actions, demeanours, graces, duties, and (it may be) sins, of saints, shall be produced and laid open; the Holy Ghost tells us, that “the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book.” It appears hence, that not only names, but things, were written, and these things were produced, and accordingly they were judged.

Then shall the King say to them on his right-hand, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Every word here is full of life and joy: 1. “Come.” This is the King’s invitation of his saints to his court; he hath summoned them before to his presence, and now they are about him, they must come nearer yet, they must go with him into his presence-chamber. 2. “Come, ye blessed of my Father”; Christ blessed them when he went up to heaven, and whilst yet on earth he pronounced them blessed many a time; but now he calls them “the blessed of his Father”; it is the Father’s will, as well as Christ’s, that they should be blessed, “Ye blessed of my Father.” 3. “Inherit the kingdom.” Christ had told them before, “It is your Father’s pleasure to give you the kingdom”; but then they were only servants, or as children under age, now they are heirs, “heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ”; and therefore they must have the inheritance in possession; they must all be kings. This word is the anointing, the setting of the crown upon the heads of the saints; “Henceforth there is laid up for

me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not for me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.” 4.

“Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” “In the beginning God created heaven”: his first work was to make heaven for himself and his saints to dwell in; he prepared it for them, and then he prepared them for it: but why for them? Were not angels the first creatures that possessed it? Nay, were they not created in it, or together with it? Yes, but yet the angels are not properly the heirs, sons, members, spouse of God and Christ, as the saints are: the angels are but ministering spirits, and the servants of the bridegroom; but the saints are the bride himself, heirs, and co-heirs with Christ, as the saints are. 5. “Prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This was the great design of God and Christ from all eternity.

Sect. VI. -- Of Christ and his Saints judging the Rest of the World.

No sooner shall the saints be acquitted, anointed, crowned, but presently they must be enthroned, and sit with Jesus Christ to judge the world.

1. As Christ is on a throne, so must the elect be set on thrones; “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.” Thrones are for kings and judges; and in that Christ hath now lifted up his saints to this condition, he will

have them sit with him as so many judges, and as so many kings; or if it be more honour to have thrones for themselves, than to sit with Christ on his throne, John in his vision saw many thrones; “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.”

2. The goats on the left hand shall then be called to receive their doom. Now shall their hearts fail them for fear; now shall they seek death (O how gladly would they die again!) but shall not find it; now they shall cry to rocks and mountains, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb”; but all in vain; the command is out, angels and devils will force them to the bar, for the Lord hath spoken it; “Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither.”

3. They shall look on Christ, and his saints, now sitting on their thrones, as prisoners that stand at the bar in the face of the judge; so must these reprobates look the Judge and all his assessors in the face.

1. For the Judge, they shall look on him, “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” And this very sight will be as convincing as if they heard Christ say, “Thou art the man that didst murder me,

thou art the man that hast pierced me; this wound, this scar, and this print of the nails in my hands and feet, were thy doings, in sinning against me. I am he whom you did crucify afresh; I am he whose person you despised, whose commands you disobeyed, whose ministers you abused; whose servants you hated, whose offers you rejected; and of whom you said, ‘There is no beauty in him that we should desire him.’”

2. For the saints, they shall look on them. In the Apocryphal book there is a plain description of this: “Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors; and when they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for; and they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This is he whom we had sometimes in a derision, and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is amongst the saints?” Here is a sight that will trouble and amaze the wicked, that those who sometimes were their footstools should now be on thrones; that poor Lazarus, who lay at the gates of that rich man, should now shine like a star near the Sun of righteousness; that they who were

reproached, reviled, massacred, murdered by them, should now be their judges, joining with Jesus Christ to sentence them to hell.

4. A particular, strict account, shall be then required, and given,

1. Of sins: “Come, (will Christ say) now confess all your sins before all the world”; time was that you concealed your sins, but now every sin shall be laid open before God, angels, and men: and now is the book of their consciences opened, wherein appear all their sins, original and actual, of omission and commission. O the numberless number of evil thoughts, words, and deeds, that are now laid open. In the book are not only written all sins done, but all such sins as were intended to be done; all the projects of the heart, though never acted, those very thoughts, secrets, purposes, and projects, shall come to light; or if there be anything more hidden or secret, as the very bent and frame of your hearts, the very inclinations of your souls to this or that evil, shall then be manifest to all the world. Nay, yet more, such sins, as by the sinners themselves were never taken notice of, either before, or at, or after the commission of them, shall this day come out. Conscience is such a kind of notary, that it keeps records of all acts and deeds, whether you observe them or no; conscience hath the pen of a ready writer, and takes in short-hand from your mouths as fast as you speak, and from your hearts as fast as you can contrive. O

what a day will this be, when not a sin committed by any reprobate from the beginning of the world, but now it shall be rehearsed!

2. As an account of all sins, so an account of all temporal gifts which God hath imparted to reprobates must now be given. Some have the gifts of the world, as, riches, honours, places of authority; others have the gifts of the body, as health, strength, beauty, life; others have the gifts of the mind, as understanding, wisdom, learning; now of all these gifts they must give an account. Come, you that are rich, (saith Christ) render an account of your stewardship; how have you spent your riches? The like will he say to others according to the talents bestowed on them: you excelled in strength, beauty, health of body, length of days; and now tell me, and publish it to all the world, how were these improved? I believe many a sad answer will be given to Christ of these things.

3. Christ and his saints proceed to sentence. First, Christ the chief Judge shall pronounce it, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Every word breathes out nothing but vengeance and woe: to depart from that glorious presence of Christ were hell enough, but they must go with a curse; not only so, but into fire; and that must be everlasting; and therein

they shall have no other company, or comforters, but devils, and they insulting over them with hellish spite, and stinging exprobatations.

2. The saints shall judge the very self-same judgment: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” That they as well as Christ shall judge the world, is without controversy: “And judgment was given to the saints of the most High.”

“Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.” “Know ye not, that ye shall judge the angels?” Nor only shall we judge the world, but the god of the world, the principalities and powers that captivate wicked men at their pleasure; even they must be judged by those whom they formerly soiled; so then there is no question but they shall judge.

Only how the saints shall judge together with Christ, is a very deep question. For my part, I am apt to think that it shall not be directly known, ere it be seen or done.

O what terror it will be to all wicked men! When not only Christ, but all the saints, shall say of them, “Away with them, let them be damned.” You that are fathers, it may be that your children will thus sentence you. I remember when the Jews told Christ, that “he cast out devils through Beelzebub the prince of devils,” he

answered, “If I through Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.” They liked well enough of the miracles of their children, but they could not endure them in Christ; and therefore he tells them, that their children whom God had converted, and to whom he had given power to do the same works as he did, even they should be their judges to condemn them. And so it may be with you, if any of your children be converted to the Lord, and you remain still in a natural estate, your very children shall be your judges, and condemn you to hell.

Sect. VII. -- Of Christ and his Saints going up into Heaven, and of the End of this World.

No sooner are the reprobates gone to their place, but the saints ascend; now Christ ariseth from his judgment-seat, and with all the glorious company of heaven, marches toward the heaven of heavens. O what a comely march is this! what songs of triumph are sung! Christ leads the way, the cherubim attend, the seraphim wait on, angels, archangels, principalities, powers, patriarchs, prophets, priests, evangelists, martyrs, and confessors of God’s law and gospel, following, attend the Judge, and King of glory; singing with melody as never ear hath heard, shining with majesty as never eye hath seen, rejoicing without measure as never heart

conceived. O goodly troop of captains! each doth bear a palm of victory in his hand, each doth wear a crown of glory upon his head; the church militant is now triumphant; with a final overthrow have they conquered devils, death, and hell; and now must they enjoy God, life, and heaven.

No sooner Christ and his company are in heaven, but this whole world is set on fire.

“The heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.”

Christians! what is the matter that we are so busy about this world? Look about you, not one of these visible objects shall that day remain, or have a being; that glorious heaven which rolls over our heads, shall be rolled “together as a scroll, and all the host shall fall down as a leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree,” – “the heaven shall vanish away like smoke.” Alas! what do we do toiling all the day (it may be all our life) for a little of this little, almost nothing -- earth? You that have an hundred, or two hundred, or a thousand acres, if every acre were a kingdom, all will be at last burnt up; so that none shall say that here was Preston, or here was London, or here was England, or here was Europe, or the

globe of the earth on which men trod; let others boast as they will of their inheritances, but, Lord, give me an inheritance above all these visibles, heaven shall remain when earth shall vanish. Here we have no abiding city, but O let us seek one to come, even that which will abide forever and ever. Amen.

Sect. VIII. -- Of Christ's Delivering up the Kingdom to God even the Father.

No sooner is he in heaven but --

1. He presents the elect unto his Father; of this the apostle speaks, "You hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight": to this end Christ died, that he might wash us and cleanse us by his blood, and then present us without spot unto his Father.

2. He presents all his commissions to his Father. So now he comes with all his commissions in his hand, and he delivers them all up to his Father again. In this case it is with Christ as it is with some general, whom the king sends forth with regal authority to the war, who having subdued the enemy, returns in triumph, and all being finished, makes a surrender of his place; thus Christ having discharged all

his offices imposed on him, now the work is finished, leaves his function by delivering up his commissions to his Father.

Christ is said to deliver up the kingdom.

1. Because he ceaseth to execute that authority, which nevertheless he hath; as a judge that goeth from the bench is a judge still, although he giveth no judgment, but employeth his time about other occasions.

2. Because the manner of his kingdom after the judgment-day shall be wholly changed: there is no need in heaven of good laws to keep men from starting into wickedness; the orders of this life are changed into a new kind of government, and in that respect he is said to give over the kingdom.

3. He presents unto his Father not only his offices, but Christ himself is presented, and subjected unto God. Christ is considered either as God, or as man, and mediator betwixt God and man. Christ, as God, hath us subject to him, and is subject to none; but Christ, as man and mediator, is subject to his Father together with us.

In the same way as Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father, is Christ also to be subject to his Father; but Christ delivers up his kingdom as man, and as mediator betwixt God and man; in these respects Christ (as we have heard) must reign no more, at that day his mediatorship shall cease, and by consequence in respect of his mediatorship, or in respect of his humanity, he shall that day be subject to his Father. Now it is God reigns over us, but only by Christ as mediator. God's immediate reign we discern not so clearly for the present, but when the end shall come, and Christ shall surcease his office of mediatorship, then shall the glory of Christ's divinity appear more eminently, not only above all creatures, but above the brightness of Christ's humanity itself; and in this respect Christ shall then be subject, if not by a new subjection, so as he never was before.

O my soul, where wilt thou stand? or what wilt thou say, when Christ shall take thee by the hand, and bring thee into the presence of his glorious Father; when he shall present thee, and present all his commissions which he received for thee, and present himself unto his Father with thee and all saints, saying, O my Father, here we are all before thy glorious Godhead; welcome me, and welcome mine, we all stand here before thy glorious throne, and expect every way as high an entertainment as heaven, or the God of heaven, can afford!

Sect. IX. -- Of Christ's Subjection to the Father, that God may be all in all.

Christ therefore subjects himself unto his Father, that God himself might be all in all; here we enjoy God by means, as, in the use of the word and sacraments, but when that kingdom (where these administrations are made use of) shall be delivered up, then shall God himself be all in all, without means, without defect, without end.

In prosecution of this, I shall discuss; 1. The meaning, what it is for God to be all in all; 2. The particulars, wherein more especially is God all in all.

1. For the meaning; it is a periphrasis of our complete enjoyment of God: that God may be all in all, is as much as to say, that we may enjoy God alone to all intents and purposes, neither wanting nor willing anything besides himself; thus God is to the saints in glory, he is their exceeding great reward; they had need nothing besides himself, their draughts of happiness are taken in immediately from the fountain, and they have as much of the fountain as their souls in their widest capacity can possibly hold.

2. For the particulars wherein more especially is God our all in all? I answer;

1. In our enjoying God immediately; here we enjoy God by means; either he communicates himself unto us, through his creatures or through his ordinances, and hence it is, that we know him but in part, we see him but in a glass darkly; but when he shall be our all in all, we shall see him face to face; we shall then see God as he is, clearly and immediately.

2. It consists in our enjoying God fully: “Now I know in part (saith the apostle) but then shall I know, even as I am known:” our enjoyment of God is but here in its infancy, there it will be in its full age; here it is in drops, there it will be in the ocean; here we see the back parts, and we can see no more, but there we shall see his face, not his second face, (as some distinguish) which is his grace and favour enjoyed by faith, but his first face, which is his divine essence, enjoyed by sight.

3. It consists in our enjoying God solely. Not as if there were nothing else in heaven but only God; but that God in heaven shall be all in all, and instead of all: it is God in heaven that makes heaven to be heaven; the saints’ blessedness, and God’s own blessedness, doth consist in the enjoyment of God himself; we shall not properly enjoy anything else but God; and indeed what can we imagine to be in heaven which is not eminently in God himself: If it be greatness, power, glory,

victory, or majesty, all these are his; if it be joy, love, peace, or beauty, or anything amiable or desirable, all these are in him. It is he only that fills the whole capacity of the soul; it is he that so fills it that it can hold no more; it is he only that is the object of love, and therefore he only is properly enjoyed, he only is possessed with full content, as portion enough, and as reward enough, for the soul for ever.

But shall not the saints have to do with something else in heaven? O yes! I believe there shall be in heaven a communion of the blessed spirits in God, an association of the saints and angels of God. Yet this shall not take away the sole enjoyment of God, that he should not be their all in all: for they shall not mind themselves or their own good and created things, but altogether God; they shall not love them, or one another, as for themselves, but only for God: here we love God for himself, and it is gracious love; but there we shall love ourselves for God, and it is a gracious love; this is to enjoy God solely, and in this respect he is “all in all”; -- “whom have I in heaven but thee?”

Sect. X. -- Of Christ's (notwithstanding this) being all in all to his Redeemed, to all Eternity.

Some may object. If God be all in all, what then becomes of Christ? Is not this derogatory to Jesus Christ? I answer. No, in no wise; for

1. It is not the Father personally and only, but the Deity essentially and wholly, that is our all in all, when we say God is all in all, we do not exclude the Son and the Holy Ghost, for the whole Godhead is all in all to all the saints, as well as the first person in the Trinity: the Father is all, the Son is all, the Holy Ghost is all; and in that Christ is God, and the Son of God, we may say of Christ, that he is all in all; only the truth of this position is not from the human nature, but from the divine nature, of Jesus Christ.

2. It is not derogatory to Christ, but rather it doth exceedingly advance Christ in the thoughts of all his saints; while it was necessary, Christ veiled his Deity, and when his work of mediation is fully finished, Christ then shall reveal his deity to his saints more than ever before. It is true, that God only, and God fully, and God immediately, is all in all; but doth that hinder that Jesus Christ is not also only, fully, and immediately, all in all? See how the scripture joins them together: “I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Now then, as I have spoken of God, so that I may speak of Christ, and conclude all with Christ, I assert this doctrine, “that the glory of Christ, which the saints shall behold in Christ to all eternity, is their all in all.” In the discussion of which, I shall open these particulars: --1. What is the glory of Christ? 2. How the saints shall behold his glory? 3. Wherein is the comprehensiveness of this expression, that the beholding of Christ is our all in all?

1st. What is the glory of Christ? I answer, that the glory of Christ is either human or divine.

1. There is an human glory, which in time was more especially conferred upon his manhood.

2. There is an essential or divine glory, which before time and after time, even from everlasting to everlasting, issueth from the Godhead; I shall speak to both these, that we may rather take a view of Christ in those glories (as we are able) wherein he will appear to his saints to all eternity.

1. For his human glory, that is either in regard of his soul, or body; for his soul, Christ was from the first instant of his conception full of glory, because even then he received grace not by measure. It is true, that by the special dispensation of God, the fullness of glory was withheld in the time of his passion, and the redundancy of glory from his soul unto his body was totally deferred until the exaltation of Christ; but Christ was no sooner exalted, and set on the right-hand of God, but immediately the interruption of joy in his soul, and the interception of glory from his soul to his body, was altogether removed. Then it was that his soul was filled with all joy which could possibly flow from the sight of an object so infinitely pleasing, as is the essence, majesty, and glory of God. And then it was that his body was replenished with as much glory as was proportionable unto the most vast capacity of any creature. Surely Christ's manhood is exalted unto an higher degree of glory than the most glorious saint or angel ever was or shall be; principalities, powers, mights, and dominions, fall short of his glory.

2. For his essential, divine glory, it is that glory which Christ hath as God: this he never laid aside; but as the sun in a dark gloomy day may not send forth his beams, so Christ the Son of Righteousness, in the time of his abode upon earth, (except a little glimpse only in his transfiguration,) did not send forth his glorious beams; but hereafter the body or humanity of Christ shall not hinder the breaking forth of all

his divine glory. But what is the essential glory of Christ? I cannot answer, it is a question not to be resolved by all the men in the world; we know little of the glory of saints, how should we know any thing of the essential glory of Christ as God?

2d. How shall the saints behold this glory? I answer: As Christ hath a twofold glory, so there is a twofold manner of beholding it, that is, ocular and mental.

1. There is an ocular vision, a sight of Christ with our very eyes; “whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him”; with these eyes in our heads we shall one day behold the human glory of Christ: I doubt not we shall behold the beauty of heaven, the shining bodies of the saints, but above all, our very eyes shall delightfully contemplate Christ’s glorious body; and indeed this shall drown all other sights.

2. There is a mental vision, a sight of Christ by the eyes of our understandings; and surely this exceeds the former, the eye of the body is only on the body of Christ, but the eye of the soul is on the body and soul, on the humanity and deity, of Jesus Christ. This is the very top of heaven, when saints shall be illightened with a clear and glorious sight of Christ as God; divines usually call it the beatifical vision.

3d. Wherein is the comprehensiveness of this expression, that “the beholding of Christ is our all in all”? I answer --

1. It comprehends the immediate seeing and looking upon all that majesty and glory which Jesus Christ hath.

2. It comprehends the enjoyment of Christ in his glory. Surely the saints shall not be mere idle spectators of the glory of Christ, but they shall enjoy him, and be taken into fellowship with him: It was said of Moses, that he did see the land of Canaan, but he was not admitted into it; it is otherwise with the saints, they shall see heaven, and they shall enter into heaven. “Come, thou faithful servant, and enter into thy master’s joy”; not only behold it, but enter into it; they must behold Christ, and take possession of Christ, and enjoy him as their own. In this respect more especially is Christ our all in all. He is all in himself, and, if we enjoy him, he is all in all unto us.

CHAP. II.

Sect. I. -- Of Knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Second Coming.

Let us know Jesus, carrying on the saints' salvation in his second coming, and taking them to heaven. Many excellent things are in this transaction; is it not of high concernment that he that now sits at God's right-hand interceding for us, should thence come again to judge the world, and after judgment take up the saints with him into glory? Cast thyself at the feet of Christ, and cry out, "O the depth of glory, and majesty, and goodness, and grace, in thee! O the riches of love, that thou shouldst let out thyself in these admirable dispensations!" Come, be exact in this study; gather up all the crumbs and filings of this gold; the least beams of the glory of Christ (especially as it shines and glitters at his second coming) having so much light, and love, and splendour in them! every part of this knowledge will be of special use and worth, yea, the low and imperfect knowledge of this mystery, of infinitely more value than the high and perfect knowledge of ten thousand things besides.

Sect. II. -- Of Considering Jesus in that respect.

Let us consider Jesus, carrying on this great work of our salvation in his second coming. It is not enough to know, but we must meditate and seriously consider of it. When the understanding works seriously and spiritually, it will fetch things into

sight, hold them there, and fasten upon them; so a man eyes Christ, till he have more of Christ, more of his presence, of his light, of his favour, and of his image. O let this be our work; let us consider Jesus in reference to his second coming to judgment. And that we may do it in order --

1. Consider Christ's preparing for judgment; realize it as if thou sawest or heardest the same; no sooner the time determined which God hath appointed, but Christ commands, "Make ready, ye angels, souls that now are with me; it is the Father's pleasure, and it is my pleasure, to go down into the nether world, and to call before me all the men and women that ever lived in it; there will I pass my doom upon all flesh, and reward every one according to his works." O what a shout may I imagine in heaven at this news! What joy is in the souls of saints, that now they must go to their bodies, and enter into them, that both their souls and bodies, which sometime lived together, may now dwell together with Christ in glory, and never part more! If those that live on earth are commanded by Christ to "lift up their heads because their redemption draweth nigh"; how much more shall they joy in heaven, who also have "waited for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies," that now the long-looked for day is come! It is come! O the exultation of the angels at these tidings!

2. Consider Christ's coming to judgment; all now in readiness; the Son of God comes forth with all his glorious attendants; "For the Son of man shall come forth in the glory of his Father, with his angels," and with the souls of saints, that for a time have been in paradise. O what a goodly sight is here! In this meditation I may see, with John, "the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Down comes Christ, and the angels, and spirits of the just made perfect: and as they come along, see how they shake the heavens, and dim and dark the very lights of heaven! see what a flood of fire goes before them! see how they pass into the cloud, where Christ makes a stand, and erects a throne for himself to sit on! Sure it will be a glorious cloud, when Christ with all his celestial servants shall sit upon it.

3. Consider Christ and the saints judging the rest of the world. No sooner are the saints sentenced, but Christ turns to the wicked, and bids them "go into everlasting fire"; in which sentence the saints shall join with Christ himself. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" When the saints appear, it is not only by a summons, but with commission; not only to be judged, but to judge; not only shall they stand at Christ's right-hand, but they shall sit down on the throne of the Son of God, to judge the wicked angels and the world.

4. Consider Christ and his saints going up into heaven. No sooner hath he done his work with the world and sent them away, but he shall go with all his troops following him into heaven. Hath not Christ said so? “If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” O those songs of joy, and shouts of praise, that will fill the world at that day! and thus, as they go along, heaven opens unto them, and they enter in. What welcomes they have here, is past my telling.

1. It is “the day of adoption, and the redemption of our bodies.” It is the day of our sonship and deliverance; I deny not but that the saints are adopted and redeemed before this day; but this adoption and redemption is not consummate before Christ come again to judgment; then shall Christ say, “These are my sons whom I have redeemed; and as I have set them free, so now shall they live and reign with me for ever and ever.”

2. It is “the day of Christ’s coming.” He was here not long since, travelling about the earth, and about our business; which done, he went away to heaven, upon a special errand for his saints; and there now he is to intercede for them, to be their advocate; and withal there, now he is to prepare their mansions for eternity. And no sooner shall he have dispatched his business there, but he will come for earth

again; he will bow the heavens, and come down to give a report of his transactions there; hath he not left us a letter to that effect, “I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also”? O why are his chariots so long a- coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

3. It is “the day of Christ’s bright and glorious appearing.” When he was upon the earth, he appeared in our dress. Many then saw him, who said, “There is no beauty in him that we should desire him.” O! it was a sad sight to see him crowned with thorns, and scourged with whips, and nailed to the cross. But in his next appearing we shall see him in his best attire, arrayed in white, attended with the retinue of glory, riding in his chariot of light, and smiling upon all his saints. Now, is not this desirable? The apostle tells us of the saints’ “looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ”; therefore surely they desire it.

4. It is the “marriage-day of the Lamb.” The saints are betrothed to Christ, when first they believe in Christ; this is Christ’s word, “I will betroth thee unto me, my sister, my spouse,” not my wife: thou art not yet married, only contracted here. But at that day the marriage of the Lamb will be complete, and then will the voice be heard, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” O the joy that Christ, and

saints, and angels, and all that belong to heaven, will make at this marriage!

“Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”

5. It is the “day of Christ’s glory.” What glorious descriptions have we in scripture of Christ’s coming to judgment; “The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory”; and the work no sooner done, but he shall return again into heaven with power and great glory. Not to mention the essential glory of Christ, O the glory of Christ as mediator; all the glory that Ahasuerus could put upon his favourites, was nothing to this spiritual and heavenly glory, which the Father will put upon the Son; it is a glory above all the glories that ever were, or ever shall be; it is an eternal glory: not but that Christ shall at last give up his kingdom to his Father; he shall no more discharge the acts of an advocate or intercessor for us in heaven, only the glory of this shall always continue; it shall to all eternity be recorded that he was the mediator, and that he is the Saviour that hath brought us to life and immortality; and upon this ground the tongues of all the saints shall be employed to all eternity, to celebrate this glory. This will be their everlasting song: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.” O what desire should the Spirit and the bride have to hear what Christ shall say to his angels, “Make ready for the journey, let us go

down and divide the skies, and bow the heavens; I gather my prisoners of hope unto me, behold I come quickly to judge the nations!” I conclude this with the conclusion of the bible, “He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so: come Lord Jesus.”

Sect. III. -- Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect.

Let us hope in Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his second coming; let us say, on certain grounds, “We hope Christ will come again, and receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.”

Such an hope is a sure anchor, that will hold the ship in a storm; only because our souls lie upon it, we had need to look to it, that our hopes be true; the worst can say, “They hope to be saved as well as the best”; but the hopes of many will be lamentably frustrated. To clear this point, that our hopes are right, and not counterfeit hopes, I shall lay down some signs, whereby we may know that Christ’s coming is for us, and for our good, and for the grace that is to be given us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. If we are born again, then will his glorious coming be, to glorify us: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible.” Come then, you that hope for glory, try yourselves; is there a change in your hearts, words, and lives? Is there a mighty work of grace upon your spirits? Are you experienced in the great mystery of regeneration? Why, here is your evidence that your hopes are sound, and that you shall sit upon thrones to judge the world.

2. If we long for his coming, then will he come to satisfy our longings: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be satisfied”; how satisfied, but in being saved? “Christ was offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, to salvation”: unto them that look for him, or long for him, shall he appear the second time unto salvation; this “looking for Christ,” is in scripture a frequent description of a true believer in Christ. Who are sound Christians, but such as live in a perpetual desire and hope of Christ’s blessed coming? They are “ever looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God.” Here are two signs in one verse, “looking for, and hastening unto”; true believers are not only in a posture, looking for the coming of Jesus Christ, but also, as it were, going forth to meet Jesus Christ with burning lamps. Dost thou look and long for the coming of Christ in the clouds? These are

firm grounds of an assured hope. Content not thyself with an hope of possibility, or probability; but reach out to that plerophory, or “full assurance of hope.” The hope of possibility is but a weak hope, the hope of probability is but a fluctuating hope, but the hope of certainty is a settled hope. Such an hope sweetens all the thoughts of God and Christ, of death and judgment, of heaven, yea, and of hell too, whilst we hope that we are saved from it. And are not the scriptures written to this very purpose, “that we might have this hope”? We are justified by his grace, “that we might be heirs in hope, heirs according to the hope of eternal life”! And was not this David’s confidence, “Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation”? “Why then art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

Sect. IV. -- Of Believing in Jesus in that respect.

Let us believe in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his second coming.

Go to Christ, as coming again into this nether world to judge the quick and the dead. This is the last act of faith, in reference to Christ: “From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” The coming of Christ, the resurrection of

the dead, the change of the living, the last judgment, and the glory of Christ with his saints to all eternity, is that transaction which must be dispatched at the end of the world: now this is the object of faith, as well as the former; Christ's work is not fully perfected, till all these be finished; nor is our work of faith fully completed, till it reach to the very last act of Christ in saving souls. -- O what an excellent worker is Jesus Christ! He doth all his works thoroughly and perfectly. The greatest work that ever Christ undertook, was the work of redemption: that work would have broken men and angels, and yet Jesus Christ will carry it on to the end; and then will he say, not only prophetically, but expressly, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

1. Faith must principally and mainly look to the design and end of Christ in his second coming. Now the ends are -- 1. In respect of the wicked, that they may be destroyed, for he "must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." He shall come with flaming fire, and then he will "take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." O the fearful sounds that will then be heard! Sure that noise must needs be terrible, when millions of men and women at the same instant shall fearfully cry out, and when their cries shall mingle with the thunders of the dying

and groaning heavens, and with the crack of the dissolving worlds when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes: “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.”

2. In respect of the godly, that they may be saved, that they may see and enjoy Christ to all eternity. This is a main end of Christ’s coming: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” – And, “Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.”

3. In respect of Christ himself, that he may be glorified. Now in two things more especially will he be glorified at that day: 1. In his justice. 2. In his mercy.

1. His justice will be glorified, especially, in punishing the wicked: on earth little justice is done on most offenders; though some public crimes are sometimes punished, yet the actions of the closets and chambers, the designs and thoughts of men, the business of retirement, and of the night, escape the hand of justice; and therefore God hath so ordained it, that there shall be a day, wherein all that are let alone by men, shall be questioned by God; then all thoughts shall be examined, and secret actions viewed on each side, and the infinite number of those sins which

escaped here, shall be blazoned there. O how will God glorify his justice at that day! Surely his justice shall shine, and be eminently glorious, in every passage.

2. His mercy will be glorified in rewarding the saints. And this is the main, the supreme end of his coming to judgment. “He shall come (saith the apostle,) to be glorified in his saints”; not but that the angels shall glorify the riches of his grace, as well as saints, but because the angels never sinned, (“they have now kept their robes of innocency above five thousand years, without one spark of dirt, or change of colour”;) therefore the glory of his grace is more especially fastened on saints, that sometime were sinners. Is not this their everlasting song, which they begin at this day, “Glory to the Lamb, and glory to his grace, that sitteth on the throne for evermore”?

Thus for directions; one word of application, or a few motives to work faith in you in this respect.

1. Christ in his word invites you to believe; these are his letters from heaven: “Come all to the marriage supper of the Lamb! Ho every one that thirsts, come in”; heaven’s gate is open to all that knock, but fools, foolish virgins, foolish souls, which have no faith, nor will have any, to render them fit for heaven. There is

Rahab the harlot, and Manasseh the murderer, and Mary that had so many devils.

A man that hath many devils may come where there is not one. Ah! poor soul, why dost thou make exceptions, where God makes none? Why shouldest thou exclude thyself out of these golden gates, when God doth not? Believe, only “believe in the Lord Jesus,” and the promise is sure, and without all controversy, “thou shall be saved.”

2. Christ, by his ministry, entreats you to believe. Come, say they, we beseech you believe in your judge! It may be you startle at this. What! to believe in him who is a-coming to be your judge? But if your judge be Jesus, if the same person who died for you, shall come to judge you, why should you fear? Indeed if your judge were your enemy, you might fear; but if he, who is your Lord, and who loves your souls, shall judge you, there is no such cause. Will a man fear to be judged by his dearest friend? a brother by a brother? a child by a father? or a wife by her husband? Consider! Is not he your judge, who came down from heaven, and who being on earth was judged, condemned, and executed, in your stead? And yet are ye fearful, “O ye of little faith.”

3. Christ by his Spirit moves, excites, and provokes you to believe. Sometimes in reading, and sometimes in hearing, and sometimes in meditating, you may feel him

stir. Have you felt no gale of the Spirit all this while? “It is the Spirit that convinceth the world of sin,” especially of that great sin of unbelief: and then of righteousness, which Christ procured by going to his Father. Observe here, it is the work of the Spirit thus to convince, so that all moral philosophy, and the wisest directions of the most civil men, will leave you in a wilderness; yea, ten thousands of sermons may be preached to you to believe, and yet you never shall, till you are overpowered by God’s Spirit. It is the Spirit that enlightens and directs you, as occasion is, “saying, This is the way, walk in it.” It is the Spirit that rouseth and awakeneth you by his effectual motions, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” “He stands at the door, and knocks”; if while I press you to “believe in Jesus,” you feel the Spirit in his stirrings, surely it concerns you to believe, it concerns you to yield, it concerns you to co-operate with the Spirit; say with him in the gospel, “I believe, Lord, help my unbelief”: I believe what? “I believe, when Jesus comes again, he will receive me to himself, and I shall be for ever with the Lord.” Amen, Amen.

Sect. V. -- Of Loving Jesus in that respect.

Let us love Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his second coming. In prosecution of this, I must first set down Christ's love to us, and then our love to Christ.

1. Christ will come. Is not this love? As his departure was a rich testimony of his love, "It is expedient for you that I go away"; so is his returning, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you"; O how can we think of Christ's returning, and not meditate on the greatness of his love? Might he not send his angels, but he must come himself? O the love of Christ in this one act, he will come again; he is but gone for a while, but he will come again in his own person.

2. Christ will welcome all his saints into his presence; and is not this love? After he is come down from heaven, he stays for them a while in the clouds; and commanding his angels to bring them thither, anon they come; and O how his heart springs within him at their coming!

3. Christ will sentence his saints to eternal life; here is love indeed! every word of the sentence is full of love; it contains the reward of his saints, a reward beyond their work, and beyond their wages, and beyond their promise, and beyond their thoughts, and beyond their understanding: it is a participation of the joys of God,

and of the inheritance of the Judge himself. Never was more love expressed in words, than Christ expresseth in this sentence, “Come, ye blessed,” &c.

4. Christ will take up all his saints with him into glory; where he will present them to his Father, and then be their all in all to all eternity. This is the height of Christ’s love; this is the immediate love that comes out from the precious heart and bowels of Jesus Christ.

5. And if Christ love thus; how should we love again for such a love? Can we love as high, as deep, as broad, as long, as love itself, or as Christ himself? No, no; all we can do is but to love a little; and O that, in the consideration of his love, we could love a little in sincerity! O that we were but able feelingly to say, “Lord, I love thee, I feel I love thee, even as I feel I love my friend, or as I feel I love myself, O thou who art the element or sun of love, come with thy power, let out one beam, one ray, one gleam of love upon my soul; shine hot upon my heart; remember thy promise to circumcise my heart, that I may love the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my soul!”

Sect. VI. -- Of Joying in Jesus in that respect.

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his second coming. Christ delights to have his people look upon him with delight; for a soul to be always under the spirit of bondage, and so to look upon Christ as a judge, a lion, or an offended God, it doth not please God. The Lord Jesus is tender of the joy of his saints: “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad,” saith Christ; “Rejoice evermore,” – “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.” “Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.” All that Christ doth to his saints tends to this joy, as the upshot or end of all: if he cast down, it is but to raise them up; if he humble, it is but to exalt; if he kill, it is but to make alive; in every dispensation, still he hath a tender care to preserve their joy. If you find it an hard thing to joy in Jesus, in reference to his second coming, think of these motives, --

1. Christ’s coming is the Christian’s encouragement; so Christ himself lays it down: “You shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory; and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” The signs of his coming, are the hopes of your approaching glory; and what should we do then, but prepare for it with exceeding joy? Many evils now surround you everywhere; Satan hath his snares, and the world its baits, and your own hearts are apt to betray you into your

enemies' hands; but when Christ comes, you shall have full deliverance, and perfect redemption; and therefore "look up and lift up your heads." The apostle speaks the very same encouragement: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and 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," – "wherefore comfort one another with these words."

2. Christ will lead us into glory. As the bridegroom, after nuptials, leads his bride to his own home, that there they may live together: so Christ, our royal bridegroom, will lead us into the palace of his glory. And is not this joy of our Lord enough to cause our joy? O what welcomes shall we have in this city! There shall we see Christ in his garden, there shall we be set as a seal on Christ's arm, and as a seal upon his heart; there shall we be filled with his love, enlightened with his light, encircled in his arms, following his steps, and praising his name, and admiring his glory! there shall be joy indeed, "For in thy presence there is fullness of joy, and at thy right-hand there are pleasures evermore."

Sect. VII. -- Of Calling on Jesus in that respect.

Let us call on Jesus, as carrying on our souls' salvation at his second coming.

1. Let us pray for the coming of Christ; this was the constant prayer of the church, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Well knows the bride that the day of Christ's coming is her wedding day, the day of presenting her unto his Father, and therefore no wonder if she pray for the hastening of it: "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart"; -- "thy kingdom come."

2. Let us praise him for his coming. Our engagement to Christ is so great, that we can never enough extol his name; at that day the books shall be opened, and why not the book of our engagements to Jesus Christ? I can surely tell you it is written full; the page and margin, both within and without. O then let our hearts be full of praises; let us join with those blessed elders that fell down before the Lamb, and sang, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Sect. VIII. -- Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect.

Let us conform to Jesus, as coming again to judge the world. “Looking unto Jesus,” contains this. When the apostle would persuade Christians to patience under the cross, he lays down first the cloud of witnesses, all the martyrs of the church of Christ; and secondly, Jesus Christ himself is of more virtue than all the rest.

But how should we conform to Christ in this respect? I answer: --

1. Christ will prepare for judgment. O! let us at all times prepare for his judging of us; doth it not concern us to prepare for him, as well as it concerns him to prepare for us? If Christ come, and find us careless, negligent, unprepared, what will become of us? The very thought of Christ’s sudden coming to judgment, might well put us into a waiting, watching posture, that we might be still in readiness. It cannot be long, and, alas, what is a little time when it is gone! is it not high time then to prepare our lamps, to trim our souls, to watch, and fast, and pray, and meditate, and to remember that for all our deeds, good or evil, God will bring us to judgment? O! let us against his coming prepare for him!

2. Christ at his coming will summon all his saints to arise, and to come to him in the clouds. Let us summon our souls to arise, and to go to Christ in the heavens.

What Christ will do really at that day, let us do spiritually on this day. Alas! we had need to be continually stirring up the gifts and graces that are in us. It is the Lord's pleasure that we should daily come to him, he would have us on the wing of prayer, and on the wing of meditation, and on the wing of faith; he would have us to be still arising, mounting up in divine contemplation to his majesty.

3. Christ will at the last judge all our souls, and judge all the wicked to eternal flames; O let us judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord: but in what manner should we judge ourselves? I answer: --

(1.) We must search out our sins. "Winnow yourselves, O people, not worthy to be beloved." There should be a strict scrutiny, to find out all the profaneness of our hearts and lives, all our sins against light, and love, and checks, and vows; "Winnow yourselves." If you will not, I pronounce to you from the eternal God, that ere long the Lord will come in the clouds, and then will he open the book wherein all your sins are written; he will search Jerusalem with candles, he will come with a sword in his hand, to search out all secure sinners everywhere, and then will all your sins be discovered to all the world.

(2.) We must confess our sins before the Lord; we must spread them before the Lord, as Hezekiah did his letter; only in our confessions, observe these rules; as, --

[1.] Our confession must be full of sorrow, “I will declare my iniquity (saith David,) I will be sorry for my sin.”

[2.] Our confession must be a full confession; we must pour it out. Thus David styles one of his psalms, “A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.” We must pour out our complaints, as a man poureth water out of a vessel: “Arise, cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches; pour out thine heart, like water, before the face of the Lord.” Water runs all out of a vessel; when you turn the mouth downward, never a spoonful will stay behind: so should we pour out our hearts before God, and (if it were possible) leave not a sin unconfessed, at least for the kinds, if not for the particular sins.

[3.] Our confession must be with full aggravation; we should aggravate our sins by all the circumstances, that they may show them odious: -- O, my sins were out of measure sinful; they were sins against knowledge, and light, against many mercies received, against many judgments threatened, against many checks of conscience, against many vows and promises; thus oft, and in this place, and at that time, and

in that manner, I committed these and these sins: but of all the aggravations, let us be sure to remember how we sinned against the goodness, and patience, and love, and mercy of God; surely these circumstances will make our sins out of measure sinful. Say, “O my God, thou art my Father; was I ever in want, and thou didst not relieve me? Was I ever in weakness, and thou didst not strengthen me? Was I ever in straits, and thou didst not deliver me? Was I ever in sickness, and thou didst not cure me? Was I ever in misery, and thou didst not succour me? Hast thou not been a gracious God to me? All my bones can say, Who is like unto thee? Lord, who is like unto thee? And shall I thus and thus reward the Lord for all his mercies towards me? Hear, O heavens, and hearken, O earth; sun, stand thou still, and, thou moon, be thou amazed at this! hear angels, and hear devils; hear heaven, and hear hell; and be you avenged on such a sin as this is!”

4. We must condemn ourselves, or pass sentence against our souls; “Lord, the worst place in hell is too good for me; Lord, here is my soul, thou mayest, if thou pleasest, send Satan for it, and give me a portion among the damned.”

5. We must plead pardon, and cry mightily to God in Christ, for the remission of all our sins. This is the way of judging ourselves; we see nothing but hell and damnation in ourselves, but then we fling down ourselves at God’s gate of mercy.

We despair not in God, though in ourselves. God in Christ is gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; and hence we make bold to entreat the Lord for Christ's sake to be merciful to us. "Lord, pardon, Lord forgive, for thy name's sake, promise sake, mercy's sake, and for the Lord Jesus' sake: O let free grace have his work; Lord, glorify thy name, and glorify the riches of thy grace in saving us."

6. Christ at his coming will be glorified in his saints; not only in himself, but in his saints also; whose glory, as it comes from him, so it will redound to him. O let him now be glorified in us, let us now in some high way conform to the image of his glory, let us look unto Christ till we are like Christ, not only in grace, but in glory; and this glory, as it comes from him, so let it redound to him. Let us so "behold the glory of the Lord in the glass of the gospel, as that we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory," from a lesser measure to an higher measure of glory.

O that something of the glory of Christ might rest upon us! O that having this glory in our thoughts, we could now feel a change from glory to glory! Is it so, that the Lord Jesus will be glorified in all his saints? And shall we have inglorious souls? base and unworthy affections and conversations? Or shall we content ourselves

with a little measure of grace? O be we holy, even as he is holy; let our conversation be heavenly, let us purify ourselves even as he is pure; let us resemble him in some high measure of grace. And, lastly, let us glorify him in bodies and spirits; all our glory is from him; and therefore let all our glory redound to him; let us now begin that gospel tune of the eternal song of free grace, which one day we shall more perfectly chant in glory; “Alleluiah! and again Alleluiah! and Amen, Alleluiah! salvation, and glory, and power, and praise, and thanksgiving, and obedience be unto him that sits on the throne, the Lamb blessed for ever and ever. Amen.”

Now all is done, shall I speak a word for Christ, or rather for ourselves in relation to Christ; if I had but one word more to speak in the world, it should be this. O let all our spirits be taken up with Christ! Surely Christ is enough to fill all our thoughts, desires, hopes, loves, joys, or whatever is within us, or without us. Christ alone comprehends all the circumference of all our happiness. O the worth of Christ! Compare we other things with him, and they will bear no weight at all; cast into the balance with him angels, they are wise, but he is wisdom; cast into the balance with him men, they are liars, lighter than vanity, but Christ is “the amen, the faithful witness”; cast into the scales kings, and all kings, and all their glory; cast in two worlds, and add to the weight millions of heavens of heavens, and the

balance cannot down, the scales are unequal; Christ outweighs all. Shall I yet come nearer home? What is heaven, but to be with Christ? What is life eternal, but to believe in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ? Where may we find peace with God, and reconciliation with God, but only in Christ? All the goodness of God comes out of God through this golden pipe, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true, those essential attributes of love, grace, mercy, and goodness, are only in God, and they abide in God, yet the mediatory manifestation of love, grace, mercy, and goodness, is only in Christ. Christ alone is the treasury, storehouse, magazine, of the free goodness and mercy of the Godhead. In him we are justified, sanctified, saved. “He is the way, the truth, and the life”; he is honour, riches, beauty, health, peace, and salvation; all the spiritual blessings wherewith we are enriched, are in and by Christ: God hears our prayers by Christ; God forgives our iniquities through Christ; all we have, and all we expect to have, hangs only on Christ; he is the golden hinge, upon which all our salvation turns.

O how should all hearts be taken with this Christ! Christians, turn your eyes upon the Lord; “Look, and look again unto Jesus.” Shall I speak one word more to thee that believest? Remember how he came out of his Father’s bosom for thee, wept for thee, bled for thee, poured out his life for thee, is now risen for thee, gone to heaven for thee, sits at God’s right-hand, and rules all the world for thee, makes

intercession for thee, and at the end of the world will come again for thee, and receive thee to himself, to live with him forever and ever. Surely if thus thou believest, and livest, thy life is comfortable, and thy death will be sweet; if there be any heaven upon earth, thou wilt find it in the practice and exercise of this gospel duty, in “Looking unto Jesus.”

THE END.