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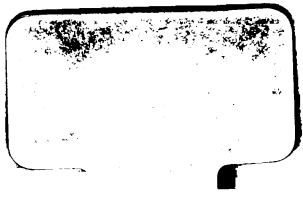

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THE

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

THOMAS BOSTON.

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THE

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

THOMAS BOSTON,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT ETTRICK;—AUTHOR OF THE FOURFOLD STATE, AND OTHER VALUABLE WORKS;

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM HIS MANUSCRIPTS, IN POSSESSION OF HIS FAMILY,

CONSISTING OF SIXTY-SIX SERMONS ON IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

With a RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE by the Clergymen who prepared the WORK for the Press.

By it, he being dead, yet speaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

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SERMONS.

THE FOLLY OF TURNING ASIDE FROM THE LORD *.

SERMON XLV.

1 SAM. xii. 21. *And turn ye not aside; for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.*

YE have been professing to forsake your wandering life through the empty creation, and to turn to the Lord as your portion, as your soul's rest, and as your great Lord and Master from henceforth. There is one thing of which I would persuade you, the faith of which would keep you ever with him; and this is, that if you were to change every day, you can never do better, never do so well. This is the scope of our text; in which we have Samuel's reason to the Israelites for their not turning aside from the Lord in any case;

 which

* Delivered at Galashiels, on Sabbath, Sept. 6. 1719.

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which is, "For then ſhould we go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain."

Theſe words (without any ſupplement, and to the ſame ſenſe, but more forcibly expreſſed) may be read word for word thus: "And ye ſhall not turn aſide, but after vain things," &c.; that is, ye cannot turn aſide, but you muſt, by doing ſo, go after vain things. The text is a defiance held out to men in their attempts to mend their condition by departing from the Lord. In which there is,

1. A caſe ſuppoſed, which is, That they ſhould turn aſide from the Lord; and having done ſo, they have the wide world to chuſe upon, let them take to the right hand, or to the left, chuſe the beſt they can pitch on, ſome or all, that what is wanting in one, may be made up in another. This is the utmoſt extent to which it can be carried.--There is,

2. The determination in this caſe, which is expreſſed in the text with all confidence. Ye ſhall not, ye cannot for your hearts, turn aſide, but after vain things; I defy you to find out a ſubſtantial good for yourſelves in the whole creation, ſeparate from God. Betake yourſelves to what you will, to idols that are ſo already, to other things to make idols of them, make your beſt of them, you ſhall never make more of them than vanity, they are unprofitable, empty, helpleſs nothings. —From this ſubject I take the following

DOCTRINE, That no man ſhall mend his condition, but will ruin it, by turning aſide from the Lord, let him turn to what hand ſoever he will.—For illuſtrating this doctrine, I ſhall,

I. Offer ſome things for explaining this point.
II. Evince the truth of this weighty point.
III.

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III. Add the practical improvement.

We are then,

I. To offer some things for explaining this point.—Here I observe,

1. That no man, by turning aside from the Lord, shall mend his condition, but ruin it, in point of rest to his heart, and satisfaction to the desires of it: Isa. lvii. 19. 20. "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. But 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." Every man's heart within him is naturally an hungry, empty thing, which must be filled from something without itself, or it cannot rest. Some, hearing of the soul's satisfaction to be had in God, come away to ordinances, and are for a time found about the Lord's hand, like the mixed multitude from Egypt among the Israelites. They do not at the very first find that satisfaction for which they look, and they cannot wait; but for haste to be filled, they go back to the world and their lusts. In this case, the more haste, the less speed, they are farther from it than ever.—I observe,

2. That no man, by turning aside from the Lord, shall mend his condition, but ruin it, in point of comfort and ease to his conscience: Psal. xxxii. 3. 5. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." This is the true way to get ease. But some awakened sinners seek ease

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by their tears, confeſſions, reſolutions, and the like, not by the blood of Chriſt: but, alas! thoſe plaſters will not ſtick, they will never draw out the thorn of guilt. Some divert the pain of conſcience, by filling their hands and heads with buſineſs, like Cain. Some ſtifle it by ſinning, yet more over the belly of convictions. But the ſore healed with any of theſe, which are but mere palliatives, will break out more dreadfully than ever, though perhaps not till there is no remedy. And how is the caſe thus mended? is it not ruined?—I obſerve,

3. That no man, by turning aſide from the Lord, ſhall mend his condition, but ruin it, in point of his intereſt and advantage: Jer. ii. 13. "For my people have committed two great evils; they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water." He who changes, changes for what he accounts the better for himſelf; yet men often find themſelves diſappointed. Nothing draws perſons more away from God than intereſt; but heaven ſhall be turned nethermoſt, and earth uppermoſt in the univerſe, ere any man, manage as ſecurely as he will, ſhall ever be a gainer by turning aſide from God. For this ye have the concurring teſtimony of all true penitents, whoſe eyes have been opened: Hoſ. ii. 7. "And ſhe ſhall follow after her lovers, but ſhe ſhall not overtake them; and ſhe ſhall ſeek them, but ſhall not find them; then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to my firſt huſband, for then was it better with me than now."—I obſerve,

4. That no man, by turning aſide from the Lord, will better his condition, but ruin it, in point of ſecurity from evil: Prov. xxviii. 18. "Whoſo walketh uprightly, ſhall be ſaved; but he

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he that is perverſe in his ways, ſhall fall at once." Sin often promiſes, but can never afford a ſolid ſhelter. Any hiding-place or defence to which perſons betake themſelves, turning away from God, is but vanity, and cannot deliver; nay, it expoſes them to the way of evil: Amos, v. 19. "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the houſe, and leaned his hand upon the wall, and a ſerpent bit him." The Jews, in their crucifying of Chriſt, are a ſtanding witneſs to this: John, xi. 48. "If we let him alone," ſaid they, "all men will believe on him, and the Romans ſhall come, and take away both our place and nation." Matth. xxii. 7. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city."—We now come,

II. To evince the truth of this weighty point, That no man ſhall mend his condition, but will ruin it, by turning aſide from the Lord, let him turn to what hand ſoever he will.—We ſhall do this,

Firſt, By conſidering to what a perſon turns aſide when he turns from God.

Secondly, By taking a view of what he turns aſide from. And,

Thirdly, By inſpecting the pretended gain which he acquires by turning aſide from the Lord.

Firſt, We are to evince the truth of this weighty point, by conſidering to what a perſon turns aſide when he turns from God. It is but vanity, which cannot profit or deliver. There are but two things to which a perſon can turn aſide, though

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the particulars are numberleſs. The character agrees either,

1. To ſin, that is, to ſinful ways, courſes, or practices. And while there is a God in heaven to avenge the affront, no man ſhall mend his condition in this way. You will not, indeed, want an invitation to turn aſide, and go in at this door; but know for a certain that it will ruin you, for "the dead are there, and her gueſts are in the depths of hell," Prov. ix. 18. Sin is the way in which you will never find reſt to your ſouls; on the contrary, it will produce a ſting to your conſcience, a conſtant reſtleſſneſs to your heart, and eternal ruin to the whole man, if mercy recover you not, and bring you back to God.—Or the character agrees,

2. To the creature, to which, when men are turning aſide from God, they turn to ſeek their happineſs. This comprehends all created comforts whatſoever. Of them we have two things to ſay.

(1.) They are all uncertain, a perſon can never get a ſure hold of them: Prov. xxiii. 5. "Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themſelves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven." Unchangeableneſs is an eſſential property of that which makes truly happy and fully ſatisfies, for otherwiſe the very fear of loſing the thing mars the full reſt of the heart in it. But where is this to be found but in God? The creature is ſo uncertain, that there is not one moment in which we may not either be taken from it, or it from us; ſo that a perſon may reſt as well on the top of a wheel, as on any creature. And turning aſide from God to it, is turning from the fountain to a ciſtern, which, in that very moment when a perſon goes to drink out of it, may run dry.

(2.)

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(2.) They are utterly insufficient. It is not in them to answer the cravings of the human heart, of an immortal soul. Hence it is said, Isa. lv. 2. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" [1.] There is no suitableness in them to the soul, for they are not commensurate to the desires of it; God only is so, being an infinite good. Wherefore, wherever you go to make your bed among them, you will find it shorter than you can stretch yourself upon. [2.] They have no divine appointment for that end, without which grass would be no more satisfying to the flocks than sand. God has kept the satisfying of the soul to himself, as his peculiar prerogative.—Therefore the turning aside to such emptiness can never make a man happy.—Here, however, may be stated this

Objection, What! does not every body know that there is a goodness in the creature? *Answer*, But every body should likewise know that it is uncertain and insufficient, and therefore not worth the turning aside to from a good God. Besides, know this farther, that no creature can be to thee more than this God, from whom thou turnest aside, makes it to be. So thou mayest get it, and at the same time there may come a withering curse with it, that thou shalt find no more sap in it than Haman in his riches, family, honours, which, by his own confession, availed him nothing, Esther, v. 13. Yea, thy ruin may rise from it, as Achan's from the golden wedge.

Secondly, For evincing the truth of this weighty point, consider what a person turns aside from, when turning aside from God. He turns from an upmaking portion; Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have

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have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee." Cleave to the Lord, turn not aſide from him: For,

1. Thou art enriched for time: 1 Tim. iv. 8. "Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The everlaſting covenant ſecures all that thou needeſt. Thy proviſion is ſure: Pſal. xxxvii. 3. "Truſt in the Lord, and do good; ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed." Iſa. xxxiii. 16. "He ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munition of rocks; bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure." Thou ſhalt not want lodging: Pſal. xc. 1. "Lord, thou haſt been our dwelling-place in all generations." Fear not want of cloathing: Matth. vi. 30. "For if God ſo cloathe the graſs of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much more cloathe you, O ye of little faith?" What want ye more, then? Why, ſome would have land alſo. Then cleave to Chriſt as thy Lord and Huſband. He is Lord of all the land in the world; the earth ſhall be thine in the right of thy Huſband: Mat. v. 5. "Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth." But what will a perſon do for money? Why, cleave to the Lord: Job, xxii. 24. 25. "Then ſhalt thou lay up gold as duſt, and the gold of Ophir as the ſtones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty ſhall be thy defence, and thou ſhalt have plenty of ſilver."—Here ſome may propoſe this

Objection, Theſe are fine words, but what will they bring into our mouth, or on our back, what will they bring into the coffers? *Anſwer*, They are God's words, and his words are better than all the world's good deeds. Some to whom God has

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has no ſpecial love, he gives them their portion in their hand, and ſets them off; others, who are his dear children, he gives them the good words of a promiſe, and keeps them at home with himſelf. Say now, which of theſe have the beſt of it? The following words determine it: Matth. xxv. 34. "Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God approves not of thoſe men who ſay to the needy, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding, *they* give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body," Jam. ii. 16. And will He himſelf treat his people ſo? No, no. Many a ſaint has truſted to theſe words, when they had nothing elſe to truſt to, and they have all been made out to them: Pſal. xxxiv. 8. 9. "O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good! bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his ſaints! for there is no want to them that fear him." The unbeliever's miſtake is, that God's bond cannot be paid, but in giving the very thing itſelf. Even this is often done, but he alſo gives his people more frequently what is as good. Moſes, wanting meat forty days, had no reaſon to complain, when God in thoſe days took away his ſtomach, and ſatisfied him otherwiſe than by meat. Adam lived well when the heavens were the roof of his houſe, and God was his God. And the enjoyment of God ſtill will abundantly compenſate the want of all theſe things.

2. Cleave unto the Lord, turn not aſide from him, and thus thou art enriched for eternity, 1 Tim. iv. 8. quoted above. Come death when it will, what then? thou ſhalt be carried where thy happineſs ſhall be completed: John, xiv. 2. "In my Father's

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Father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." The law cannot debar thee from this happineſs, it is ſatisfied; juſtice has nothing to ſay againſt thee, for the debt is paid: God is thy God; and the tongue of men, nor of angels, cannot fully expreſs this privilege.

Thirdly, The truth of this weighty point in the text will farther appear, by inſpecting the pretended gain which is acquired by turning aſide from the Lord.—It may all be ſummed up in theſe two particulars.

1. It is nothing: Prov. xxiii. 5. (quoted above). All the gain is but children's gain, which they have won off their fellows, of which grown perſons make no account; and as little will a ſpiritual heart account of gain got by turning aſide from the Lord. It is a poor trade where a perſon is not gaining for his ſoul; and no perſon will gain for this by turning aſide from God.

2. It is worſe than nothing. Whatſoever thou thinkeſt thou gaineſt by turning aſide from the Lord, a thouſand times more is going to deſtruction in the mean time. Count what thou giveſt out, as well as what thou getteſt in, and thou wilt ſoon ſee the gain worſe than nothing: Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

From all which it is evident, that no man ſhall better his condition, but ruin it, by turning aſide from the Lord, let him turn to what hand ſoever he will.—I now proceed,

III. To make ſome improvement of this ſubject, in an uſe of information.—Hence,

1. You

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1. You who have never yet turned to the Lord, but have been going aside from him all your days, know, that ye are yet in a ruinous condition; there is nothing you can call yours, but what is vanity, and cannot profit or deliver. Ye will not be perſuaded of this; but remember it is explicitly told you; and if grace do not open your eyes to ſee it timely, death will open them to ſee it when it is out of time to mend the matter.

2. Backſliders, be all of you convinced of the fooliſh choice ye have made, repent, and turn again unto the Lord. What have you gained by your departures from him? Where is the advantage of the ſad exchange? Blaſted profits! ſhort-lived pleaſures! leaving a ſting behind them in the conſcience! theſe will not compenſate for what ye have loſt.

3. Ye who have got near God in this ordinance, ye may ſee that it is your duty and intereſt, by a holy tender walk, a living by faith, to hold where you are. If you ſtep aſide from God, you may well mar your caſe, you will never mend it this way. Entertain no curioſity to be on the other ſide of the hedge; ſatisfy yourſelves that there is nothing there but vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain: Iſa. xxx. 7. "For the Egyptian ſhall help in vain, and to no purpoſe; therefore have I cried concerning this, Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill."

4. Diſappointed communicants may hence be ſatisfied, that if you love your own ſouls, it is not for your profit to go aſide to another door, to get your loſs at the door of God's houſe made up another way. Your caſe, it is likely, is ſad, and Satan will ſtrike in with the occaſion to make you a fair offer. But know of a truth, if you embrace it, inſtead of mending your condition, you ſhall make your

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your ſad caſe yet ſadder. Be peremptory in your reſolutions, that you will wait upon the Lord, and not give over, how long ſoever ye be without ſenſible ſucceſs: Gen. xxxii. 26. "And the angel ſaid to Jacob, Let me go, for the day breaketh; and he ſaid, I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me." Go thou, and do likewiſe.

5. Ye carnal ones, who are weary of waiting on about the Lord's hand, and are longing to be back to the world as your element, ſaying in your heart, "When will the Sabbath be over?" ye may ſee the propriety of checking theſe carnal motions; ſtir up yourſelves to ſeek the Lord, and to improve the preſent opportunity for making a happy ſettlement for your ſouls; otherwiſe, if ye miſs ſuch an occaſion of mending your condition, ye know not if ever ye ſhall have it again; and by neglecting it, ye run towards the ruining of your ſouls.

Let all be exhorted to cleave to the Lord, and tremble at the thought of turning aſide from him. Be exhorted, with purpoſe of heart to cleave unto the Lord, Acts, xi. 23. Turn not aſide from his precious truths, his holy ordinances, the way of holineſs and tenderneſs in the whole of your converſation; but cleave to the Lord, his word, his way, and to whatever bears his ſtamp. Turn not aſide, whatever may be the temptation or allurement. Know of a truth, that it is but poiſon preſented in a golden cup to you, which will work the ruin of your condition; it is but a gilded vanity, to cheat you out of a ſubſtantial good: it is what will not fail to be bitterneſs in the end. Have your eyes in your head, then, and forfeit not God's favour or ſmiles for lying vanities.

Again, Turn not aſide, whatever be the hazard of holding on. Let devils and men run that as high

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high as they will, as ſure as God's word is truth, the greateſt hazard is ever on the other ſide; and they who turn aſide run the moſt fearful riſk.—Wherefore, take it home with you, lay it up in your hearts, and improve it in your daily walk; decide all your controverſies with temptation, managed by a ſubtile devil, a carnal heart, or the men of the world, by this,—That you cannot turn aſide, but "after vain things, which cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are vain." Amen.

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JESUS COMPLETELY QUALIFIED FOR HIS WORK*.

SERMON XLVI.

ISA. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.*

THIS text is that upon which our Lord Jesus himself preached to the congregation of Nazareth, Luke, iv. 16.—19. And if ye ask of whom the prophet spake, Jesus tells you, ver. 21. that it was of him. Though the prophet perhaps had an eye to himself, and to the promised deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; yet certainly Christ, and the spiritual deliverance by him, is the principal subject. Jesus is here described as the Mediator between God and man. In the words we have two things.

1. The glorious qualifications of our Mediator: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.* Here are the three persons of the Trinity distinguished. The Lord God, his Son, and his Spirit. Our Lord Jesus

* Delivered Sept. 1718.

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Jesus being both God and man, the Holy Spirit, with all his gifts, was put on the man Christ. At his baptism the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, Matth. iii. 16. On him also the Spirit rested, and never again departed from him, but continued filling him at all times with graces and gifts for the discharge of his great trust. So that he says the Spirit *is* upon me, not *is come* upon me. —We have,

2. The *reason* of these glorious qualifications. This was, because they were necessary for the office to which he was called: *Because the Lord God hath anointed me.* It behoved him to be both God and man. As he was God, he could have nothing added to him; but as he was man, it behoved him to be endowed with unparalleled qualifications for this unparalleled office.—Here consider his call to the work. The Lord anointed him, as prophets, priests, and kings were wont to be, and thus were called and set apart to their respective offices; in like manner was Christ called of the Father to the Mediatorial works, not with material oil, as they were, but with the Holy Spirit, which was signified by that oil. ——Again, consider his mission: The Lord *sent* him. He did not come unsent to the world; but his Father having called him, and furnished him for the work, sent him away to exercise his commission, and to perform his work. ——Consider, next, the work he was called to, and sent out upon. Consider this work with respect to Christ himself; and it is threefold. *First*, As a prophet or preacher of the gospel, revealing the Father's mind. *Secondly*, A priest or healer, a spiritual physician, for sin-sick souls, to bind up the broken hearted. *Thirdly*, As a king, to issue out proclamations, far more joyful than

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thoſe of Cyrus to the captives, as the ſpiritual captivity and impriſonment is far worſe than a corporal one.—Conſider the work as it reſpects the different ſorts of people with whom he has to deal; and it is twofold. *Firſt*, Some of them have ſome good in them wrought by his Spirit; and of theſe, ſome are the meek, others are broken hearted. *Secondly*, Some of them have no good in them, they are captives, priſoners to Satan. Both ſorts are in his commiſſion, as perſons he has to deal with.—Conſider this work as it reſpects the different caſes of theſe ſorts of perſons; and it is fourfold. 1*ſt*, To the meek, he has to carry good tidings. 2*dly*, To the broken-hearted, he has to bind up their wounds. 3*dly*, To the captives he has to give deliverance, and 4*thly*, To the priſoners he has to open the priſon-doors. Thus he is, by the Father's ſpecial appointment, to give ſuitable help to each caſe. A more particular explication of theſe things will be given as we advance in the ſubject.

Now, here is a great work; and becauſe of it, (or, as it is in the Hebrew, anſwerable to it), he is endowed with the Spirit, with his graces and gifts, without which he could not be qualified for it.

The ſubject of our preſent diſcourſe, is our Lord's qualification for his work: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.* Here our Lord commends himſelf to poor ſinners, that they may come to him, and be happy in him. Who can commend him to purpoſe but himſelf? He commends himſelf to us, from the fulneſs of the Spirit lodged in him, as in Rev. iii. 1. "And unto the angel of the church of Sardis write, Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars." As when the ſoul is gone, the body can move

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move and act no more; so where the Spirit of God is gone from men, they can do no more good. While destitute of the Spirit, they are shut up under an uninterrupted barrenness. Now, this is the natural case of the whole world. To the world, then, under the want of the Spirit, Christ here makes public proclamation, where the Spirit is to be found; as if he had said, 'O all ye spiritless, lifeless sinners, dead to grace and goodness, be it known unto you, *the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.*' He says as Joseph said to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 9. and downwards. The Spirit came upon Moses and the prophets, but they could spare none of their oil; if they could, they could not have communicated it. But the Spirit is on *me*, as the oil in the cistern, to be dispersed by the pipes of conveyance to poor sinners who will come to me. This is indeed a proclamation of a well-stored and cheap market, to a country perishing under famine, to which they should all resort.

That this is the true intent of these words, appears, *first*, Because it is plain from the original accentuation, that the principal purpose of the text, is not to shew why the Spirit was on Christ, (for in that case the chief stop within the verse had been at broken hearted), but to shew, that the Spirit *is* on him, (for there the great stop is.) *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, &c. *Secondly*, Because an amazing change is prophesied, in the preceding chapter, to come upon the church of the Gentiles; and so here follows the accounting for it: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, to be communicated for effecting this change.

From this part of the subject, I observe the following

DOCTRINE, That the Spirit of God was eminent-

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ly on Jesus Christ, to be communicated to poor sinners.

This was typified by the ointment poured out on the head of the High Priest, Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Compare John, i. 16.

For illustrating this doctrine, we propose,

I. To shew in what eminent sort the Spirit of the Lord was upon Christ the Mediator.

II. To confirm this point, That the Spirit is put upon Christ to be communicated.

III. I will consider the reasonableness and suitableness of this glorious device, of the Spirit's being put on Christ, to be communicated to poor sinners.—And then,

IV. We shall improve the subject.—We are,

I. To shew in what eminent sort the Spirit of the Lord was upon the Mediator.—Here we observe,

1. That the gifts and graces of the Spirit were conferred on Christ's human nature in a singular measure: Psal. xlv. 7. "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." What these are you may see, Isa. iii. 2. 3. Others have had much of these, but never any so much of them as the man Christ, though they were not infinite, which is a property peculiar to the divine perfections. Thus his enemies were obliged to confess, that he spoke as never man spoke. And in this sense that testimony, John, iii. 34. "God giveth not his Spirit by measure unto him," may be applied even to Christ's manhood; namely, that God gives not his gifts and graces to him sparingly, as out of a measure, but with a full hand most abundantly.—We observe,

2. The fulness of the Spirit was upon the Mediator; and that is an infinite fulness, for he is God

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God as well as man: Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." The Holy Spirit is an infinite Spirit of boundleſs perfections, all which Jeſus Chriſt as God doth fully poſſeſs. The divine nature, an unfathomable depth of perfections, was united to the human nature in our Mediator; ſo that he has not only a portion of the Spirit, but the whole fulneſs of the Spirit, John, iii. 34. Saints have, and can have, but their meaſure; but the ocean of perfections, which knows no bounds, and all grace, were and was in him.—We obſerve,

3. That the Spirit was at all times alike on the Mediator. The Spirit came ſometimes on the prophets, inſtructing them what to ſay, and exciting them to ſay it; but ſometimes the ſpirit of prophecy did not blow, they had it not at their command: 1 Peter, i. 21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt." See an inſtance, 2 Sam. vii. 2.—5. where the prophet Nathan knew not how to direct David, till the word of the Lord came to him. So the Spirit of ſanctification in the ſaints, though he never departs from them, yet how often is there a dead calm in their ſouls, which requires them to ſay, as in Song, iv. 26. "Awake, O north wind! and come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits." But the Spirit reſted on Jeſus Chriſt, Iſa. xi. 2; it dwelleth in him, Col. ii. 9. He never can be at a loſs for want of the Spirit, whoſe waters in him are never ſhallow, but ſtill continue alike deep.—We obſerve,

4. That the Spirit is upon him in the fulneſs of a fountain, to be communicated to thoſe who come

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to him: Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness: So "Jesus breathed on his disciples," John, xx. 22. and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." All others, even the saints in heaven, have but the fulness of a vessel, what only may serve themselves. But he has the fulness of a spring, where the waters are ever flowing, and therefore can furnish all others who come to him, and yet have never the less to himself.—We come now,

II. To confirm this point, That the Spirit was in Christ to be communicated.—We observe,

1. That this is plain from scripture-testimony: Rev. iii. 1. "He hath the seven spirits of God." All the saints have the Spirit of God. He dwells in each of them; if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. But then this is quite another thing than the simple having of the Spirit. Christ hath the Spirit as he hath the seven stars, that is, at his disposal, to give them or take them from whom he will: Psal. lxvi. 18. "Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Compare Eph. iv. 8. Whence it is plain, that Christ received these gifts, received them to give them to men.—This is plain,

2. For Christ, as Mediator and Surety of the new covenant, is a common person, as Adam was in the first covenant, who received the stock of all mankind in his hand, and lost it. Now, free grace has made up the stock again, and put it in a sure hand, where it never can be lost: Psal. lxxxix. 19. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty." He is the second Adam, and therefore the

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the fulneſs of the Spirit and of his grace is put upon him, to be communicated by him to poor ſinners.—Conſider farther,

3. That Chriſt could not have been qualified to execute the office to which the Father had called him, without communicating the Spirit to thoſe with whom he has to deal; therefore ſays the text, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe he hath ſent me to preach good tidings to the meek.* How ſhall the poor meek ones, who ſee nothing in them or about them to recommend them to God, believe the good tidings, without the Spirit of faith? How can the broken hearted have their wounds bound up without the healing Spirit? How can the captives and priſoners be delivered, unleſs the Spirit break off their fetters.—Conſider,

Laſtly, That it is from Jeſus Chriſt that all who partake of the Spirit do receive the Spirit; there is no other channel of conveyance: John, i. 16. "Out of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace." John, vi. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the words that I ſpeak unto you are ſpirit, and they are life." It is he who ſends the Spirit, John, xv. 16. It is true, the Father is ſaid to give the Spirit to them that aſk him, Luke, xi. 13.; but it is ſtill in Chriſt's name, and for his ſake, John, xiv. 29. Therefore he is called the Spirit of God's Son, whom he ſends forth into the hearts of his people.—We now proceed,

III. To conſider the reaſonableneſs and ſuitableneſs of this glorious device, of the Spirit being put on Chriſt to be communicated to poor ſinners.

1. It is moſt ſuitable to the Father's honour, that guilty criminals partake of his Spirit through a Mediator. God looked on all the fallen race of man, and could be pleaſed with none of them:

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Pſal. xiv. 3. "They are all gone aſide; they are altogether become filthy." But behold his own Son became man! and he is well pleaſed with him, with his perſon and mediation, and therefore with ſinners in him, Matth. iii 17. In Chriſt he meets with the ſinner; and his juſtice being ſatisfied by him, he may, with ſafety to his own honour, communicate with the poor creatures, and they receive his Spirit, as members of his own Son, their glorious Head.

2. It is moſt ſuitable to the honour of the Son, who is appointed head over all things to the church, which is his body, Eph. i. 23. This is that honour which his Father has put upon him, that he be the great ſteward of heaven, the truſtee for all the elect of God, the great diſpenſer of the Father's favours, to the objects of everlaſting love. And as Pharaoh put an honour upon Joſeph, by ordering his petitioners to go to Joſeph; ſo does the Father put honour upon Chriſt, his own well-beloved Son, by a ſimilar appointment.

3. It is moſt ſuitable to the honour of the Holy Spirit; for in this manner the gift of the Spirit appears to be by the infinite value of the blood of the Son of God: Rev. v. 6. "The Lamb ſlain hath ſeven horns and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent forth into all the earth." No receiving of this holy fire, but from the altar where a Saviour was ſlain. No communicating of that Spirit, but through the blood of the Redeemer.

Laſtly, It is moſt ſuitable to the ſinner's caſe; for Chriſt is bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh. He is our near kinſman, through whom we come to God boldly: Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him." We are not able to behold an unvailed God,

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God, his glory would dazzle and confound us; but through the vail of the flesh of Christ, we may behold him, and live.--We now come,

IV. To a practical improvement of the subject. And this,

First, In an use for information.

1. This lets us see the transcendent glory and beauty of Jesus Christ. Pharaoh could say of Joseph to his servants, Gen. xlviii. 38. "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" How does the firmament shine with the stars which sparkle in it! How beautiful is the earth, when decked with the variety of the gifts of nature in the spring! But what are all these to the Mediator's glory and beauty, in whom all the gifts and graces of God's Spirit do center: Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured into thy lips." There is no man, however well qualified, that excels in all things, there is a want in every individual, but no want in Christ: Song, v, 16. "Yea, he is altogether lovely." (Heb. He is all desires).--We may learn,

2. The absolute fulness and sufficiency of Christ to make the sinner who comes to him perfectly happy; he gives them rest, Matth. xi. 28. There is a fulness of the Spirit in him to answer all their necessities, be what they will. Behold the whole constellation of gifts and graces in our exalted Redeemer. Every good gift, natural, moral, or religious, come from this Spirit. Some have one gift of him, some another; but our Lord Jesus Christ has all, which is more than all the excellencies to be found in angels and men. And what can he want to bestow, who has the Spirit to

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to give to thoſe who come to him?—We may learn,

3. The freedom of grace in Chriſt. He has all, and he communicates all freely. The ſpring runs freely without price or hire. It is a pleaſure to have a full breaſt ſucked; and it is a pleaſure to our bleſſed Redeemer to do good and to communicate to undeſerving ſinners.—We may ſee,

4. The abſolute need we have of Chriſt. Ye are ruined without the Spirit, ye will pine away in your guilt, ruſt away in your corruptions, and, like dead corpſes, be buried out of God's ſight, if ye get not the Spirit; and ye cannot have the Spirit but from Chriſt. This is the only market opened to relieve your neceſſities.

Laſtly, Ye are inexcuſeable if ye continue without the Spirit, for you may have the Spirit if you come to Chriſt; but, alas! he may ſay of us, as John, v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." I would raiſe your dead ſouls, I would quicken you, I would make you as a well-watered garden; but alas! ye care not for the Spirit: Prov. i. 25. "Ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof."—We ſhall improve this ſubject.

Secondly, In an uſe of exhortation.

1. I would exhort you, then, to come to Chriſt, that ye may partake of his Spirit. Chriſt is ſaying to you this day, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.* Come, and I will pour him out upon you. Alas for the want of the Spirit this day! it appears ſadly in the whole church, in the congregation, in neighbourhoods, and in families. There is enough of a ſelfiſh, deviliſh, carnal, worldly, profane, and formal ſpirit, but little of a holy heavenly ſpirit, to be ſeen this day. But we may

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may get the ſpirit, if we will by faith come to Chriſt for it. O that we were all moving to him for this ſpirit!—To be more particular, we would exhort you,

1. Come to Chriſt, O thou dead and lifeleſs ſinner, who art lying rotting under the power of thy luſts, who haſt a heart within thee which cannot repent and mourn, or let go the dead grip it has taken of the world, and of ſinful courſes. His Spirit is a ſpirit of life, which will make the dry bones live, the withered ſoul flouriſh as an herb, the heart, which is like a clog now in duties, to be like the chariots of Aminadib: Eph. v. 14. "Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt will give thee light."

2. Come, drooping, fainting, diſpirited ſoul, who art haraſſed with terrors, pierced with fearful apprehenſions, whoſe heart is like a ſtone, dying within thee. His Spirit is a ſpirit of light, life, and comfort; he binds up the broken hearted, makes light to ariſe to thoſe who go mourning without the ſun, takes off the ſackcloth, and girds with gladneſs.

3. Come, hard-hearted ſinner, whom nothing can move, neither judgements nor mercies, who canſt not mourn either for thy own ſins, or the ſins of the generation. His Spirit can ſoften the heart. He will take away your ſtony heart, and give you an heart of fleſh. An outpouring of the Spirit, would melt down the heart, and diſſolve it in tears of godly ſorrow, this would break the bands of iron and braſs: Zech. xii. 10. "And I will pour out upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplication; and they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him, as one mourn-

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eth for his only ſon; and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born."

4. Come, tempted ſinner, who art haraſſed with temptations, and art ready to ſay, One day I ſhall fall before this great adverſary. The Spirit is a ſpirit of power, 2 Tim. i. 7. It may be, that temptations come in on thee like a breaking forth of waters, threatening to ſweep all before them; but come to Chriſt for his Spirit, who is able to ſtem the tide, to create peace, and to make thee more than a conqueror.

5. Come, unfruitful ſinner. The Lord is at much pains with you by ordinances and providences, yet you are barren! you bring forth no fruit anſwerable to the pains of the Huſbandman. What is the reaſon the Spirit comes not with the word and providences? But you may have the Spirit from Chriſt, and this would make you fruitful: Eph. v. 9. "For the fruit of the Spirit, is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth." The blowing of that wind from heaven would make the ſpices flow out, Cant. iv. 16. and cauſe you to make progreſs in your journey to the Zion above.

6. Come, unholy ſinner. The Spirit which Chriſt has to give, is a ſpirit of holineſs, Rom. i. 4. He works like water in waſhing the polluted ſoul, like fire in burning up corruption. He is the great principle of holineſs, who works it wherever he comes, and makes of the very worſt a veſſel fit for the Maſter's uſe.

Laſtly, Come to Chriſt for his Spirit, whatever your caſe be; you will find a ſuitable cure from him, by the fulneſs of the Spirit in him; he is ſuited for every caſe that is put in his hand: Col. ii. 9. 10. "For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who

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p is the head of all principalities and powers." will be eyes to the blind, light to them that ſit darkneſs, legs to the lame, meat to the hungry, ink to the thirſty, cloathing to the naked; all in —To prevail with you in coming to Chriſt for the Spirit, I would offer you the following MOTIVES.

Mot. 1. The Spirit of the Lord is abſolutely neceſſary for you to have, you cannot want him, you muſt have him. The world may as well want the ſun, moon, and ſtars, as you can want the Spirit; for without the Spirit ye can do nothing but ſin. When the ſoul is away, the body is dead, and can do nothing but lie and rot in a grave: And when the Spirit of God is not in a man, he is dead in ſin, and can do nothing but ſin: John, vi 63. "It is the ſpirit that quickneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life." Ye cannot have a good and acceptable thought, nor perform any duty acceptable: John, iv. 24. "God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth." So that all pains are loſt upon thee, as on the dead tree, to which ſummer and winter are alike.—Again, without the Spirit, ye are none of Chriſt's, Rom. viii. 9. "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his." All thoſe who are Chriſt's, they are ſealed and marked with the Spirit of Chriſt: Eph. i. 13. "In whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with the Holy Spirit of promiſe." Men ſet their mark on their ſheep, and therefore ſays one, If ſuch a one be one of my ſheep, it has ſuch a mark; ſo ſays our Lord, If one of my ſheep, he has my Spirit in him; and ſo without the Spirit, without Chriſt, and without the Father, therefore without the Spirit, without God in the world.—Farther,

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without the Spirit, ye are undone for ever; for ſo ye are without God, and therefore without hope, Eph. ii. 12. The dead corpſe may be kept a while, but when there is no hope of the return of life, it is buried in a grave; ſo, without the Spirit, ye may be kept a while through God's patience, but the end will be, to be caſt into the pit, and buried out of God's ſight in fiery flames.

Mot. 2. You cannot have the Spirit but from Jeſus Chriſt. The bleſſed Mediator is the bowl from which this holy oil is conveyed to all the lamps which burn with it. The Spirit, ſays he, is on *me:* 1 John, ii. 20. "But ye have an unction from the *holy One*, and ye know all things," ver. 27. "But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you." The Egyptians muſt have ſtarved, if they had not been ſupplied with corn by Joſeph, for he had all the corn at his diſpoſal; and we muſt be for ever without the Spirit, if we receive him not from Chriſt. The Spirit dwells in none but as members of Chriſt; and whence ſhall the members have life but from the Head?

Mot. 3. Ye may have the Spirit, and that freely, from Chriſt: Prov. i. 23. "Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." And the promiſe is very bountiful, ye may have all free of coſt: Rev. xxii. 17. "And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Spirit on Chriſt is that water of life which gives life to the dead, and life more abundantly to the living; and the terms are, Aſk of him, and he will give thee living water, John, iv. 10. Not only drops of the ſpirit, but the ſpirit poured out, floods of the ſame: Iſa. xliv. 3. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing

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ing upon thine offspring." John, vii. 38. 39. "He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water. (But this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive; for the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified)."

Laſtly, By way of motive, if ye will not come to Chriſt for the Spirit, ye judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life, ye are ſlighters of Chriſt, and dreadful will your reckoning be: Prov. i. 24.—27. "Becauſe I have called, and ye have refuſed: I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof. I alſo will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you." It will be more tolerable for thoſe who never heard where they might partake of the Spirit than for you.

In concluſion, I ſhall only add the following DIRECTIONS.

1. Pray earneſtly for the Spirit, in the name of Chriſt; you have a promiſe of the Spirit; ſays God by Ezekiel, xxxvii. 27. "And I will put my ſpirit within you." And ſaid Jeſus, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall not your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?" Take courage then, believe the promiſe, preſs it, and depend upon it.

2. Unite with Jeſus Chriſt, accepting him in the goſpel-offer, and giving yourſelves away freely to him. Bring your dead ſoul to the Lord of life, and he will breathe in it, and ye ſhall be like the dead man laid in the ſepulchre of Eliſha,

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who revived, and ſtood upon his feet, whenever he touched the prophet's bones, 2 Kings, xiii. 21.

Laſtly, Wait and look for the Spirit in Chriſt's ordinances, eſpecially the preaching of the goſpel. They who would have the wind to blow on them, go out into the open air; though they may for the preſent miſs it, they wait till it blows, when in like manner exerciſed, then you ſhall know that the miniſtration of the Spirit is glorious, 2 Cor. iii. 8. Amen.

JESUS

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JESUS COMPLETELY QUALIFIED FOR HIS WORK.

SERMON XLII.

ISA. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me———.*

UNDER this part of the text, we propose to consider the neceſſity of the fulneſs of the Spirit being lodged in Chriſt. It was neceſſary, becauſe the Lord had anointed him unto, and ſent him forth upon the Mediatory work. The greatneſs of that work required it.—Here I obſerve the following DOCTRINES.

DOCT. I. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was by the Father anointed to, and ſent forth upon, the Mediatory work.—Or, in other words,

That our Mediator, the Lord Jeſus, was anointed by the Father unto this office, and ſent forth by him to this work.

DOCT.

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DOCT. II. That the work upon which Jesus the Mediator was sent forth, necessarily required the fulness of the Spirit to be lodged in him.—We begin with

DOCT. I. That our Lord Jesus Christ was by the Father anointed to, and sent forth upon, the Mediatory work.—Or, in other words,

That our Mediator, the Lord Jesus, was anointed by the Father unto this office, and sent forth by him to this work.—In illustrating this doctrine, I shall,

I. CONSIDER the anointing here mentioned.

II. Speak of the sending which flowed from and followed upon it.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. I AM to consider the anointing here mentioned. In attending to this, I shall, *first*, shew what is meant by this anointing. *Secondly*, Wherewith Christ was anointed.

First, We are to shew what is meant by this anointing. Under the Old Testament, anointing was a ceremony used for consecrating kings, priests, and prophets: thus David was anointed king, Aaron was anointed priest, Elisha anointed a prophet. This ceremony signified two things:—The designation of the person to the office. It being a sign, by the divine appointment, that this was the person whom God had called to this work; it was also a discovery of the divine purpose, as thereby the person was consecrated to the office; though sometimes it was long after that he got his orders to proceed to the actual exercise of it. Thus Samuel, by the command of the Lord, anointed David king long before he assumed the government, 1 Sam. xvi.

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xvi. 13.—Again, this ceremony alſo ſignified the endowment of the perſon with abilities and qualifications neceſſary to fit him for the work. Thus, when Saul was anointed king, God gave him another heart, 1 Sam. x. 13. "And when David was anointed king, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward," 1 Sam. xvi. 13. Accordingly, Chriſt's anointing ſignifies two things.

1. His deſignation to the Mediatory office. The Father pitched upon his Son, and ſet him apart for this grand work, to recover a ruined world. He made choice of him to be the repairer of the great breach, and put the breach under his hand. Hence he is called God's elect or choſen one: Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold (ſays God) my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth." Chriſt's anointing ſignifies,

2. His being fitted and furniſhed for that office to which he was deſigned and ſet apart: John, iii. 31. "For he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him." Hence it is ſaid of him, that he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them." It was an unparalleled work, and ſo unparalleled qualifications were neceſſary for it. He was pitched upon to be the Father's ſervant in the great work of recovering an elect world. He was infinitely wiſe who made the choice, and therefore could not but pitch on a ſuitable perſon: He was alſo infinitely powerful, and all ſufficient, and therefore could fully qualify him for it. We have both the choice and the furniture together: Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my ſpirit upon him; he ſhall bring

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bring forth judgement to the Gentiles." And this is the import of the anointing.—But let us view it more particularly,

In the designation or choice made by the Father. Infinite wisdom appeared in it most conspicuously, with infinite love to an elect world. When the divine decree and purpose of man's redemption was laid down by the Trinity, the great thing next to be considered was, who should undertake the work, and be the Redeemer. No mere man could be chosen, for none could have a back to bear such a burden. All were guilty, and could not satisfy for their own sin, far less purchase salvation for others. No angel could be chosen, for even they, with their stock, could not have been able to have discharged the debt, in regard it was infinite; wherefore the Father made choice of his own Son, as a person who could undertake it: Psal. lxxxix. 19 20. "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people; I have found David my servant, and with my holy oil have I anointed him." He being the Son of God, it doubtless became the divine perfections to pitch on him, as one who was to purchase for us the adoption of sons, and to bring many children to glory. —Let us view this anointing,

In qualifying him for the work, in which the same love and wisdom appears. Our Mediator had to die, for "without shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin." The divine nature was not capable of dying, therefore he prepared him a body: Heb. x. 5. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The same nature which sinned had to suffer; therefore he did not create him a body out of nothing, but prepared

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red him one of the ſeed of Adam. He was choſen out of the people: Gal. iv. 4. "God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." But farther, our nature was corrupted, and our fleſh ſinful fleſh; therefore it could not be immediately united to the divine nature; wherefore he ſanctified the ſubſtance of which that precious body was formed, and made him a holy human nature: Heb. vii. 26. "For ſuch an High-prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeperate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens." While what the human nature could do or ſuffer, would not have poſſeſſed ſufficient virtue, if ſeparated from the divine; therefore he unites it with it, John, i. 14. "And the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us." And hence the human nature was filled with all gifts and graces neceſſary to it, for that part which it was to act in the great work. —Let us now,

Secondly, Inquire wherewith Chriſt was anointed. Not with material oil, but with the Spirit, ſignified by it: Pſal. xlv. 7. "God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs, above thy fellows." And while the deſignation of the perſon was from eternity, the Spirit's deſcending upon him like a dove at his baptiſm, was the diſcovery of that eternal choice, and ſerved for the viſible deſignation of him to the world: Matth. iii. 16. 17. "And Jeſus, when he was baptiſed, went up ſtraight way out of the water: and, lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And, lo! a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed." And by the ſame Spirit it was that he was qualified and fitted for the Mediatory work, his holy human nature being with it.—If it be inquired, how his having been

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been anointed can be the reaſon of the Spirit's being upon him, when the Spirit was that with which he was anointed? I anſwer, That Chriſt's having been anointed with the Spirit to qualify him for the Mediatory work, is a very proper reaſon why the Spirit was lodged and continues to be in Chriſt, to be communicated from him to the members of his myſtical body.

II. We are now ſhortly to ſpeak of the ſending of Chriſt by the Father. As he anointed, ſo he ſent him. This means the Father's calling him out unto the exerciſe of his office for which he had been deſigned, and for which he had been qualified. He was ſeaſonably ſent to the work by the Father, and he willingly came and put hand to it, for his Father's glory, and the ſalvation of poor ſinners: Pſal. xl. 87. "Then ſaid he, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God! Yea, thy law is within my heart." We may obſerve three periods of this ſending.

The *firſt* period was at Adam's fall, when all mankind was newly ruined by the firſt ſin; then the Mediator came and looked on the ruins of the world, Gen. iii. 8.; preached deliverance to the captives, ver. 15. telling them that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. He healed the broken hearted, by covering Adam and his wife with coats of ſkin, ver. 21. even the ſkins of ſacrifices, a type of the righteouſneſs of a ſlain Redeemer. Thus he underpropped the world by his mediation, when all was ſhaken looſe by man's diſobedience. He began immediately to repair the breach, and kept the world from abſolute and irreparable ruin.

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The *second* period was at his birth, in the fulneſs of time, when he became man, being born of the virgin: Gal. iv. 4. "When the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." The world was then in a deplorable condition; the knowledge of the true God was loſt among the Gentiles, religion was corrupted among the Jews, ſome few were groaning for the conſolation of Iſrael. Then he came in the fleſh, being born of a mean woman, and laid in a manger; but at his birth the angels ſung, as in Luke, ii. 14. "Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

The *third* period was when he entered on the public exerciſe of his miniſtry at his baptiſm; then was he, in a ſpecial manner, ſent out on that work to which he was called: Matth. iii. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed." Matth. iv. 17. "From that time, Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Then he went about his work, preaching the goſpel, to bring ſinners to God; he alſo became obedient unto the death, according to the everlaſting covenant between him and his Father.

III. We now proceed to make ſome practical improvement.

1ſt, In an uſe of information.

1. This ſubject informs us, that the ſalvation of ſinners was the concern of a whole Trinity. How great a work muſt it be, when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, each acted their part for bringing it about. The Father ſent the Son, the Son ſubmitted to be ſent as Mediator, and by the Holy Spirit he was fitted for the work. Never, then, think little of that ſalvation, which re-

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quired such causes and authors to bring it about. —It informs us,

2. That Jesus Christ is perfectly able to save sinners: Heb. vii. 25. "He is able to save to the uttermost." He was the Father's choice to that great work, which may assure us he was an able hand for it. He has all given him to fit him for it, which the fulness of the Godhead affords. The Father had never taken him cautioner, if he had not been perfectly able to pay the debt. He had never laid the sinner's help upon him, if he had not been able to bear the weight of it.

3. See here the manifold wisdom of God, how it is displayed in the contrivance of salvation through Christ. The first creation was a work of wisdom; but the second was more so; the confused heap at first was little in comparison of the confusion sin brought into the world, but divine wisdom brought order out of this confusion. Truth meets with mercy, righteousness and peace embrace each other, sin is punished, and the sinner spared. Out of the greatest affront to God, rises the occasion of his greatest glory, his Son's obedience instead of theirs. When at the fall hell rejoiced, angels stood astonished, and men lay groveling in the depth of misery, wisdom found out a way of recovery, to the marring of the devil's joy, the dissipating man's fears, and giving angels a mystery of wisdom to pry into: Eph. iii. 10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord."

4. See here the amazing mercy of God to objects in the deepest misery. To have given rebel sinners some years respite from their due punishment, to have

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have locked them up in hell, to be releaſed after ſome millions of years, would have glorified mercy; but for an offended God to provide a Mediator himſelf, proclaims the height and depth of infinite mercy.

5. See here the love of God to poor ſinners. The love of the Father is wonderful, in ſending his own Son to recover ſinners by his obedience and death: John, iii. 16. "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his Son, his only-begotten Son, unto the death, the moſt bitter death, even the death of the croſs."—The love of Chriſt, which undertook that heavy work for poor ſinners. Here is love admirable in all its dimenſions: Chriſt coming in the room of ſinners. If ye doubt his love, look into his pierced ſide, and behold its glowings there. —The love of the Spirit dwelling in Chriſt, as the Head, to enliven poor ſinners as his members, being in him, exciting, moving him forward to the work, and fitting him for it.—I ſhall only add an uſe of exhortation.

O! ſirs, let Chriſt be your choice, as he was the Father's. His Father is well pleaſed with him, be you alſo well pleaſed with him. Employ him in your every caſe, put all your caſes in his hand, lay your help where the Father hath laid it. Receive him whom the Father hath ſent, receive him for all the ends to which the Father hath anointed and ſent him. He is called Meſſiah, and Chriſt, to denote his being anointed as the Prophet, Prieſt, and King of his people; he was anointed for all theſe offices, receive and improve him in them all. He is anointed as the great Prophet, to declare the mind of God to ſinners: Iſa. lxi. 1. He is to "preach good tidings to the meek." Receive him for your Prophet, and teacher; renouncing your own wiſdom, ſubmit yourſelves to be taught by his word and Spirit;

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and go to him for direction in all cases. He is an anointed Priest: Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Receive him as your Priest, laying the weight of your souls on his sacrifice and intercession; renouncing all confidence in yourselves. Carry your guilt to him, to be carried off by his atonement, and put all your spiritual sacrifices in his hand, for only out of his hand will they be accepted. He is anointed King: Psal. ii. 6. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Submit yourselves a willing people to the royal Mediator, to receive his commandments, to live according to his laws, to pursue the interest of his kingdom in the world, and to fight under his banner against the devil, the world, and the flesh; since for these ends he is sent, and has come, it lies on us to receive him as such. And that this may have weight with you, consider,

(1.) Who sent him; the Father, the first person of the glorious Trinity: John, v. 37. "The Father himself," said he, "that hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." And will we not welcome him whom the Father hath sent, and entertain him for the ends for which he is sent? The Father had a concern for the salvation of lost sinners, and hath sent them a deliverer, a Saviour. How will you answer if you slight him?—Consider,

(2.) Who is sent. The Father hath put an honour on man, beyond what he hath put on angels, in that he sent a Saviour for the one, not for the other. Had he sent a lower person, an angel, with what profound respect ought we to have received him as the messenger of the Lord? how much more when he hath sent his own Son?—Consider,

(3.) The errand and design on which he was sent; namely, to recover a lost world, to make up the peace

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peace between God and ſinners: Luke, xix. 10. "For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt." O! may not his errand make him a welcome meſſenger to the world? If we will not receive him on this errand, we are ſelf-deſtroyers a ſecond time, who having firſt given ourſelves a dreadful wound, in the next place reject the Saviour, the Phyſician ſent to us.—Conſider,

(4.) The work he was ſent upon for this end; doing-work, ſuffering-work. His doing-work we have in our text, it will be pleaſing and acceptable to ſenſible ſinners. His ſuffering-work was hard work, but was a neceſſary foundation for the other. He preached good tidings, but he brought them from his own death. He bindeth up the broken-hearted, but the healing medicine is his own blood; he proclaims deliverance, but the ranſom was his own life.—Conſider,

(5.) Whence and whither he was ſent; from the Father's boſom to this earth, where he was entertained with all evil treatment, till they nailed him to a croſs, and he was buried in a grave, Phil. ii. 6.—8. He was ſent from the regions of bliſs to this lower world, and refuſed not the journey; he was ſent from the halleluiahs of angels, to endure the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf. And when he is come, will we not receive him?

Laſtly, Conſider the neceſſity of this miſſion: Pſal. xl. 6. "Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire; mine ears haſt thou opened; burnt-offerings and ſin-offerings haſt thou not required; then ſaid I, Lo! I come." The world had univerſally periſhed without remedy if he had not come. He bare up the pillars thereof, and warded off the blow of juſtice, by laying his own neck on the block. And now that he is come, he muſt be embraced

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and improved, else we perish; for, Acts, iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no other salvation to look to: Heb. ii. 3. "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" —I shall now go on to illustrate very briefly,

DOCTRINE II. That the work upon which the Mediator was sent forth, necessarily required the fulness of the Spirit to be lodged in him.

IN illustrating this, all that I intend is, To confirm the point briefly, and then conclude with a very short improvement.

To confirm this point, we need do no more but give a short account of Christ's Mediatory work.

1. Christ is the Days-man betwixt God and sinners. He was employed to take cognisance of the difference between the two parties, to decide who it was had done the wrong, and on what terms they might be reconciled. Hence we read, John, v. 22. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son." He has framed the covenant of reconciliation, as Mediator between the parties: Song, iii. 9. "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon." In him is found what Job so much desired, Job, ix. 33. "a days-man to lay his hands upon both;" namely, to keep the dissenting parties asunder, lest they should fall foul of one another. This the Mediator had to do; this he did when he timeously stept in betwixt an offended God and guilty sinners, like the ram caught in the thicket, when Isaac was lying bound on the altar, which stopped the execution, and held the hand of justice, Psal. vi. 7. (quoted above).—He is a days-man, to keep them

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them together, leſt they ſhould quite ſeperate, and the reconciliation of the parties blow up. Thus Chriſt deals with ſinners, who otherwiſe would run away from God, and never come in terms with him. Thus he did with our firſt parents, whom he brought out of their hiding-place, to ſet matters on a new footing.

2. He is the Meſſenger that goes betwixt the parties, intimating the mind of the one to the other, in order to make reconciliation. And in this reſpect Moſes was a typical mediator: Deut. v. 5. "I ſtood between the Lord and you at that time, to ſhew you the word of the Lord; for ye were afraid by reaſon of the fire, and went not up into the mount." So Chriſt is called the Meſſenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. He brings the Lord's mind to poor ſinners, unfolds the thoughts of love which were from eternity in his breaſt: John, i. 18. "No man hath ſeen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him." Thus he brings down the covenant out of the regiſter of heaven, and proclaims it to rebels: And if there be any among them content to come into it, and who accept of it, he reports their acceptance to his Father: John, xvii. 8. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt unto me, and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me."

3. He is a Surety betwixt the parties, and therefore is called the ſurety of a better teſtament, Heb. vii. 22.; engaging and taking burden upon him on their behalf, that ſo the peace may be firm and laſting.—Chriſt, the Mediator, is ſurety for man to God. In the firſt covenant, man had no ſurety for himſelf; and there needed none. He was able to do all that was required of him; for he was in good

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good caſe, there was no flaw in his eſtate; but in his fallen ſtate, God would not take his word, nor his moſt ſolemn engagement; it behoved him to have a ſurety to undertake for him, and that both by way of ſatisfaction and caution. Man was broken, was drowned in debt which he never would be able to pay, and ſo he needed a ſurety to make ſatisfaction, who ſhould be able, and would engage himſelf to pay the debt. Chriſt the Mediator then became ſurety for the broken man, undertook to pay all his debt, gave in his bond for it in the covenant of redemption, which the Father accepted: Pſal. lxxxix. 19. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty;" he engaged body for body, life for life, like Judah for Benjamin, Gen. xliii. 9.; in the fulneſs of time he paid the debt, and got up the diſcharge at his own reſurrection from the dead. Man was falſe and fickle, and not to be truſted; ſo needed a cautioner who would bind for his good behaviour. Chriſt became cautioner for the poor prodigals, engaging himſelf that they ſhall conſent to the covenant: John, vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out." And that having conſented, they ſhall hold by it, and never fall away totally and finally: John, x. 28. "And I will give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any one pluck them out of my hand." By his Spirit of faith and holineſs, which he puts in them, he accordingly ſecures them.—He is alſo ſurety for God to man. He undertook that God's part of the covenant ſhall be punctually fulfilled to us: 2 Cor. i. 20. "For all the promiſes of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." It is true, the infinite veracity and power of the principal leaves no need of

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of a ſurety, in reſpect of himſelf; but poor guilty ſinners, ſenſible of their own unworthineſs, are timorous, miſbelieving, diſtruſtful creatures; and therefore, that they may be helped to believe, there is a ſurety of their own nature, even the man Chriſt Jeſus, granted unto them. That all the promiſes of God in the covenant, ſhall be fulfilled to thoſe who come into it, he has completely enſured. He has given his cautionary word: John, v. 24. "Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life." He hath given his Spirit as the earneſt and ſeal of the promiſes, Eph. i. 13. "In whom alſo, after ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory." He has given them the firſt-fruits of the Spirit in themſelves, Rom. viii. 23. He has alſo given them the Sacrament. He has gone to death with it, ſaying, "This is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins," Matth. xxvi. 28.

4. He is an Interceſſor betwixt the parties: Iſa. liii. 12. "He makes interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors." He, by his intereſt, manages betwixt the Lord and poor ſinners, to ſet matters right, and keep them ſo. This is that which relates to the application of his redemption, and puts life in the Mediator's death, that it may be efficacious to his choſen ones. As the High-Prieſt appeared in the holy of holies, preſenting the blood of the ſacrifice to the Lord; ſo does Chriſt appear in heaven to intercede for thoſe for whom he has died. And he intercedes,—as a Peace-maker, who actually makes peace betwixt God and every believing ſinner: Hence, Heb. xii. 24. he

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he is "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;" and his blood is "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." By his means, he who was before an enemy is reconciled to God, brought within the bond of the covenant of peace, and gets a right to all the benefits of it. As by his gracious Spirit he extinguishes the real enmity of the sinner against God, so by his intercession he removes the legal enmity in God against the sinner.—He intercedes as the Secretary, or favourite courtier of heaven, bringing in the sinner into the comfortable gracious presence of God, procuring him access to God, and communion with him in duties: Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him." Thus, through the vail of his flesh, the believing sinner draws nigh to God, and God draws nigh to him with his quickening, sanctifying, and comforting influences. The sinner looks on God with the confidence a child does on a father.—He intercedes as a Resident at the court of heaven: Heb. ix. 24. "He is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And by this means he maintains that peace which he has made betwixt God and believers: Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have epace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" He keeps the believer's trade with heaven open and free for them: Rom. v. 2. "By whom also we have access by faith, into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." He removes any emergent differences, Isa. liii. 12.; and so ensures, by the covenant of peace, that there can never be a total rupture betwixt heaven and them: Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for

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for them."—He intercedes as an Advocate at the bar of God: 1 John, ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He pleads their cause before God, upon the ground of his own sufferings, against all their accusers and whatever is charged upon them, so that they are freed from condemnation, their right and title to heaven is still vindicated, notwithstanding their many failures; and wrath can go no farther against them than temporary strokes. —He intercedes as a Solicitor for his people before the Lord. He presents their petitions, and solicits for the granting of them. With much incense he offers the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne, Rev. viii. 3. They have many wants, both as to temporal and spiritual things. They must go to God for them, and put up their petitions. But he must present them, else they cannot be heard.

5. He is the Administrator of the covenant, God's deputy-governor, to dispose of the benefits of the covenant, and to manage the whole matter betwixt the Lord and sinners: Matth. xxviii. 18. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." As Joseph was set over the land of Egypt, so he is set over his Father's house, all commerce betwixt the Lord and sinners being through his mediation. As they can offer nothing to God acceptably, but through him; so they can receive no benefit from heaven but through his hand: John, v. 22. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son." He has to bring the elect to consent to the covenant; to rule and govern them in it; to protect, provide, and furnish them with all necessaries through the wilderness; and, finally, to give them the crown and kingdom at last; this is the office and work to which Christ was anointed; neither men nor angels

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gels could be fit for such a trust. Could any manage it without a fulness of the Spirit lodged in him? therefore, as in John, v. 22. (quoted above), and in ver. 23. "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father: he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him." All men should honour the Son, for none but one who had the fulness of the divine perfections could be capable of such a trust. Who else was fit to be days-man between God and sinners? Who else could be the messenger of the covenant, for who hath known the mind of the Lord, but his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who from eternity lay in his bosom?

I conclude with a very short improvement.

1. Learn hence, that the work of the salvation of sinners, restoring them to the favour of God, and to make them happy, is a great work, and a work which was not easily accomplished. It was a work above the power of men or angels, a work not to be performed but by him who has all power in heaven and earth. Think on this, ye that judge it such an easy thing to obtain mercy; and assure thyself it is a work which can never be done but by Christ's own hand.

2. Highly esteem and honour Christ, particularly by believing in him, who is thus qualified for this great work. O what need of the fulness of the Spirit in him to support him under the load of the elect's debt,—in order to the discharging it,—and to touch and turn the hearts of sinners unto God!

Lastly, See your absolute need of Christ. You must have an interest in him, else you cannot be saved. His mediation only can save you from the wrath of God, and from the lowest hell. Amen.

JESUS

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JESUS A PREACHER OF GOOD TIDINGS TO THE MEEK.

SERMON XLVIII.

Isa. lxi. 1. *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.*

IN theſe and the following words, we have repreſented the great, the important work for which Jeſus was appointed, and to which he was ſpecially called by his heavenly Father,—work for which he was completely qualified, by the Spirit of the Lord God being upon him. We propoſe to conſider the ſeveral parts of this work, in that order in which they are ſet before us; and accordingly begin with that part, his having "to preach good tidings to the meek."—In which words we have,

1. The work itſelf in which the Son of God was employed, and to which he was called: *To preach good tidings.* He was a miniſter by office: Rom. xv. 8. "Now I ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion, for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes of God made to the fathers;" the great miniſter of the goſpel. He

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was the beſt among men; he brought good tidings, the beſt of tidings; by theſe tidings is meant the goſpel, Luke, iv. 18. This is the good news, the tidings of peace and ſalvation, which Jeſus brought from heaven to earth.—We have,

2. The ſpecial object of this part of the work, *the meek*. The word ſignifies, ſuch as are meek, humble, and ſubmiſſive, being made ſo by poverty and affliction. In the parallel place, it reads poor, and the one explains the other. If it is inquired, what poor ones are meant? I think it is plain, it is not thoſe who are mean in the world, but the poor in ſpirit, for theſe poor ones are meek. Theſe meek poor ones are claſſed with the broken-hearted, and both diſtinguiſhed from the captives and priſoners, by the original accentuation. So that by the meek here is meant, the poor in ſpirit, thoſe who, as being convinced by the law, have ſeen themſelves to be poor, that they have nothing in which they could ſtand before God as righteous, but look on themſelves as wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17. And it is remarkable, that our Saviour's ſermon on the mount begins with good tidings to ſuch perſons: Matth. v. 3. "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

But here there occurs a queſtion: Was Chriſt to preach the good tidings of the goſpel to none but theſe? To this I anſwer, The goſpel was in itſelf good tidings unto all: Luke, ii. 10. "And the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people." Our Lord preached to all who heard him promiſcuouſly theſe good tidings, but in effect they were not good to any but to the poor in ſpirit among them. None but theſe could reliſh the goodneſs of them; to others they were taſteleſs, but

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but to the poor in ſpirit, they ſunk like a refreſhing oil into their bones.—From theſe words I take the following

DOCTRINE, That as the tidings of the goſpel will indeed be good and welcome tidings to thoſe who are meek, and poor in ſpirit, ſo Jeſus is, by his heavenly Father, employed on the great work of preaching the good tidings of the goſpel to ſinners, eſpecially to ſuch who are meek, and ſpiritually poor in their own eyes.—In handling this doctrine we propoſe,

I. To conſider this meekneſs and poverty, and ſhew who are theſe meek poor ones.

II. To explain the good tidings of the goſpel, and, as we go along, ſhew that they are good and welcome tidings to ſuch perſons.

III. Shew how this great work of preaching is, and hath been performed by Chriſt.

IV. Give the reaſons of the doctrine.

V. Make ſome practical improvement of the whole.—We are then,

I. To conſider this meekneſs and poverty, and ſhew who are theſe meek poor ones.—As to this, we obſerve, that this meekneſs comprehends in it,

1. A preſſing ſcene of utter emptineſs in one's ſelf: Rom. viii. 18. "For I know that in me (that is in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing." A poor man going abroad, ſees this and the other thing, in the houſes of the rich; but when he comes home, he ſees none of them there. Thus, the meek poor ſoul looks through himſelf, and there, as in himſelf, he ſees nothing but emptineſs of all goodneſs, no holineſs, wiſdom, nor ſtrength. The heart, which ſhould be the garden of the Lord,

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appears as a bare muir, a wild, a waſte. He is ready to cry out, O barren, dry, ſapleſs heart and nature of mine! Agur looks for knowledge, and he ſays, Prov. xxx. 2. 3. "Surely I am more brutiſh than any man, and have not the underſtanding of a man. I neither learned wiſdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." The prodigal looks to his proviſions, and ſays, "How many hired ſervants of my father have bread enough, and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger?" Paul reckons up his whole ſelf, and the ſum total is nought: 2 Cor. xii. 11. "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, though I be nothing."—This meekneſs comprehends,

2. A preſſing ſenſe of ſinfulneſs: Rom. vii. 14. "We know that the law is ſpiritual, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin." He looks to the whole of himſelf, and he ſees nothing on him but rags; a ſinful nature, a corrupt heart, unclean luſts, and an unholy life. He muſt rank his righteouſneſs with his unrightouſneſs, his duties with his ſins, for he is defiled with them all: Iſa. lxiv. 6. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Theſe meek poor ones ſee themſelves the very picture of rank poverty, having only filthy rags, death painted on their face by want, and overgrown with the vermin of filthy luſts. They ſee themſelves not only nothing, but worſe than nothing, while they look over theſe frightful accounts of the debt of ſin, which ſtand againſt them, and for which they have nothing to pay.—This meekneſs comprehends,

3. A preſſing ſenſe of miſery by ſin. Like the prodigal, they ſee themſelves ready to periſh with hunger. Debt is a heavy burden to an honeſt heart,

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heart, and filthineſs to one that deſires to be clean: Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" They look about them, and ſee themſelves in a cloud of miſeries, ariſing from their ſins. Their poverty preſſeth them down. They are obliged to do many things which otherwiſe they would not, and cannot attain to other things which they deſire to arrive at: Rom. vii. 19. "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." It ſeparates them from that communion with God which they would otherwiſe enjoy, makes them ſit within, mourning without the ſun, when otherwiſe they might walk abroad in the light of the Lord's countenance. This preſſeth their ſouls to the duſt.—It comprehends,

4. A ſenſe of utter inability to help one's ſelf: 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves." They ſee themſelves in the mire, but unable to help themſelves out; therefore theſe poor men cry unto the Lord, Pſal. xxxiv. 6. They ſee an emptineſs and weakneſs in all their external privileges, their gifts, duties, yea, their graces, to ſave and help them. They count all things but loſs for Chriſt, and wiſh to be found in Chriſt, not having on their own righteouſneſs, which is of the law. They find the ſting in their conſcience, but cannot draw it out; guilt is a burden, but they cannot throw it off; luſts are ſtrong and uneaſy, but they are not able to maſter them; and this preſſes them ſore.—This meekneſs comprehends,

5. A ſenſe of the abſolute need of a Saviour, and of help from heaven: 2 Cor. iii. 5. "But our ſufficiency is of God." The pride of the ſpirit is beat down, they lie down at the Lord's feet, ſaying, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was

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chaſtiſed, as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God." They ſee they will be ruined if their help come not from above. Their caſe appears deſperate to all remedies, but thoſe which are under the management of an eternal omnipotent hand. They ſay to their ſouls, as the king of Iſrael ſaid to the woman in the time of famine, "If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee?" —It comprehends,

6. A ſenſe as to utter unworthineſs of the Lord's help; they ſee nothing which they have to recommend them to the Lord's help. They dare not ſtand upon worth, like thoſe proud beggars, who would have others to value them, and who value themſelves, on what they have been or done. Like the centurion, they ſay, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof." Hence there is a word put in for them, Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the water, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." They own the Lord would be juſt, if he ſhould never vouchſafe his mercy and grace to them, but exclude them for ever from his preſence: Jer. iii. 22. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not." They ſee a lothſomeneſs in the beſt things about them, in their reformation, mourning, their deſires of Chriſt, wreſtling, and prayers for mercy; ſo that they conclude, if ever he notice them, it muſt be altogether for his own name's ſake.—This meekneſs comprehends,

7. An earneſt deſire as to the ſupply of ſoul-wants: Mat. v. 6. "Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt

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thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled." A greedy many we ſay, is always poor, becauſe natural poverty conſiſts rather in the deſire of what we want, than in the want itſelf. There are many who want ſpiritual good things, yet are not poor in ſpirit, becauſe they are not pained with the want of them. But the poor in ſpirit are pained with the want of ſpiritual good things. They pant for them, Pſal. xlii. 1.; long for them, thirſt for them, Pſal. lxiii. 1. Hence we read of the expectation of the poor, which ſhall not periſh for ever, Pſal. ix. 18.—It comprehends,

Laſtly, A hearty contentment in ſubmitting to any method of help which the Lord will preſcribe: Acts, ix. 7. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Beggars muſt not be chuſers; theſe meek poor ones are content with Chriſt on any terms, while others ſtand contending about them. Neceſſity has no law, and hunger will break through ſtone-walls. Whoſo are thus ſituated, will be for a Saviour, a righteouſneſs, and holineſs, at any rate. They are content to be taught, content to be managed: Pſal. xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgement; and the meek will he teach his way." They are content to part with all, for the enriching pearl of great price.—We are now,

II. To explain the good tidings of the goſpel, and, as we go along, ſhew that they are good and welcome tidings to ſuch perſons.

The poor in ſpirit are wounded by the law; the goſpel brings a healing medicine to theſe wounds. It ſuits their caſe fully, and declares to them the good news of a ſalve for all their ſores. Solomon tells us, Prov. xxv. 25. "As cold waters to a thirſty ſoul, ſo is good news from a far country." Applicable

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cable this to nothing so much as the good tidings brought us from heaven in the gospel. I cannot enumerate all the articles of these good tidings, but shall take notice of the following.

1. The gospel-tidings are tidings of a complete salvation. And are not these good tidings? Luke, ii. 11. "For unto us is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." O! lost sinners, there is a salvation purchased for you, a great, a complete salvation, a salvation from sin, Matth. i. 21. and from the wrath of God, John, iii. 16. It is offered to you, and offered freely, though it was dear bought; it is offered without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1. If ye ask what ye shall do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved. Though you are lost, though you have destroyed yourselves, yet here is help for you. Though ye are insensible sinners, the tidings are to you; it will in particular be good and welcome tidings to the meek poor ones, who see their lost and undone condition. A Saviour will be as welcome a sight to them, as a rope cast out from the shore will be to a drowning man. They will eagerly embrace the Saviour and his salvation: Song, i. 3. "Because of the savour of of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee." —These tidings relate,

2. To a redemption, to a ransom paid: Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Sin and Satan made war upon the world, and overcame them all in Adam; so that by nature we are captives and slaves. No more God's free men, nor our own men, but slaves; and the rattling of the chains of divers lusts upon us are evidences of it. But good tidings, O captives! the King's Son, out of

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of his princely bounty, has purchaſed for you redemption, he has paid a complete ranſom, even his own blood; and whoſoever will, may come to him. Your freedom is bought; come, take the benefit of it, by following him out of the land of your captivity: Zech. ix. 11. 12. "As for thee alſo, by the blood of thy covenant, I have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit wherein is no water; turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope." But what avails this to thoſe who account it a kind captivity, who love their maſter, and his drudgery work? they will not come to Jeſus. But never were the tidings of a ranſom ſo welcome to a ſlave in Turkey, as theſe are to meek poor ones, who are groaning under their bondage, and breathing for the liberty of the ſons of God.—Theſe tidings relate,

3. To an indemnity, a pardon to criminals who will come to Jeſus: Acts, xiii. 38. 39. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes." The world of mankind, God's natural ſubjects, have joined his grand enemy, and riſen up in rebellion againſt their ſovereign Lord. The law has proclaimed us all traitors, juſtice demands vengeance on the criminals, and we cannot eſcape by flight or by might. But good tidings, O criminals! The glorious Mediator has got an act of grace, of indemnity and pardon, paſſed in the court of heaven, in favour of a ruined world, bearing, that whoſoever will come in, and lay down their arms, ſhall have a full and free pardon, written, for the better ſecurity, in the blood of the Mediator. It is proclaimed to you, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake

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forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." In this indemnity, there are no exceptions: Iſa. i. 18. "Come now, let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: Tho' your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red as crimſon, they ſhall be as wool." Now, whatever this be to others, it will be welcome tidings to the meek poor ones, whoſe conſciences are galled with the ſting of ſin, bowing down under a ſenſe of guilt. Never was a pardon more welcome to a malefactor on the ſcaffold, than this will be to them: Iſa. xxxiii. 24. "And the inhabitants ſhall not ſay, I am ſick; the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquities."—Theſe tidings relate,

4. To a glorious phyſician of ſouls, who never miſſes to cure his patients: Matth. ix. 12. 13. "They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners, to repentance." That forbidden fruit which was eaten by our firſt parents, has entailed dreadful diſeaſes on all their poſterity; ſo that this world is no better than an hoſpital, where there is not one found perſon; and the ſickneſs is unto death. But good tidings, O ſin-ſick ſoul! There is a glorious Phyſician come from heaven, who will cure all who will come to be cured by him. He cures infallibly; his blood cleanſeth from all ſin. He cures freely: Hoſ. xiv. 4. "I will heal their backſliding, I will love them freely." He rejects no patients: John, vi. 37. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out." The medicine of his blood and Spirit removes all diſeaſes. What is thy diſeaſe? Is it a ſtony heart? He takes it away, and gives an

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heart of flesh. Is it blindness, deafness, dumbness, lameness? He makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. Is it the falling evil of backsliding? the consumption or decay of grace? the running issue of predominant lusts? the fever of raging lusts? the universal leprosy of the corruption of nature? All these he can cure, for he healeth all manner of diseases. They who see not their diseases, will indeed slight him; but it will be good tidings to the meek poor ones, who are groaning under these diseases. O! then, will such an one say, I will take my stony heart to him, my blindness to him, &c.—These tidings are the tidings,

5. Of a feast: Isa. xxv. 6. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well refined." Since man has left God, he has had nothing to feed upon, but the dust with the serpent, or the husks of created things with the swine. He has never been satisfied, he never could get enough; still red hunger has been upon him, like those who eat but are not satisfied. But good tidings, O famished sinners! our Lord Jesus Christ has made a feast for hunger-bitten sinners, and they are all invited to it: Isa. lv. 2. "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." It is the best of feasts, where the soul may feed to the full. Jesus himself is the maker, and also the matter of it; all the benefits of the covenant are the provision which are served up at this feast, he who eats thereof shall never die. It is true, that most men put no value upon it: Prov. xxvii. 7. "The full soul loatheth an honey-comb." But, Psal. xxii. 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied."

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satisfied." It will be good tidings to hungry souls, who are sick of the dust and of husks, and are longing to eat bread in their Father's house, where there is plenty and to spare.—These tidings relate,

6. To a treasure: 2 Cor. iv. 7. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Man was broken by his fall; he lost all his goods, and all his credit in heaven; so that absolute poverty reigns among Adam's sons, who have neither in them nor on them for the present necessity, and besides are drowned in debt to the justice of God. But good tidings, poor sinners! There is a treasure hid in the field of the gospel, which will enrich you; and by the gospel you are pointed to it. O buy the field! Matth. xiii. 44. In this field are the most precious things, precious promises, and within them precious Christ, with all his merits; gold tried in the fire, white raiment and eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. Here is variety of all good things, and abundance. They who are rich in their own eyes will not value this treasure; but to the meek poor ones, it will be glad tidings. They will readily do as the man, Matth. xiii. 14. who sold all that he had, and bought the field in which the great treasure was hid.—These tidings relate,

7. To a marriage, a most happy match for poor sinners: Hos. ii. 19. 20. "And I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving kindness, and in mercies; I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The Bridegroom is the royal Mediator, who is content to match with poor captive souls. We are naturally of the house of hell: John, viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." This being,

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ing our caſe, we could have no hopes of being comfortably diſpoſed of. But good tidings, O children of the devil's family! You may be married to the Son of God, who for that end has taken on our nature; he ſays, Matth. xxii. 4. "All things are ready: come unto the marriage." This match is the moſt honourable, the richeſt, the happieſt, of which we are capable. There is nothing to hinder the match, he will make you lovely; and, what is more, he will make you willing. Moſt men deſpiſe this marriage, they prefer their farms and merchandiſe to it. But the poor meek ones will as gladly embrace it, as ever a captive woman, to ſave her life, would match with the moſt deſirable conqueror.—Theſe tidings relate,

8. To a victory, a glorious victory: Iſa. xxv. 8. "He will ſwallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from all eyes." There is no getting to the heavenly Canaan, without fighting our enemies; which would, if poſſible, keep us out there. We are not able for them; ſin, Satan, and death, are too ſtrong for us. But good tidings! Chriſt has fought that battle, and obtained a glorious victory; he offers you a ſhare of the victory and ſpoils: Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne." Join the conqueror, come up at his back againſt your ſpiritual enemies, and ye ſhall be more than conquerors, through him that loved us, Rom. viii. 37. They who have not yet broke their covenant with death, and agreement with hell, will ſlight this victory. But it will be good tidings to the meek poor ones, who would fain break through the hoſt of their ſpiritual enemies, but know not how to make it out.—Theſe tidings relate,

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Laſtly, To a peace, a moſt deſirable peace: Eph. ii. 14. "For he (Chriſt Jeſus) is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Sin made diſcord, and broke the peace between heaven and earth; ſo that God and the ſinner became enemies. All acceſs to God, all communication betwixt heaven and earth, was blocked up. But good tidings! Chriſt has made peace by his own blood. It is offered to you, Iſa. xxvii. 4. 5. "Fury is not in me: Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me." It is a firm peace, on the moſt ſolid foundation, a laſting peace which will never terminate, a peace which will ere long be complete in all its parts; peace external, internal, eternal.—This will be good tidings to the meek poor ones, who are wounded with the apprehenſions of God's anger, and affrighted with the thoughts of his wrath.—We are, then,

III. To ſhew how this work of preaching is and hath been performed by Jeſus Chriſt.—As to this, we obſerve, That he performed it under the Old Teſtament, and under the New Teſtament diſpenſation.

Firſt, He performed this work under the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation.—Under this diſpenſation,

1. The firſt proclamation of theſe tidings was done perſonally by himſelf in paradiſe, to the compendized world, our firſt parents: Gen. iii. 15. "And 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." The Son of God appearing in human ſhape, as a prelude of his incarnation, ſat as their

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their Judge, and, as the Interpreter of his Father's mind, preached the firſt goſpel to them in that promiſe, which contains the ſubſtance and abridgement of the whole goſpel. He was abſolutely the firſt, in all reſpects, who preached the good tidings of the goſpel.

2. The ſecond proclamation was, by his ambaſſadors in his name, who were of two ſorts:—Extraordinary, namely, the prophets whom he inſpired infallibly to teach the people: 2 Pet. i. 21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt."—And ordinary teachers, ſuch as prieſts and Levites under the law, prieſts and others before the law. And in reſpect of this preaching by men in his name, he is ſaid to have preached to thoſe who lived before the flood: 1 Peter, iii. 19. "By which alſo he went, and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon."—There was alſo a proclamation,

3. By his written word, Deut. xxx. 11.—14. This is his own word, where the meek poor ones may always find the glad tidings of ſalvation. Before it was written, they never wanted inſpired men, and when it was written, though for a time, they might want prophets, yet this they had always from him as an infallible rule.

2*dly*, He preached and preaches under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation.—This he did,

1. By his own perſonal preaching in the days of his fleſh, when he went about among the Jews, preaching to them as the Miniſter of the circumciſion: Rom. xv. 8. "Now I ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes made unto the fathers." So that he himſelf, by himſelf, did begin this diſpenſation. The goſpel at

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the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, Heb. ii. 3. "He ſpake as never man ſpake, and taught as one having authority."—He did it,

2. By inſpiring his apoſtles to preach and write the doctrines of ſalvation, contained in the New Teſtament, on whom he poured out his Spirit, and by their writings, they being dead, yet ſpeak to us from him and by him.—He does it,

3. By raiſing up and continuing always a goſpel-miniſtry in the church: Eph. iv. 11.—13. "And he gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers; for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt." And with them he has promiſed to be preſent always, even unto the end of the world, Matth. xxviii. 20. Theſe preach in his name, as deputed by him to declare theſe good tidings.

Thus you ſee this work is performed by the Son of God, not only by himſelf, but by his ſervants in his name. And though the miſtakes, errors, and unfaithfulneſs of ordinary miniſters, both under the Old and New Teſtament, are ſolely their own, their preaching of the true doctrine of the goſpel is indeed his; they are but as it were the voice, he is the ſpeaker. For—— He gave and gives the gifts whereby they are fitted to preach the goſpel. All their tapers are lighted at his ſhining lamp: John, i. 9. "That was the true light, which lighteth every one that cometh into the world." Their wiſdom and knowledge in divine myſteries is given them by him, for the good of his church, Eph. iv. 8. Their commiſſion

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commiſſion is from him, and from him they derive their power and authority, Matth. xxviii. 19. 20. They are his miniſters and ſervants ſent out upon his work, and to him they muſt give an account: *Laſtly*, The efficacy of their miniſtry is ſolely owing to him and his Spirit, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe." He makes it effectual to his elect ones. —We are,

IV. To give the reaſons of the doctrine, or ſhew, That none but he was fit to be employed in this work.—This will appear if we conſider,

1. That none but he could reveal the ſecrets of love, which were hid from eternity in the breaſt of God: John, i. 18. "No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him." Neither man nor angel could open up theſe. But he was privy to his Father's counſels, as being in the boſom of his Father from all eternity.

2. None but he was fit to be an univerſal preacher to all perſons for whom theſe tidings were deſigned, and to whom they were to be carried, and this in all ages. Who elſe could have the great charge of this weighty buſineſs? This required one of infinite wiſdom, and one every where preſent.

Laſtly, Whoſe teſtimony but his could be a ſufficient ground of faith in this, of all matters the moſt important? Here lies the weight of God's honour, and the ſalvation of an elect world; and this required no leſs ſolid a bottom, than the teſtimony of Truth itſelf.

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SERMON XLIX.

ISA. lxi. 1. *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.*—

HAVING gone through the doctrinal part of this ſubject, by offering what was intended on the ſeveral heads of method which we laid down, we ſhall now, as was propoſed,

IV. MAKE ſome practical improvement; and this in uſes of information,—trial,—and exhortation.

We are, in the *firſt* place, to improve this ſubject in an uſe of information.

1. Hence you may learn what is the great cauſe of ſlighting the goſpel, of that coldrife entertainment which it gets amongſt moſt of its hearers, that little reliſh which there is for the great truths of the goſpel; why ſo few do comply with the gracious calls which it affords. People may attribute

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tribute this to what cauſes they will, but the true cauſe is the want of this meekneſs and poverty of ſpirit. Inſtead of this, there are pride and ſelf-conceit, unſubdued and unmortified. I may branch theſe out into ſeveral particulars, as oppoſed to this meekneſs. There is,

(1.) No due ſenſe of ſpiritual wants: Prov. xxvii. 7. "The full ſoul loatheth the honey-comb." Moſt men are ſick of a Laodicean diſeaſe, ſaying in their practice as they ſaid in their hearts, that "they are rich and increaſed in goods, and ſtand in need of nothing," Rev. iii. 17. They are not mourning under their want of light, of life, and of holineſs. They reign as kings with what they have, though, as with King Saul, God is departed from them. Hence they do not value that treaſure which is hid in the field of the goſpel.

(2.) Men have no true ſight and ſenſe of their own ſinfulneſs. They ſee not the ſinfulneſs of their nature, of their hearts, lips, and lives, but are like Sampſon, without his two eyes: Matth. ix. 12. "They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick." They are pining away in their ſins; their ſickneſs has not yet taken them by the heart; their wounds are not lanced; the law has not had its effect upon them, and therefore the goſpel is not reliſhed.

(3.) Their eyes are vailed, ſo that they ſee not their miſery by ſin, and as being without Chriſt; Hoſ. vii. 9. "Strangers have devoured his ſtrength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not;—and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor ſeek him for all this." Did they ſee the clouds of wrath which are hanging above their heads, the quick approaches which death with its ſting is making towards them, their ſeparation from God, and from all

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all the privileges of the covenant, they could not be at eaſe. The goſpel-tidings would be to them as life from the dead.

(4.) They are ſtrangers to their utter inability to help themſelves. They are like Sampſon, in another caſe, who knew not that his ſtrength was departed from him We may ſee how corrupt nature changes itſelf into various ſhapes on this point. If you urge men to ply the work of their ſalvation, Alas! ſay they, we can do nothing; they thus make it a covert for their ſloth. Urge them with the neceſſity of reformation and repentance, they ſay, It is time enough, they will attend to this afterwards; as if it were in the power of their hand to do this buſineſs at any time: they thus make it a covert for their delays, and ſtill have no reliſh for the goſpel.

(5.) They do not feel their need of Chriſt: Rev. iii. 17. "They need his blood and Spirit, but they are not duly ſenſible of their need." Their own works are big in their own eyes, and appear to them ſufficient in order to obtain God's favour. Their natural and acquired abilities are alſo with them ſufficient in order to their ſanctification; they are by no means ſhaken out of themſelves; therefore the offer of the goſpel is but an offer of food to the full ſoul, and ſo is loathed.

(6.) They ſee not their own unworthineſs of a Saviour's help; they come to the market of grace with their money in their hand. They look on themſelves as worthy of what Chriſt ſhould do for them, Luke, vii. 4. Though they be perhaps ſo far humbled as to ſee they muſt have mercy and help from the Lord, yet they look on their reformation and duties as what cannot but recommend them to Chriſt beyond many others.

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They cannot ſee how the Lord can reject thoſe who come ſo far a length as they do. Hence the doctrine of free grace is but taſteleſs to them.

(7.) They have no anxiety for the ſupply of their ſoul-wants. They want grace and holineſs, but they can be eaſy without them. Like fooliſh virgins, they ſleep on at eaſe, while they have no oil for their lamps: Prov. vi. 10. "Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep." Their deſires are keen after the world, but weak, faint, and languiſhing after ſpiritual good things. They have no hunger and thirſt after them. Hence they value not the goſpel, nor the fountain of living waters.

(8.) They are not content with Chriſt but on terms of their own making. They are like thoſe who ſeek to buy a commodity which yet they can be without. If they can get it at their own price, they will take it; if not, they can want it. There are right-eye ſins, yet they will by no means part with them. They are not pleaſed with the covenant, ſome things are in it which they muſt have out; there are ſome things out which they muſt have in, elſe they will not come into it. Hence they care not for the goſpel, or that covenant which it reveals.

2. Hence learn, that ſlight the goſpel-call who will, the meek, the poor in ſpirit will gladly receive it. They who are ſhaken out of themſelves by the law, will be glad to creep under that ſhelter which is held forth in the goſpel. Theſe ſouls will feaſt ſweetly on what is taſteleſs to others, what others tread under feet and deſpiſe. The hungry are glad of that for which the full ſoul has no appetite; and juſt ſo it is in this caſe.—This ſubject informs us,

3. Of the dignity and honour of the work of the

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the miniſtry. With Paul, we would not be aſhamed to magnify that office which is converſant about thoſe things which are moſt neceſſary for the world, which bring the higheſt honour to God, and the greateſt good to mankind. It is true, it is often a deſpiſed office in the world; but wiſdom is juſtified of her children. God had but one Son, and he made him a miniſter, a preacher of the goſpel. He is the chief ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls, and therefore the office of the miniſtry will be eſteemed by all thoſe who have a true eſteem for Chriſt.—It informs us,

4. Of that good-will which the Father and the Son jointly bear to ſinners; ſince the Father put his own Son into this work, and the Son readily engaged in it. Do they not by this ſay, "Why will ye die?" It was good-will to men in its utmoſt height, that ever ſuch tidings were to be carried, and that ever ſuch a meſſenger was employed.—It informs us,

5. How acceptable meekneſs and poverty of ſpirit are unto the Lord, who has put a peculiar article in Chriſt's commiſſion for ſuch. As to others, he is to humble and bring them down; as to theſe, he is to refreſh and revive them with good news.—It informs us,

6. As to the goodneſs and weight of the good tidings of the goſpel, which are brought to us by ſuch a hand. Surely the weight of the matter muſt be great, when ſuch a meſſenger was ſent to publiſh it.—We are informed,

7. As to the danger of ſlighting theſe tidings, though men be employed in carrying them; for they ſpeak in the name of the great Meſſenger, preach in the name, and by the authority of, the great Preacher. So he that "deſpiſeth them, deſpiſeth him that ſent them:" Heb. ii. 3. "How ſhall

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ſhall they eſcape, if they neglect ſo great a ſalvation?"

This ſubject may be improved,

Secondly, In an uſe of trial.

Hereby we may try whether we be meek and poor or not. What reliſh have we for goſpel-truths? The meek, the poor in ſpirit, (and ſuch all muſt be who are true Chriſtians), have a ſingular reliſh for the word of the goſpel. It taſtes to them very differently from what it does to any in the world beſides. Job ſays, "I have eſteemed the words of his mouth more than my neceſſary food," chap. xxiii. 12. David ſays, "They are more to be deſired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb," Pſal. xix. 10.—For,

1. They are admitted to partake of the kernel of the word, while others break their teeth on the ſhell. It comes to them as it did to the Theſſalonians, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. "not in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance." It has not been a dry channel to them, or a dead letter, but the miniſtration of the Spirit. Therefore the apoſtle ſays, 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. "As new-born babes, deſire ye the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if ſo be that ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious." And this firſt taſte of it leaves a reliſh behind it; the drawing by of the vail has diſcovered the treaſure in the earthen veſſels.

2. It is their food, food proper and ſuitable to their new nature: Deut xxxii. 47. "For it is not a vain thing for you, becauſe it is your life." All living creatures have their proper food; thus one reliſhes and delights in that which another does not deſire. The new creature is nouriſhed by the ſincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. This is natural

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natural to them, for the saints have had their life by it, they are born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God, 1 Pet. i. 23. Thus the saints have a peculiar relish for the word of God, while others do not regard it; more than the dog does the hay, which, though the ox feeds sweetly on it, yet it is not agreeable to the dog.

Lastly, All their hopes are in it; it is all their salvation, and all their desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.; take this from them, and what have they more? Hence they are content to part with all to buy this field, Matth. xiii. 44. and to part with life itself rather than the gospel, Mark, viii. 35.—What wonder is it that a landed man should have a delight in reading his charter, the pardoned criminal in reading the king's pardon, which another has not? As natural is it that the Christian should have a delight peculiar to himself in reading and hearing the gospel.—Here occurs a

Question, Since hypocrites may have a relish of the good tidings of the gospel, how shall I distinguish between their relish and the relish of a sincere Christian, who is meek and poor in spirit?—To this I

Answer, Hypocrites may have some desires, and wait upon public ordinances, Isa. lviii. 2. Like the stony-ground hearers, they may receive the word joyfully, Matth. xiii. 20.; but yet there are great differences betwixt their desires and those of a sincere Christian.—Such as,

1. The sincere Christian relishes the good tidings of the gospel as good, yea, as the best for him, so as that he can lay the weight of his salvation, for time and eternity, upon this word, and chuse it for his portion, Psal. cxix. 111.; whereas the hypocrite may relish them as good, but not as the best for him: So that, for all the relish he has of the word, he has another thing which he looks

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looks on as ſtill better for him. He has ſomething elſe on which he is diſpoſed to lay at leaſt part of his weight before the Lord; for he is never poor in ſpirit, nor ſhaken out of his own righteouſneſs. But the Chriſtian has no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3.

2. The Chriſtian gets his reliſh for the goſpel, by feeling the extreme bitterneſs of ſin: Acts, ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and ſaid unto Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?" But the hypocrite comes eaſier by his: "When he hears the word, he anon with joy receives it," Matth. xiii. 20. No man can reliſh health at the rate one does who is brought back from the gates of death. Many reliſh the ſweetneſs of the word to whom ſin was never made bitter; or if it was, it was never the bittereſt of all things. Hence the reliſh for ſuch is very ſuperficial. But God puts in more and more bitterneſs in ſin to his own people, till it becomes of all bitters the bittereſt; and then they truly reliſh the good tidings of the goſpel.

3. The Chriſtian's reliſh for the goſpel is the moſt powerful and overcoming reliſh which he has. The hypocrite's is not ſo: Pſal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." So ſays the Chriſtian, but of the hypocrite it is ſaid, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs." The ſincere Chriſtian chuſes Chriſt

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peremptorily, if they ſhould beg with him. They ſee ſuch a ſuitableneſs in him to their caſe, that they muſt have him on any terms; whereas the hypocrite gets only half a look of Chriſt in the goſpel. Hence he has only half affection for him, a kind of hankering after him. Chriſt is ſweet to them, but ſtill ſome one luſt is ſweeter; ſo that, like Orpah, they leave him, but not without ſome affection for him. But the Chriſtian-like Ruth cleaves unto him, and thereby is brought to honour.

Laſtly, The Chriſtian reliſhes all the tidings of the goſpel in every particular of them, whereas the hypocrite has always ſomething in them which he does not approve of. The Chriſtian without ſhame has reſpect to all God's commandments, Pſal. cxix. 6. He reliſhes the goodneſs of the promiſes, and alſo the holineſs of the commandments. "He eſteems all God's precepts concerning all things to be right," ver. 128. Herod heard John gladly till his beloved luſt was touched. And ſo do many, they love the word, with the exception of that which ſtrikes againſt their beloved luſts.

This ſubject may be improved,

Thirdly, In an uſe of exhortation.

As ever you would reliſh the good tidings of the goſpel, labour to be meek and poor in ſpirit. Would you have your ſouls refreſhed at ordinances? Would you partake of the goodneſs of our Lord's houſe, and find that in ordinances, which is the hidden manna, which the carnal world knows not of? Well, take this courſe; it is the way to prepare yourſelves for it.

1. Keep up always a deep ſenſe of your own ſinfulneſs, wretchedneſs, and abſolute need of Chriſt. Our Lord was called the friend of publicans,

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blicans and ſinners, becauſe they who ſaw the leaſt good in themſelves got moſt of his converſe: 1 Pet. v. 5. "God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." The low valleys have the waters running in them, when they run off the high hills as faſt as they come on: Iſa. xl. 4. "Every valley ſhall be exalted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be made low." The man who feels his diſeaſe prizes the remedy, while he who is raving and inſenſible diſregards it.

2. Be of a teachable diſpoſition; this is true meekneſs: Pſal. xxv. 9. "The meek will he teach his way." They who ſit down to judge the word, rather than to be judged by it, may meet with what may diſguſt or pleaſe their fancy, but are out of the way of the true ſpiritual reliſh for the word: James, i. 21. "Wherefore, lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls." How many a weak Chriſtian's ſoul is refreſhed with that word, in which men who have knowledge, but not grace, find nothing. They will be ſure to profit who lie down at the Lord's feet, to learn and receive the word as the word of God.

3. Be much in reviewing and mourning over your ſpiritual wants. Look not ſo much to what you have attained, as to what you are yet ſhort of. Imitate Paul, in "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe things that are before," Phil. iii. 13. Mourn over your darkneſs, deadneſs, and unholineſs. Let theſe be your continual burden, and you ſhall not want a word in ſeaſon, Iſa. l. 4. Jeſus hath the tongue of the learned, to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary. This would make you lie at the catch for a word from the Lord, like Benhadad's

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ſervants in another caſe, and receive the Lord's meſſage greedily, as what in one way or another will profit you.

4. Cry much to God for communion with him in goſpel-ordinances. Come to ordinances in a believing expectation of enjoying it. Set yourſelves to receive the goſpel as the Lord's word to you, which worketh effectually in you that believe. The Lord appoints ſinners to meet with him there, ſaying, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee," Exod. xx. 24. Propoſe a meeting with him there alſo, and you may be ſure it will hold. Like Jacob, you will prevail with God to bleſs you, Hoſ. xii. 4. compare Gen. xxxv. 1. Chriſt had promiſed the Spirit, and commanded the diſciples to wait for him, Acts, i. 4. They continued in prayer, ver. 14. See the fruit of it, chap. ii.

Laſtly, Be thankful for the leaſt of God's mercies, and be ſubmiſſive to the Lord under every trying diſpenſation, as ſenſible of your utter unworthineſs. When was it that Jacob got the bleſſing? Was it not when in this frame, "I am not worthy," ſaid he, "of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." A ſenſe of unworthineſs as to the leaſt mercies, cannot miſs to produce in you a reliſh for the great mercies of the goſpel.

There are many complaints as to the want of God's preſence in ordinances. There is not that found in them which was in former times.—Many lay the blame of this on miniſters; and I dare ſay, there is not either a godly miniſter in Scotland, or a godly Chriſtian, acting as ſuch, who

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who dare refuse that he has a real share in it.—The *clean*, to cast stones at the *guilty*, must come out from among those ministers and people who are strangers to their own hearts, and see better into others than they do into themselves. But however it be, I dare promise, in the name of the Lord, that the hungry shall not be sent empty away. The meek poor ones shall be feasted in ordinances; and their hungry souls shall be refreshed with the gospel, fare with others as it will: Psal. xxii. 24. "The meek shall eat, and be satisfied." Matth. v. 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—O! but the spiritual relish for the word is well worth all the trouble which is necessary for having it. For,

1. This is the hidden manna peculiar to God's hidden ones on earth: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna," Rev. ii. 17. We read, Exod. xvi. 13. 14. of a dew under which the manna lay. The ordinances are that dew; communion with Christ in ordinances, by relishing his word, is the manna under it. The ordinances are the cabinet; this is the opening of the cabinet; and the finding of the jewel, the drawing by the vail, and beholding the glory; the digging up the field, and falling on the treasure; the breaking the shell, and getting out the pearl.

2. This would make the Sabbath the most pleasant day in all the week, the hours of worship the most pleasant hours, which now to most are a weariness. See how the gospel, felt in its power, doth affect: Isa. ix. 3. "They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Compare ver. 2. If you had ever any experience of this relish, dare you say but that these were your golden days, even

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the beſt time ever you had in your life, and that all the world could never make up your loſs ſince you wanted them? You who never taſted of it, believe others, ſince you are not capable of judging in the matter: Pſal. lxxxiv. 10. "For a day in thy courts is better than a thouſand." Believe thoſe who have got that at ordinances, which has made them joyfully embrace perſecution, baniſhment, a ſcaffold, and a fire.

3. This would readily hang about you all the week, in a holy, ſavoury, tender diſpoſition, and make you rejoice at the return of the Sabbath: Pſal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the houſe of the Lord." It is good being in Chriſt's company in his ſanctuary; wherever they go afterwards, they ſmell of his good ointments; knowledge is taken of them that they have been with Jeſus, Acts, iv. 13. Remember what is ſaid of the goſpel, 2 Cor. ii. 16. "To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death, and to the other the ſavour of life unto life." Alas! how rank and unſavoury are the converſations of moſt, becauſe they never get a reliſh for the word.

4. This would make you uſeful Chriſtians. The woman of Samaria, as ſoon as ſhe reliſhed the goſpel, ſhe got another ſpirit: As ſhe had been formerly a prop of the devil's kingdom, and an agent for him in the place where ſhe lived; ſhe now, when converted by grace, turns uſeful for others. This would make you naturally commend the way of God to others, would make you uſeful in your families, in the congregation, and in the country-ſide.

Laſtly, This would be a heaven on earth. What is the happineſs of the ſaints in glory? They enjoy

joy God, and this in the utmoſt perfection. You ſhould reliſh that enjoyment of him, which in your meaſure you have for the preſent, as a prelude, an earneſt of what ſhall be your privilege hereafter.

I SHALL have done with a word to all in general, and in particular to meek poor ones.—To all in general, I would ſay, Entertain the good tidings of the goſpel, ſlight them not, give them a ſuitable entertainment. Believe them as undoubted truths. When God ſpeaks, it is reaſonable we believe; for he is Truth, he is the faithful and true Witneſs, Rev. iii. 14. The carnal mind is apt to fall into unbelief of the goſpel, which reflects great diſhonour upon God: 1 John, v. 10. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." And this alſo makes the goſpel unprofitable to ourſelves: "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it," Heb. iv. 2.—Embrace theſe tidings joyfully and thankfully; they are tidings of great joy, and ſhould be received with the greateſt joy and chearfulneſs; as a malefactor on the ſcaffold ſhould receive the tidings of a pardon, or as an indemnity would be received by thoſe who have forfeited their lives by their treaſon. And the greater the danger is from which the goſpel proclaims deliverance, the more welcome ſhould the tidings be.—Finally, lay the weight of your ſouls on theſe tidings for time and eternity, fall in with the goſpel-contrivance, and embrace the covenant as well ordered in all things and ſure, Matth. xiii. 44. Embrace the ſalvation; come away with the Redeemer, accept the ranſom, accept the indemnity, put your caſe in the hand of the great Phyſician,

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ſician, and all ſhall be well. To prevail with you as to this, conſider, for MOTIVES,

From whence the tidings come. It is from a far country, from heaven, the throne of God, yea, the depths of the counſel of God, John, i. 18. Behold tidings of love and good will from heaven, of a mercy-ſeat ſet up there for poor ſinners, from whence they could have looked for nothing but wrath!—Conſider,

Who brings the tidings, the Son of God. O! glorious meſſenger, who left the Father's boſom and came down into this earth, to proclaim the glad tidings. And now that he is aſcended into heaven, he has ſent his miniſters in his name to proclaim them, with this certification, That he who heareth you, heareth me; and he who deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he who deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.—Conſider,

What are the tidings. Tidings of a ſalvation, a redemption, &c. They are good tidings, the beſt of tidings that ever came into the world.—Good to refreſh and revive the ſpirits of thoſe whom nothing elſe can comfort, even ſinners depreſſed under apprehenſions of wrath. And the more to be eſteemed that they are peculiar to ſinful men, not fallen angels. "Unto you, O men! I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men."—Conſider,

The need there was of theſe tidings in the world. Never did tidings come ſo ſeaſonably to any, as thoſe of the goſpel to the world ruined by ſin. We were as Iſaac, with the knife at our throat, when the tidings came of Jeſus Chriſt, as the ram caught in the thicket. Let us but ſuppoſe the world without the goſpel, we will then have a fiery law, flaming on our faces, and no

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way whatever to escape. Thus will we see the seasonableness of gospel tidings.

To meek poor ones, in particular, I would say, O! sensible sinners, pressed with the sense of your spiritual wants, your sinfulness, misery, inability to help yourselves, you who see your absolute need of Christ, and withal your unworthiness of his help, who are longing for supply, and content with Christ on any terms, to you is the word of this salvation sent, particularly; come away, and joyfully embrace these good tidings. To influence you to this, consider,

That your names are particularly in Christ's commission. He was sent to preach good tidings to the meek. The Lord knows that the poor convinced sinner will have many doubts and fears, which will be hard for him to overcome, so as to get the tidings believed. Therefore, as in Mark, xvi. 7. the angel said unto the women, "Go your way, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." So here particular notice is taken of the meek. God has a special eye on the outcasts of Israel to bring them in to himself, Isa. lv. 1. Again, consider,

That the grand end for which the Lord discovers to you your spiritual poverty is, that you may come to Christ for supply: Gal. iii. 24. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." God brought a famine on Jacob's household in Canaan, when there was corn in Egypt, that Joseph's brethren might have an errand to him. Therefore reject not the counsel of God against yourselves. Consider farther,

That Christ is able to supply all your wants: "Open thy mouth wide, says he, and I will fill it,"

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it," Pſal. lxxxi. 10. Were your wants as great as Paul's, as Mary Magdalene's, as Manaſſeh's were, he has enough to ſupply them all, a fulneſs of merit and of Spirit. If all the world were ſo poor in ſpirit, there is enough for them all, and to ſpare; there is an infinite value in his blood, and an infinite efficacy in his Spirit. Conſider,

That you cannot get the ſupply of your wants any where elſe: Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved." Alas! poor ſinners are ready to go to wrong doors for ſupply, and to ſeek to have their wants ſupplied by themſelves. But all your duties, prayers, watchings, mournings, will do no good, unleſs you believe: John, vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent." Conſider, laſtly,

That our Lord makes you welcome to him and his fulneſs, and that freely, Iſa. lv. 1. I dare not come to Chriſt, ſays one. Why ſo? Chriſt is a gift, even the gift of God, John, iv. 10.; and what is freer than a gift? Nothing is required of you but to receive it. Incline then your ear, and come unto him, hear, and your ſouls ſhall live.—Amen.

JESUS

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SERMON L.

Isa. lxi. 1.—*To bind up the broken hearted.*

IN these words, we have another piece of work which the Father has put in Christ's hand. He hath sent him *to bind up the broken hearted.* In the words there is, 1. The work itself, *to bind up;* Luke hath it *to heal*, chapter iv. 18. He is employed by the Father as the great Physician to bind up sinners, as a surgeon does a broken bone or any other wound, and to heal them. This belongs to his priestly office. We have, 2. The objects of it; *the broken hearted*, such as are sick of sin, who have their hearts broken and cast down within them, on account of sin, and its consequences. This is a sickness which Christ is sent to cure.

From this subject, you may observe the following

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DOCTRINE, Our Lord Jesus is appointed of his Father, to be the Physician of broken-hearted sinners, to bind them up, and heal them.

FOR illustrating this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. What is that brokenness of heart, which is here meant.

II. What is it in and about sin which breaks the man's heart, who is thus evangelically broken hearted.

III. What sort of a heart a broken heart is.

IV. How the Lord Christ binds up, and heals the broken-hearted.

V. Make some improvement.—We are then,

I. To inquire what is that brokenness of heart which is here meant, and of which the Lord takes so much notice. The broken hearted is of two kinds.

1. There is a natural one, arising from natural and carnal causes merely, which worketh death, 2 Cor. vii. 10. Thus many who are very whole hearted in respect of sin, complain that their hearts and spirits are broken by their crosses, afflictions, and ill usage which they meet with in the world. Thus Ahab, Haman, and Nabal, their hearts were broken with their respective crosses. This is nothing but the crack which a proud heart gets by God's providence, when it will not bow, and is very displeasing in God's sight. This Christ will not heal, till it is broken at another rate.—There is,

2. A religious broken heart, which arises from religious causes, namely, sin and its consequences. Sin has sunk into the souls of all Adam's posterity, like a deadly poison. But most men are whole-

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whole-hearted, though they carry their death about with them, becauſe the poiſon has not yet begun to work. The thorn of guilt is ſticking in their conſcience, but they are eaſy, for it has not yet begun to feſter. But when the poiſon begins to work, the heart is broken with it. Every ſuch breaking of heart is not the ſickneſs unto life which Chriſt is ſent to heal. There is a twofold religious breaking of heart.—*Firſt*, A mere legal one: Jer. xxiii. 29. "Is not my word like as a fire? ſaith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" When the heart is broken by the mere force of the law, it is broken as a rock in pieces by a hammer, each part remaining hard and rocky ſtill. As it breaks the heart of a malefactor, to hear his doom pronounced, that he muſt be hanged for his crime; ſo does the law break the heart of a ſinner. This breaks the heart for ſin, but not from it. Thus the hearts of Cain and Judas were broken, and thus the hearts of the damned ſhall be broken for ever. Men may die of theſe wounds, and never be healed. But there is,—*Secondly*, An evangelical one. When not only the law does its part, but the goſpel alſo breaks the ſinner's heart: Zech. xii. 10. "And I will pour upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication; and they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born." This is that kindly heart-breaking for ſin, which is an effect of goſpel-grace, a ſickneſs of which never one ſhall die, it is the very malady which in the text Chriſt is ſent to cure. Sin in an ungracious ſoul, is like poiſon in a ſerpent, it is agreeable

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to their nature, it does not make them ſick at all. Though it be indeed with them as a kind of ſerpent, from whoſe killing looks men defend themſelves, by holding a glaſs betwixt them and the ſerpent, which reflects the poiſon on the ſerpent himſelf, and ſo kills him. Thus, Pſal. vii. 16. "The wicked man's miſchief ſhall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings ſhall return upon his own pate." But in thoſe in whom God has a gracious work, ſin is like poiſon in a man, contrary to his nature, and ſo makes him heart-ſick. Thus the true broken-hearted ſinner is as ſick of ſin, as ever a man was of poiſon, which he had unwarily ſwallowed down, and would by all means be quit of it.—We now come,

II. To inquire what it is in and about ſin which breaks the man's heart, who is thus evangelically broken-hearted.—There is,

1. The guilt of ſin, by which he is bound over to the wrath of God. This, which cannot be taken away but by a free pardon, ſickens the poor creature at the heart: Iſa. xxxiii. 24. "And the inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick: the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity." This guilt is their burden, a burden on their backs, on their heads, on their ſpirits, which makes them to cry out, as in Hoſea, xiv. 2. "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly." They find the load, and their ſpirits are broken under it, as a burden which they are not able to bear.—There is,

2. The domineering power of ſin, or its tyranny, by which they are led captives to it. This is breaking to them, that luſts are ſo ſtrong, and they ſo weak, that they cannot get the maſtery over

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over them as they would: Rom. vii. 23. 24. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For some time the yoke of sin sat soft on their necks, they walked willingly after its commandments; but now they are weary of its dominion, averse to submit to its rule, and their hearts are broken under the weight of those iron fetters, from which they would now fain be delivered.—There is,

3. The contrariety which is in sin to the holy nature and law of God. The commandment is come into the heart, which it is inclined to obey, and so that contrariety is breaking: Rom. vii. 13. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." The love of God has so touched the heart, as to produce in him a considering sin to be bitter as death: The soul is wounded and cast down to think of its grieving the Spirit, trampling on the holy law, sinning against mercies, against checks and reproofs; and accounts itself very miserable in thus requiting the Lord.—There is,

4. The indwelling of sin, and its cleaving so close to a person that he cannot shake it off: Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He sees sin to be in his heart and life, and not only so, but that it is interwoven into his very nature, and not to be totally extirpated till death. He has now a sincere love to holiness, an ardent desire of perfection, Phil. iii. 13. 14.; an hearty hatred against

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ſin, and an irreconcileable enmity to it: ſo that it cannot but be breaking to him, while he ſees the unwelcome gueſt ſtill within his habitation.— There is,

5. Sin's mixing itſelf with all he does, even with his beſt duties: Rom. vii. 21. "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me." In the faireſt line which he writes, ſin leaves a blot; and on the pureſt and moſt ſacred of God's holy things to which he puts hand, ſin drops its defilement. This is breaking to a holy heart. When he reviews his duties, and ſees what deadneſs, what want of faith and love is in his prayers, hearing, communicating, and the like, what unwatchfulneſs, untenderneſs, and ungodlineſs, in his daily walk, he is lothſome in his own eyes, and ſick, heart-ſick of his ſinful ſelf.

6. Frequent backſlidings into ſin, are very breaking in this caſe. The Lord complains of breaking by theſe: Ezek. vi. 9. "I am broken," ſays he, "with their whoriſh heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes which go a-whoring after their idols." And, on the other hand, they are moſt breaking to the ſenſible ſinner himſelf: Jer. xxxi. 18. "I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus: Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a bullock unacuſtomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God." O how heavy is it to a gracious heart, to be ſo often falling back into evils mourned over and reſolved againſt! How near the heart of a ſick man muſt it go, to be ſo often relapſing, after he has been in a fair way of cure. Nothing is more powerful to make one ſay of life, I loath it.— There is,

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7. Deſertions, hidings of the Lord's face, and interruptions of the ſoul's communion with God. See how breaking theſe are, Iſa. liv. 6. "For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forſaken and grieved in ſpirit, and a wife of youth, when thou waſt refuſed, ſaith thy God." Sometimes the ſoul is brought very low by deſertions, and ready to give up all for loſt: Lam. iii. 18. "And I ſaid, My ſtrength and my hope is periſhed from the Lord." This is a bitter root, ſpringing up from ſin, and branches forth divers ways, all of them breaking to a ſenſible ſoul.—There is ſpiritual deadneſs, Song, v. 2. Influences from heaven are reſtrained, and ſo the heart is bound up as with bands of iron and braſs. They cannot either believe, love, or mourn acceptably. All that remains is a ſecret diſſatisfaction with their own caſe, only a ſigh or a groan, becauſe they cannot believe, love, or practice, as they know to be required of them, ſaying, Iſa. lxiii. 17. "O Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" This is breaking. Next there is, prayers ſhut out, Lam. iii. 8. "Alſo when I cry and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer." While a Chriſtian has acceſs to God by prayer, and can pour his complaints into his boſom, whatſoever be his caſe, he has not ſo much to complain of. Thus Hannah, after ſhe had done ſo, went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more ſad. This alſo encourages them to wait upon the Lord, Micah, vii. 7. But when the door of acceſs ſeems to be ſhut, and a thick cloud is drawn about the throne, this is breaking: Lam. iii. 44. "Thou haſt covered thyſelf with a cloud, that our prayer ſhould not paſs through." This made Zion ſay, Iſa. xlix. 14. "The Lord hath forſaken me, and

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my Lord hath forgotten me." And Pſal. xx. 2. "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"—Again, there is wrath apprehended, the terrors of God ſeizing on the ſoul. "The arrows of the Almighty," ſaid Job, "are within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirit, the terrors of God do ſet themſelves againſt me," ch. vi. 4. This is of all terrors the moſt terrible, and what heart can remain whole under it? Prov. xviii. 14. "The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmities, but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?" See how Heman was broken under this, Pſal. lxxxviii. 15. "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted." It made Job, a grave ſolid man, of extraordinary piety, cry out in the congregation, as unable to contain himſelf, chap. xxx. 29. 30. 31. "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls: My ſkin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp alſo is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep."—Finally, there are temptations dogging the ſoul, the more vile and horrid theſe are, the more dreadful. Sometimes the Lord looſes Satan's chains, and he is let almoſt looſe on a Chriſtian, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Hence there are fiery darts ſhot into the heart, extraordinary temptations as to faith or practice, Epheſ. vi. 16.; and theſe, though repelled, yet coming back as if a ſiege were laid to the ſoul, by an army reſolved to maſter the town. And when withal, one is left often to fall under theſe, this is moſt breaking to a gracious ſoul.—There is,

Laſtly, To ſum up all in a word, a Chriſtian's ſinfulneſs, with the bitter fruits ſpringing from his ſin; theſe are what are breaking to his heart.

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He is not what God would, nor what he would have himself to be. He is dissatisfied with himself, yet cannot right his case: Rom. vii. 19. "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." He brings miseries on himself by his sin, and therefore is sadly broken under the thought of his case.—We now proceed,

III. To shew what sort of a heart a broken heart is.—As to this we observe,

1. That it is a contrite or bruised heart: Psal. li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Not only broken in pieces like a rock, but broken to powder, and so fit to receive any impression: So the word signifies. The heart, though before sometimes like an adamant, which mercies could not melt, nor judgements terrify, is now kindly broken and bruised betwixt the upper and nether mill-stone;—the upper mill-stone of the law, a sense of God's wrath against sin; and—the nether mill-stone of the gospel, of divine love, mercy, and favour, manifested in word and providences.—If one going to break a hard stone, would lay it firm upon another hard stone, which will not yield underneath it, then, when you strike, it will either not break at all, or if it do, it will not break in shivers: But either lay it hollow, or on a soft bed, and it will break all in shivers. Thus, lay the hard heart upon the hard law, and strike it with the most dreadful threatenings of hell and damnation, it either will not break at all, or at least it will not break small. But lay the hard heart on the bed of the gospel of mercy and love, and then let the hammer of the law strike, the heart will go asunder. Legal preaching,

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preaching, which casts a vail over gospel-grace, is not the way to make good Christians. Joel lays the hearts of his hearers on mercy, then fetches his stroke with the hammer of the law, and cries, chap. ii. 13. "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." But it is the Spirit of the Lord that carries home the stroke, else it will not do.—A broken heart is,

2. A pained heart, an aching heart: Acts, ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Bruising or breaking a living member is not without pain. God wounds the guilty conscience, that the sinner may see and find what an evil and bitter thing sin is: Jer. ii. 19. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts." The deeper that the wound is, the sorer the heart is broken.—It is pained with sorrow: Prov. xv. 13. "By sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." A broken heart is a sorrowful heart for sin, for the offence given to God, the dishonour put on him by it, and the evil brought on one's self. Thus the broken-hearted sinner is a mourning sinner, Zech. xii. 10. The spirit of heaviness sits down on the man, till Christ bind up his wound; his joy is turned into lamentation.—The heart is pained also with remorse for sin, Acts, ii. 37. Every remembrance of his folly gives him a twitch by the scourge of conscience. He calls himself fool and beast for so requiting the Lord. He is heartily

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tily diſpleaſed with himſelf on that account: Job, xlii. 6. "Wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes." He ſmites on his breaſt, as worthy to be pierced, Luke, xviii. 13.; and ſmites on his thigh, as worthy to be broken for what he has done.—Again, it is pained with anxiety and care how to be ſaved from ſin: Acts, xvi. 30. "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" It brings a burden of care upon his head, how to get the guilt removed, the power of it broken, and to get it expelled at length. Never was a man more anxious about the cure of a broken leg or arm, than the broken-hearted ſinner is to get his ſoul-wounds healed, and to be free of ſin, which is his greateſt croſs.—The heart is pained with longing deſires after grace: Pſal. cxix. 20. "My ſoul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgements at all times." The broken-hearted ſinner, ſenſible of his ſpiritual wants, longs for the ſupply of them, pants for it as a thirſty man for water; and the delay of anſwering theſe deſires makes a ſick heart: Prov. xiii. 12. "Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick."—A broken heart is,

3. A ſhameful heart. The whole heart in ſin is impudent; but the broken heart is filled with ſhame. Ezra ſaid, chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increaſed over our head, and our treſpaſs is grown up unto the heavens." The man hangs down his head before the Lord, as not able to look up, Pſal. xl. 12. He ſees himſelf ſtripped of his beautiful garments, and is aſhamed of his ſpiritual nakedneſs, and, with the publican, he cannot lift up his eyes. He is fallen into the mire, and is aſhamed to come before God in his defilement, Iſa. lxiv. 6. His vain expectations from the way of ſin are baulked, and

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and so he turns back ashamed. His reproach is discovered, he is convicted of the baseſt ingratitude, and so is filled with shame. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed, Jer. ii. 26.—A broken heart is,

4. A soft and tender heart, for a broken and a hard heart are opposed to each other: Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." When the Spirit of the Lord breaks the heart with gospel-grace, he melts it down, and softens it, takes away that stoniness, stiffness, hardness, that cleaves to the heart in its natural state. The broken-hearted sinner, however, will very probably say, Alas! I find my heart a hard heart.—To this I answer, To find the hardness of heart, and to be weighted and grieved with it, is a sign of tenderness, even as groaning is a sign of life: 2 Cor. viii. 12. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." There is no heart in this world but there is some hardness in it. There may be tears where there is no broken heart, as in Esau, and there may be a broken and tender heart where tears are not. Try, therefore, the tenderness of your hearts by the following marks.

Are your hearts kindly affected with providences? Thou meeteſt with a mercy, and it is a wonder to thee that the Lord should be so kind to such an unworthy wretch. Thou sayeſt as Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant," Gen. xxxii. 10. It melts thy heart into an earneſt desire of holiness, knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.—Again, thou meeteſt with a rebuke of providence, shewing thee that thou art

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out of the way, and thou dareſt not venture farther that way. This is a good ſign: Prov. xvii. 10. "A reproof enters more into a wiſe man, than a hundred ſtripes into a fool."—Again, do the threatenings of the Lord's word awe thy heart, not only in reſpect of groſs outbreakings, but in the courſe of thy daily walk? Iſa. lxii. 2. "——but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word." Art thou afraid of the Lord's diſpleaſure more than of any thing elſe, and muſt thou ſtand at a diſtance from theſe things which the world makes light of on that account? This is a ſign of a tender heart. This reflection was comfortable to Job, chap. xxxi. 23. "For deſtruction from God was a terror unto me; and by reaſon of his highneſs I could not endure." Now this had a tendency to keep him free from all ſin.—Finally, have the Lord's commandments an awful authority on thy conſcience, ſo that thou art tender of offending him, and trampling on them? A hard heart can eaſily digeſt an offence againſt God, but a tender heart reſpects all his commandments, Pſal. cxix. 6. A burnt child dreads the fire; and the ſinner whoſe heart has been broken for ſin dreads ſin as the greateſt evil. There are ſome who will be very tender at their prayers, it may be that they weep and pray; but then fearful untenderneſs appears in their ordinary walk. But ſhew me the perſon who is in the fear of the Lord all the day long, who is afraid to ſay or do an ill thing: I ſay, this is the tender perſon, though his prayers ſhould be filled from beginning to end with complaints of hardneſs of heart; not the other: 1 John, v. 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."—A broken heart is,

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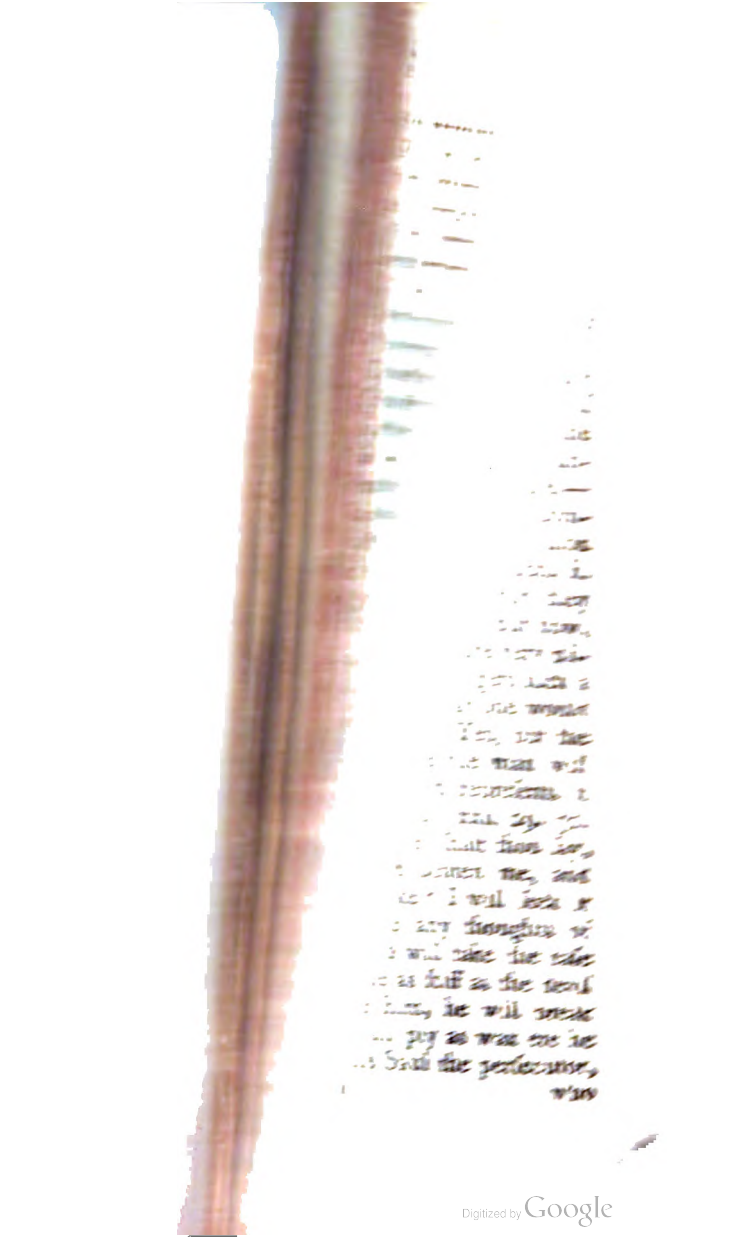

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5. A rent heart: Joel, ii. 13. "And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." The plough of humiliation and repentance is drawn through the heart, which tears up the fallow-ground, and pierces to the very soul. Many a man's heart is rent with remorse, or rather mangled, which is never thoroughly rent; and so their wound goes together again after some time, and they are as before. But the truly broken heart is rent to purpose, till the plough reach to the root of sin.

Here there may be proposed this question, What is the difference of these rentings? To this I answer, An unrenewed man's heart may be rent for sin, but it is not rent from it. The heart truly broken is not only rent for, but from sin; not only affrighted at, but framed into a hatred of it, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations." The heart is so broken, that the reigning love of sin runs out of it, as water out of a cracked vessel, or as filthy matter out of a wound which is laid open. He digs deep, as the wise builder; the other, like Balaam, who professed a regard to the authority of God, but still loved the wages of iniquity.—Again, the rent of the former either closes too soon, as those who quickly fall secure again, getting ease by bribing their consciences; or it never was closed at all, falling under absolute despair, like Judas. But the other is at length healed, yet not till the great Physician takes the cure in hand. The wound is kept open, and the soul refuseth healing, till the Lord looks down and beholds from heaven, as in Lam. iii. 50. The wound is too deep to be

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be cured, but by his blood and Spirit, yet not so deep, but that some ray of hope is always left; there is a "*who* knows but the Lord will yet return?"—The broken heart is,

6. A pliable heart. The hard heart is a heart of stone, unpliable. When the Spirit breaks the heart for sin, he makes it a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Hearts which the grace of God has not touched, are like young horses not used to the saddle, young bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke; they are unpliable and unmanageable, because they are not yet broken, Jer. xxxi. 18. But if ever any good be made of that heart of thine, the Spirit of God will break it; however wild and untractable it be, the Spirit will make it pliable.—He will make it pliable to the will of his commandments, saying, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? and what shall we do?" Acts, ii. 37. They had often heard before what they should do, but they would not comply; but now, since their hard heart is broken, they are very pliable. Many a time the sinner's heart gets such a piercing thrust in his sinful course, that one would think, surely he will comply now. Yes, but the heart is not broken yet, therefore the man will not comply, according as Solomon represents it in the case of the drunkard, Prov. xxii. 29. 32. and 34. "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." But if God have any thoughts of love to him, the Spirit of God will take the case in his own hand; and were he as stiff as the devil and his hard heart can make him, he will break him to that rate, that he shall ply as wax ere he have done with him. Witness Saul the persecutor,

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who was so softened, that he cried, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Acts, ix. 6.—The heart becomes pliable also to the will of his providence: Psal. li. 4. "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be cleared when thou judgest." An unrenewed heart is a murmuring one under the hand of God, and will readily chuse to sin rather than suffer. But the broken heart will say, Give me thy favour, and take from me what thou wilt: Luke, xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Sometimes one meets with an affliction, and they cry out they are broken, they are not able to bear it. God sends them a heavier one, they are stricken till they leave off weeping, and withal opens the heart-vein to bleed for sin, and so in some sort they are made to forget their affliction. And it is their great concern to get their soul's disease healed, let God do with them otherwise as he will.—A broken heart is,

Lastly, A humble heart: Isa. lvii. 15. quoted above. The hard heart is a gathered boil; when it is broken, it is discussed. As soon as the heart is broken under a sense of sin, pride and self-conceit vanish away; and the more broken-hearted that a person is, the less proud. Paul was a proud persecutor, but the Lord laid the pride of his heart, when he broke it, Acts, ix. 4. 5. Hezekiah, in his brokenness of heart is very humble: "I shall go softly," said he, "all my years in the bitterness of my soul," Isa. xxxviii. 16. O! if the proud and empty professors of this day had a taste of this broken heart, it would soon lay their gay feathers, let out the ulcers of pride, self-conceit,

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ceit, which are ſwollen ſo big in many a poor ſoul. It would turn the ſaying, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou," unto "Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man." It would make them think little of what they have been, of what they are, and of what they have done or ſuffered; little of what all their attainments, gifts, yea, and graces alſo, if they have any, are.

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SERMON LI.

Isa. lxi. 1.—*To bind up the broken hearted.*

HAVING considered that brokenneſs of heart which is here meant,—what about ſin the heart is broken for,—and deſcribed the nature of a broken heart,—we go on, as was propoſed;

IV. To ſhew how the Lord Chriſt binds up and heals the broken hearted.—The great Phyſician uſes two ſorts of bands for a broken heart, he binds them up with inner and with outward bands.

1. With inner bands, which go neareſt the ſore, the pained broken heart. And theſe are two.—The firſt inner band is,

Chriſt's own Spirit, the Spirit of adoption. The hearts of the diſciples were ſore broken at the news of Jeſus leaving them, and it behoved them to bleed a while. But he tells them, he would

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would send a healing band for their broken hearts: John, xiv. 16. "And I will pray the Father," said he, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Our Lord breaks his people's hearts by his Spirit, and yet by the same Spirit binds them up again. —In the first work he is the Spirit of bondage, and some may be long under his hand this way. Hence we read of some "who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 15. The Old-Testament church had much of this Spirit, "I am afflicted," says the psalmist, Psal. lxxxviii. 15. "and ready to die, from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted."—In the next work, he is the Spirit of adoption: Rom. viii. 15. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." He comes quickening, sanctifying, reviving, and comforting the soul. Therefore pray with David, Psal. li. 11. 12. "Take not thy holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit."—The second inner band is,

Faith in Christ, (the band of the covenant), which he works in the heart by his Spirit. Faith is a healing band, for it knits the soul, Ephes. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The woman with the bloody issue, when she got a touch of the hem of Christ's garments, was presently made whole. Thus the broken-hearted sinner, when he gets hold of Christ by faith, is bound up with him in one mystical body, virtue comes from him for the soul's healing. The virtue of his blood takes away guilt; the virtue of his Spirit breaks the power of sin. The apostle prescribes this healing band to the

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broken-hearted jailor: Acts, xvi. 31. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house;" and the more faith that there is, the band will be the stronger, and the soul the sooner healed. Much unbelief, and little faith, keep the wounds of the soul long open: Psal. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." A broken-hearted sinner staving off and disputing against his believing, is like a child which has a broken leg, doing what he can to tear off the bands with which it must be bound up; but he must admit them, or his leg will never heal: John, xi. 40. "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Peter walking on the water, was like to break and sink quite, Matth. xiv. 30.; the cause was his unbelief, ver. 31. "Jesus said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—There are also,

2. Outward bands for a broken heart.—These also are two.

The *first* outward band is his own word, especially the promises of the gospel. This band Peter held out to the broken-hearted company, Acts, ii. 38, 39. "Repent," said he, "and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This word has a sovereign virtue for healing, Psal. cvii. 20. "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." Our Lord wraps up a promise, in a soft band of love; and he makes them lay it to with their own hands; and the more closely they

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tie it about their broken hearts with the hand of faith, they will be the sooner whole. Say not, What can a word do? An encouraging word from men will wonderfully raise a carnally-dejected mind; and if so, certainly the Lord's word will heal a broken heart. A promise will be, in this case, like the opening of a box of perfumes to one ready to faint away: Song, i. 3. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is like ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee."

The *second* outward band is his own seals of the covenant, Acts, ii. 38. quoted above. These seals are for our ingrafting into, and having communion with Jesus Christ, and so are most fit means to bind up hearts broken under a sense of sin, when they are partakers of these in faith. Hence many have been healed at such occasions; though indeed the water is not moved at all times, or at least the broken-hearted sinner does not always step into it. It was an ancient custom, though that will not justify it, to put a white garment on persons when they were baptised. But surely our Lord has taken off the spirit of heaviness, and given the garment of praise to many at sealing ordinances. The eunuch, after he was baptised, went on his way rejoicing. The sorrowful disciples were also made glad, when after his resurrection Jesus made himself known to them in the breaking of bread, Luke, xxiv. 35. All these bands are the Physician's absolute property. The poor patient has nothing of his own to be a band to his wounds. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; faith is his work; the word and sacraments are his ordinances, and their efficacy is all from him; and thus he heals them. His kindness in this instance, we may take up in these three things.

1. They

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(1.) They are juſtified and pardoned: Job, xxxiii. 23. 24. "If there be a meſſenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs: Then he is gracious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom." The ſting of guilt is taken away, that poiſon is carried off, by a full and free pardon. Thus the ſick man is whole: Iſa. xxxiii. 24. "And the inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick; the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity." The blood of Chriſt, with which by faith the ſoul is bound up, cleanſes the wound, and heals it: 1 John, i. 7. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin."

(2.) They are ſanctified: 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God." The Spirit is a ſanctifying ſpirit; faith a ſanctifying grace: Acts, xv. 9. "And put no difference between us and them, ſanctifying their hearts by faith." The ſacraments are ſanctifying ordinances: 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by one Spirit, we are all baptiſed into one body,—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." By theſe the power of corruption, as to its reign, is broken; luſts are gradually killed, and grace is made to grow.

Laſtly, They are comforted: Job, xxxiii. 25. 26. "His fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's: He ſhall return to the days of his youth: He ſhall pray unto God, and he ſhall be favourable unto him: and he ſhall ſee his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteouſneſs." All theſe

theſe bands have a comforting and alſo a refreſhing virtue. They bring the oil of joy ſooner or later to the ſoul. The way of the Phyſician in this is, "According to thy faith, ſo be it unto thee." And thus the broken-hearted eat of the hidden manna, they get the white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, Rev. ii. 17.

V. It now remains that we make ſome improvement of this ſubject.—It may be improved in uſes of information,—reproof,—conſolation,—and exhortation.

Firſt, In an uſe of information.

1. This ſhews us the love and good-will of God to help poor ſinners, eſpecially broken-hearted ones. He has provided a glorious Phyſician for them, having remembered us in our low eſtate. O the love of the Father in inveſting his Son with this office! O the love of the Son in undertaking it! Eſpecially conſidering, what it behoved him to undergo, in order to provide the medicines; his own heart had to be broken, that ſinners might be healed.—We may learn,

2. The precioufneſs of our ſouls, and with all the deſperateneſs of the diſeaſes of ſin. Sure it behoved to be a deſperate diſeaſe, and the patient at the ſame time very precious in the Lord's ſight, for which he employed ſuch a Phyſician. A phyſician of leſs value than an incarnate God, would have been a phyſician of no value for a broken-hearted ſinner. No medicine leſs than his blood could have been effectual, elſe the Saviour's heart had never been broken for blood to cure it.—We may ſee,

3. To whom we muſt go with our hard hearts. O the reigning plague of hardneſs of heart this day among all ranks! Ordinances, providences, mercies,

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mercies, judgements, cannot break them. Alas! There is little occasion to speak to broken-hearted sinners this day; it is the least part of our work, to get their hearts healed. We cannot go with whole hearts, as broken. What can we do with them? Carry them to Christ. He who can heal broken hearts, can surely break whole hearts. He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, Acts, v. 30. A look of him would do what nothing else can do. When the Lord Jesus looked on Peter, then Peter remembered his sins, and went out, and wept bitterly, Luke, xxii. 62.—We shall improve this subject,

Secondly, In an use of reproof.—This doctrine reproves and condemns,

1. Those who, when their hearts are any way broken for sin, go not to Christ, but to physicians of no value: Hos. v. 13. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." The Spirit of the Lord is at work with the hearts of many to break them for sin, who mar all by their haste to be healed, which carries them to other physicians than Christ, who may palliate the disease, but never can effectually cure it. These are,—the law, which is now weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. The law may wound the soul, but can never heal it: Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Yet many go to it for healing, namely, when they go about to pacify their consciences, not by a believing application and sprinkling of Christ's blood, but by their own prayers, vows, repentance, amendment of their ways, and the like.

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like. The law indeed may give them a palliative; by these things their consciences may be blinded and bribed, but the disease is still rooted in them, and will break forth again at last, when there is no remedy, if not sooner, by the mercy of God, to prevent their final ruin.—Throng of worldly business. When Cain's heart was wounded, and he could not get out the sting which galled his conscience, he went to this physician, he went from the presence of the Lord, and built a city, Gen. iv. 16. 17. To this many run at this day, who, when their consciences begin to stir within them, fill their heads and hands with business, till they get conscience quiet. This palliates the disease by way of diversion, while it will make it only like a gathered dam, which will at length break down the wall, and overwhelm the soul with aggravated sorrows: Isa. xxx. 13. "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant."—Jovial company: So Saul, in his distress of mind, instead of calling for his Bible to read on, calls for musicians to play to him. And it is not to be doubted, that many a man's convictions are drowned in the ale-house, hushed to silence at revelling-meetings, these supports of the devil's kingdom, people are so fond of; and many good motions are spoiled and laughed away. This palliates the disease by searing the conscience, and making it senseless. But it will awaken again on them like a lion roused up, and rent the caul of those hearts which have been so healed, Hos. xiii. 6. 8.—This doctrine reproves,

2. Those who offer themselves physicians to the broken in heart, in opposition to Christ and his method of cure. There are such agents for the devil, who, like the Pharisees, will neither enter

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enter in themſelves, nor ſuffer thoſe who would to enter. Like Elymas the ſorcerer, they ſeek to turn away men from the faith, Acts, xiii. 8. They no ſooner diſcern any beginning ſeriouſneſs in others, but they ſet themſelves to cruſh it in the bud by their wicked advices, mockings, taunts, and licentious enſnaring examples. To theſe I may ſay, as in Acts, xiii. 10. "O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" The blood of the ſouls of ſuch as periſh by theſe means will lie at the door of ſuch perſons, and be required of them.

Laſtly, Thoſe are reproved, who, as their duty is, dare not go to theſe phyſicians of no value, yet do not come to Chriſt, which is their ſin: Pſal. lxxvii. 2. "My ſoul refuſed to be comforted." It is unbelief which makes it ſo, and Satan will do what he can to carry it on, to deter the ſinner from the great Phyſician. But has the Father accepted Chriſt a phyſician for broken-hearted ſinners? Surely, then, they may come, and welcome; nay, they muſt come, or elſe they will never be healed.—We ſhall now improve the ſubject,

Thirdly, In an uſe of comfort to theſe who are truly broken-hearted for ſin in a goſpel-ſenſe. You have an able Phyſician, who both can and will cure you, even though Satan may be ready to tell you that your caſe is paſt cure. There is great ground of comfort for ſuch. (1.) Your name is in Chriſt's commiſſion. (2.) You know your diſeaſe, and this is a conſiderable ſtep to the cure. (3.) Never any died of your diſeaſe: Pſal. cxlvii. 3. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth

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up their wounds."—Here, however, may be propoſed this

Objection, My heart has been long broken for ſin, and yet there is no appearance of being healed: Jer. xiv. 19. "Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy ſoul loathed Zion? why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us? we have looked for peace, and there is no good, and for the time of healing, and behold trouble."—To this I

Anſwer, Thy ſoul may be healed of the diſeaſe of ſin, and thy guilt removed, even the power of ſin may be broken, though thy trouble does remain. David's ſin was put away, 2 Sam. xii. 13. yet he cries out of broken bones, Pſal. li. 8.—I would adviſe you to wait patiently on the great Phyſician, and in due time he will bind thee up. Limit him not to times and ſeaſons, which are in his own hand; he beſt knows how to manage his patients. Some he keeps long in trouble, to prevent pride and ſecurity, into which they are apt to fall: others he ſoon cures, to prevent deſpair or utter deſpondency, to which they are moſt liable.—It only remains that this ſubject be improved,

Laſtly, In an uſe of exhortation.—This ſhall be addreſſed to three ſorts of perſons.

I would exhort whole and hard hearted ſinners to labour to get broken hearts, hearts kindly broken for ſin.—To prevail with you in complying with this exhortation, I offer the following MOTIVES.

Mot. 1. Conſider the evil that there is in hardneſs of heart.—It is very diſpleaſing in the ſight of God: Jeſus was grieved with the hardneſs of men's hearts, Mark, iii. 5. It grieves his Spirit, and highly provokes him, ſo that God is ever angry with the hard-hearted ſinner. Suppoſe a man to be under never ſo great guilt, but his heart is bro-

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ken on account of it, God is not so displeased with him as with those who, whatever their guilt be, are hard-hearted under it.—It fences the heart against receiving any benefit by the means of salvation. Till this hardness be removed, it makes the heart proof against ordinances and providences: Psal. xcv. 8. "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Consider, as it is with the dead tree, even in the spring, all labour is lost upon it; so is it with the hard-hearted sinner. God speaks by his word and Spirit, by mercies and judgements; but nothing makes impression on the hard heart, yea, the most softening means leave it as they found it, or most probably in a worse state.—It binds up the heart from all gracious motions: Rom. ii. 4. 5. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God." This hardness is an iron band on the will, a stoniness in the heart, a hard freeze on the affections, so that the sinner cannot repent, mourn, or turn from his evil courses. It so nails him down in his wicked way, that he cannot move God-ward, cannot relent of his folly, though his danger be clearly before his eyes.—In a word, it is the highway to be given up of God. Natural and acquired hardness lead the way to judicial hardness: Rom. xi. 7. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." When men harden their hearts against reproofs and warnings, God many a time visits them with a curse, so that they shall never after have

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have power to relent and yield: Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

Mot. 2. Conſider the excellence of a broken heart. It is very pleaſing in the ſight of God, and precious: Pſal. li. 17. "The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe." He looks to ſuch, while he overlooks others, Iſa. lxvi. 2. He is near to them, while far from others, Pſal. xxxiv. 18. It is the way to get good of all the means of ſalvation; and it is the root of gracious motions in the ſoul. However low they lie, God will take them up, and take them in: Pſal. cxlvii. 3. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Mot. 3. The hardeſt heart will break at length, if not in a way of mercy, yet in a way of judgement: Prov. xxix. 1. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy." (Heb. broken, and no healing). Thy ſins are breaking to the Spirit of God, Ezek. vi. 9. Aſſure thyſelf that the ſtone will roll back on thyſelf ſooner or later; if it do not kindly break thee in a way of repentance, it will grind thee to powder in the way of wrath.—To ſuch we would give the following directions briefly.

Believe the threatenings againſt ſin, and apply them: Jonah, iii. 5. "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth, from the greateſt of them even to the leaſt of them." This belief worketh fear, and fear worketh ſorrow. And though this be but legal humiliation, yet this is ordinarily a mean ſanctified of God to bring forward the elect ſinner to Chriſt, as it was when Noah builded the ark, Heb. xi. 7.—Ponder thy manifold ſins, on the one

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hand, and the rich mercies with which thou haſt been viſited on the other. This is a proper mean to bring the heart into a broken diſpoſition: Rom. ii. 4. "The goodneſs of God leadeth to repentance." Believe and meditate on the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin. Look how he was broken for it in a way of ſuffering, till thy heart be broken for it in a way of repentance: Zech. xii. 10. (quoted above).

We addreſs ourſelves, in the next place, to broken-hearted ſinners. To ſuch we ſay, Come to Chriſt as a Phyſician for binding up and healing your broken hearts. You have ſufficient encouragement to put your caſes in his hand.—It is a part of the work expreſsly put upon him by the Father, to bind up your wounds.—He has a moſt tender ſympathy for ſuch broken-hearted ones: Iſa. lxiii. 9. "In all their affliction, he was afflicted, and the angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Therefore let us improve this ſympathy: Heb. iv. 15. 16. "For we have not an high-prieſt, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—He is very near to ſuch, even as dwelling under one roof with them for their welfare: Iſa. lxvii. 15. "For thus ſaith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—There is a particular relation betwixt him as the Phyſician,

and

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and the broken hearted as his proper patients; and therefore he has a peculiar care of them: Ezek. xxxiv. 15. 16. "I will feed my flock, and I will cauſe them to lie down, ſaith the Lord God; I will ſeek that which was loſt, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will ſtrengthen that which was ſick; but I will deſtroy the fat and the ſtrong, I will feed them with judgement." You ſee that he will handle the broken hearted very tenderly: Iſa. xl. 11. "He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd, he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young;" chap. xlii. 3. "A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench; he ſhall bring forth judgement unto truth."

In the laſt place, we would exhort thoſe whoſe broken hearts Chriſt has healed, to take heed to the preſerving your reſtored health. Indeed every one who ſeems to be healed, is not healed by the hand of the true Phyſician; but if your hearts are now eaſed, and your wounds bound up by the great Phyſician, you will know it by theſe three things.—1. You will have an appetite for ſpiritual food: 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. "As new-born babes, deſire ye the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious." When one begins to recover in earneſt, he recovers his appetite. But ſuch an one, ſay we, is not well yet, for he has no appetite; ſo thou art not well if thou doſt want the ſpiritual hunger.—2. Your food will reliſh with you: Prov. xxvii. 7. "The full ſoul loatheth the honey-comb; but to the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet." Many have their qualms of conſcience which they get over, but ſtill

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they have no reliſh for ſpiritual things, but for the world and their luſts. But if Chriſt has healed thee, he has corrected thy taſte.—*Laſtly*, You will be beginning to walk in the way of God. "I will run," ſaid David, "in the way of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart," Pſal. cxix. 32. They who return with the dog to the vomit, ſhew that their diſeaſe is yet in its ſtrength, though they are not ſenſible of pain.

Now, if Chriſt has healed you, to preſerve the health of your ſouls, it is neceſſary for you,—To keep a good and regular diet. Beware of theſe things which formerly caſt thee into ſoul-ſickneſs. Peter went no more back to the high prieſt's hall, nor Judah to Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 26. Feed there, and on theſe things which may tend to the ſoul's health. "Behold," ſaid Jeſus to the impotent man he had healed, "behold thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come upon thee." And for this cauſe obſerve your Phyſician's rules in all things.—Walk circumſpectly, take notice of every ſtep you make, as one who has had a broken limb healed: Iſa. xxxviii. 15. "I ſhall go ſoftly," ſaid Hezekiah, "all my years, in the bitterneſs of my ſoul." And beware of walking in the dark, of going forward there where you cannot diſcern your way by the light of the Lord's word.—Study to increaſe in love to Chriſt, zeal for his glory, and hatred of ſin.—Always keep correſpondence with your Phyſician. Be often at the throne of grace by prayer, and keep up communion with him in the exerciſe of faith. "They who wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint."——Amen.

JESUS

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JESUS PROCLAIMS LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES.

SERMON LII.

Isa. lxi. 1.—*To proclaim liberty to the captives.*

HITHERTO we have had Christ's commission as it respects those who have some good in them, the meek and the broken hearted. Here is his commission with respect to those who have no good in them, but are utter strangers to him, living in their natural state. He is anointed *to proclaim liberty to the captives.*—In which words consider,

1. Man's natural state. It is a state of captivity; they are captives to Satan: 2 Tim. ii. 26. "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captives by him at his will." He is the tyrant whose captives they are, who has carried them away out of the light of God's favour, and holds them fast in his territories, being the god of this world.—Consider,

2. Christ's

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2. Christ's work with respect to them, it is *to proclaim liberty* to them, Luke, iv. 18. "To preach deliverance to the captives." These are indeed the same. Luke's word for liberty or deliverance, is properly dismissing or letting away, that is, giving liberty. The words for preaching and proclaiming, signify properly to cry, and are used either of preaching or proclaiming. And what is preaching but proclaiming in the name of the King of heaven? and so this relates to Christ's kingly office.—From this part of the subject we take the following DOCTRINES.

DOCT. I. That sinners in their natural unregenerate state are Satan's captives.

DOCT. II. That Jesus Christ, with the express consent of his Father, has issued out his royal proclamation of liberty to Satan's captives.

WE begin with,

DOCT. I. That sinners in their natural unregenerate state are Satan's captives.

FOR illustrating this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. How sinners in their natural state have become Satan's captives.

II. What is their condition as Satan's captives.

III. The properties of this captivity.—And then,

IV. Add the improvement of the subject.

WE are then,

I. To shew, how sinners in their natural state have become Satan's captives.—They have become his captives,

1. As

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1. As taken in war: 2 Pet. ii. 19. "Of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage." Satan having proclaimed war againſt Heaven, maliciouſly ſet on our firſt parents in paradiſe, and on all mankind in them. He ſet on them as the confederates of heaven, and carried his point, gained the victory. And in this reſpect he is ſtill purſuing the victory, and driving the unrenewed world before him as priſoners of war, called his lawful captives, Iſa. xli. 24.—They have become his captives, becauſe,

2. They are born his captives, as being born of thoſe whom he overcame and carried captive. So they are expreſsly called the children of hell, Matth. xxiii. 15. There were many of the captives in Babylon, who had never ſeen Canaan, having been born in that country. Theſe were captives no leſs than their parents; and that by their birth. So is it with all Adam's poſterity naturally, they were born under the power of Satan, Acts, xxvi. 18. When a ſlave, under the law, married in his maſter's houſe, though at the end of ſeven years he got his own freedom, yet the children were his maſter's as being born in his houſe, and could not be free without a particular liberty for them, Exod. xxi. 4. Thus even the children of godly parents are by nature Satan's captives; children of Abraham, children of the devil. To the Jews, our Saviour ſaid, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the luſts of your Father ye will do," John, viii. 44.—We were,

II. To inquire what is their condition as Satan's captives.—Upon this we obſerve,

1. That every natural man is tranſported from their primitive ſoil into Satan's territories, his kingdom of darkneſs. Hence believers are

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ſaid "to be turned from the power of Satan unto God." Acts, xxvi. 18. And again, Col. i. 13. "God hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Sinners are not now where God at firſt ſet them down, they are tranſported into another kingdom; like the prodigal, they have left their father's houſe, and gone into a far country, where they have ſpent their ſubſtance, Luke, xv. 13. They are far from God, his covenant, and his Son. Thou art in Satan's kingdom, O unconverted ſoul! a black and diſmal kingdom, where ſin, darkneſs, and death reign, where there is no gleam of ſaving light or life; and if thou wert awakened out of thy dream, thou wilt ſee matters ſo ſituated; a kingdom with which God will have war for ever; and thou art an unhappy ſubject of that kingdom.

2. They are plundered and robbed of all that is valuable, as captives uſed to be: Rev. iii. 17. "They are wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The light of the mind, the righteouſneſs of the will, the holineſs of the affections; all is loſt, all has become a ſpoil, and a prey to the helliſh conqueror. Now thou art a poor captive, who haſt nothing truly good left thee, nothing which the bands of hell have not made thee render up.

3. They are ſtripped, as has alſo been an ancient cuſtom of dealing with captives. Thus, as the prophet Iſaiah, ch. xx. 3. 4. walked three years naked, for a ſign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia; ſo did the king of Aſſyria carry away theſe nations captive, naked and bare-foot. What a melancholy ſight is it, to ſee brave men, who were glittering in ſhining apparel and arms

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at the commencement of an engagement, when fallen into the hands of their enemies, ſtript and driven away naked before the conquerors. But yet more melancholy to ſee precious ſouls ſtript by Satan of their original righteouſneſs, and driven away before him, without any covering but rags, filthy rags, Rev. iii. 17. This, O ſinner! is the ſhameful and dangerous caſe, which thou art in as Satan's captive.

4. They are no more maſters of themſelves, but under the power of the conqueror: 2 Tim. ii. 26. "They are taken captive by him at his will." Their liberty is gone, and they are ſlaves to the worſt of maſters. Wonder not that many a poor ſinner is at Satan's beck, over the belly of reaſon and conſcience, to ſerve the devil, to their own viſible ruin. Alas! they are captives, not at their liberty, but muſt go as he commands them: Rom. i. 23. "There is a law in their members, which bringeth them into captivity to the law of ſin and death."

5. If they get any thing that is valuable, they cannot get it kept, it is torn from them by the conqueror. As the Babylonians waſted and inſulted the Iſraelites, when they carried them away captives, ſo does Satan waſte and inſult his captives, Pſal. cxxxvii. 3. Sometimes the natural man gets a conviction of ſin or duty darted in on him, and this produces relentings for ſin, and reſolutions to amendment of life; but they do not continue. Alas! how can they, while they are Satan's captives, who will not ſuffer them to think of entertaining them, more than Pharaoh would endure the Iſraelites to think of leaving his ſervice. Nay, he reſts not till they have thrown them away.

6. They

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6. They are so secured, as that they cannot get away, they are kept by the strong man under the power of darkness, Col. i. 13. There is a gulf fixed between them and all spiritual good, so that they cannot pass. Satan has his guards on them, whom they cannot escape to come back to the Lord. He has them fettered with divers lusts, which they cannot shake off. And, in a word, nothing less than a power stronger than all the powers of hell, can make way for the deliverance of a captive.

Lastly, If they but offer to make escape, they are more narrowly watched, stronger guards set on them, and more work put in their hands; as Pharaoh did with the Israelites, the devil does with his captives, Rom. vii. 9. 10. 11. Hence many never go so far wrong, as on the back of communions, convictions, or times of more than ordinary seriousness, the powers of hell being joined together to stop the fugitive.—We now proceed,

III. To speak of the properties of this captivity. Here we observe, that it is,

1. A spiritual captivity, a captivity of the soul. The soul is the most precious part of the man: and therefore the captivity of it must be the most deplorable. All the captivity of men, if they were captives to the Turks or the most barbarous nations, extends but to the body. He whose body is in the power of another, his soul and thoughts are as free as those of any. But Satan lays his hands upon the inner man, and, go the body as it will, he holds fast the man, in so far as he holds fast the soul. And,

2. It is universal. It extends to all the powers and

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and faculties of the ſoul, the inner man. The natural man's mind is Satan's captive: 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned." The Lord formed the mind of man in him, and endowed it with knowledge, to be the guide of the whole man in the way of happineſs; to be the eye of the ſoul, to diſtinguiſh betwixt ſin and duty; and the pilot, to direct his courſe through the ſeveral rocks and quickſands that lay betwixt him and the ſhore of the upper Canaan. But in the engagement betwixt Satan and mankind, being wounded by the deceit of the tempter, Gen. iii. 5. it fell into the hands of the enemy, who robbed it of its light, and ſhut up ſinners in darkneſs. Hence they are ſaid to be darkneſs, Eph. v. 8. They cannot ſee the way to eſcape: and withal, there is ſtruck up a falſe light in the mind, which, like wild-fire, leads the ſoul into pits and ſnares, cauſing it to put ſweet for bitter, and bitter for ſweet, good for evil, and evil for good. They thus "glory in their ſhame, and mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 19.—Again, the will is his captive. They have a ſtony heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 16. The Lord having endowed this faculty with righteouſneſs, and ſtraightneſs with his own will, for, Eccl. vii. 29. "God made man upright," gave the will dominion over the man, that nothing, good or evil, could be done by him without it. But behold it fell likewiſe into the enemy's hands, who hath given it ſuch a ſet to the wrong ſide, that no created power can again ſtraighten it: Hence, 2 Theſ. iii. 5. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." He only can do it. Satan holds it ſo faſt, that it cannot move without the

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circle of evil he has drawn about it, nor can it will any thing truly good in a right manner: Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Satan hath loaded it with such heavy chains, that it cannot come to Christ at his call, more than a mountain of brass can come to a man at his call. "No man," saith Jesus, "can come unto me, except the Father who sent me draw him."—Farther, the affections also are Satan's captives: Gen. vi. 5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The affections being made perfectly holy, were subjected to the guidance of the mind, and the command of the will, and were set in the soul to execute its holy contrivances and will. But they also were taken in this war with hell; loosed from this bond of subjection to the understanding and will in these things, but nailed to Satan's door-posts to serve him and his work in the soul for ever; so that they have no heart for the price put into their hand to get wisdom, and can have no heart to it. But the natural man's joys and delights are arrested within the compass of carnal things, together with his desires, sorrows, and all his other affections.

3. It is a hard and sore captivity. The Egyptians and Babylonians never treated their captives at the rate Satan does his. They are held busy, and even busy working their own ruin, kicking against the pricks, digging for the grave as for hid treasures. It is their constant work to feed their lusts, to starve their souls; and the design of their master is, that the one may ruin the other. It is their daily employment, to weave snares for their

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their own feet, twiſt cords to bind themſelves over to deſtruction, and dig pits into which they may fall, and never riſe again. In ſo far as ſin is their work, they wrong their own ſouls, Prov. viii. 36. and ſhew themſelves in love with death.—This captivity is,

4. A perpetual captivity. A few years captivity among men, how grievous is it! And men will do what they can to be ranſomed. But this conquerer will never quit his captives, unleſs they be taken from him by Almighty power. Death at fartheſt looſes other captives: "For in the grave," ſays Job, iii. 18. 19. "the priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the oppreſſor; and the ſervant is free from his maſter." But thoſe who die, Satan's captives are ſo far from being free, that they are enſured to him for ever and ever.

Laſtly, It is a voluntary captivity, and thus the more hopeleſs: 1 Tim. ii. 26. "They are taken captive by Satan at his will." They need not to be driven. They do not only go, but they run at his call: Rom. iii. 15. "Their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood." Though they were taken in war, and born captives, yet now he is their maſter, by their own conſent and choice, while they chuſe to ſerve the devil, and cannot be brought to give themſelves to the Lord. It is a bewitching captivity. The ſinner once captive to Satan, never cares for his liberty, unleſs grace changes his heart. He glories in the badges of his ſlavery; loves his work heartily, and is well pleaſed with his condition. The gracious proclamation of liberty by Chriſt ſounds in his ears; but he ſays, I love my maſter, I will not go out free.—We are now,

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IV. To make some practical improvement,

First, In an use of conviction. Know then, and be convinced, O unconverted sinner! that thou art the devil's captive. Are there not many who have never troubled their heads about their state, who never have had any thing like a work of grace or conversion upon their spirits? many in whom their hopeful beginnings have been all marred? I would say to every such one, Thou hast been hearing of the case of the devil's captives, and thou art the man, thou art the woman, as fast in his power as ever prisoners of war were in the hands of their conquerors. You will not believe it, and this is your sin, and also your misery, Rev. iii. 17. You will be ready to sign yourselves, and defy the devil; though you have never been, by regenerating grace, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col. i. 13. But this is Satan's way with his captives, to put out their eyes: 2 Cor. iv. 4. "He blinds the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;" that they cannot know where they are, or who it is that has got hold of them. Do you think, that it is only witches and wizards who are the devil's captives? No, no, Satan may have a full possession of thy soul, though his name with thee be not Legion. Even praying people, and great pretenders to religion, to righteousness, and sobriety, and those who have turned to a strict course of life, much more to making a profession of religion, may still be children of hell, as our Saviour called the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth xxiii. 15. And all unregenerate ones are children of wrath, and the devil's captives. He is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of

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of disobedience;" and they are "the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 2. 3. Will you apply what was spoken before for your conviction?—Try yourselves.

1. Art thou not, O unconverted sinner! carried off from God's gracious presence, into the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of darkness? What knowest thou of the light of God's countenance shining on thy soul? Certainly thou wast once darkness, Eph. v. 8. Has there any spiritual saving light broke up in your soul yet? Has the long night of thy natural state had a morning yet? Or are you not in the state in which you was born? If you be not in darkness, what means your works of darkness, and your not discerning the transcendent excellence of Christ?

2. Are you not robbed and stripped of your spiritual ornaments? Where is the light of the mind, the righteousness of the will, the holiness of the affections, which man had before he fell into the enemy's hands, and which are restored in some measure to the ransomed of the Lord?

3. Are you free to righteousness? are you not under the power of the conqueror? How is it then that you have no power to resist a temptation, that Satan can so easily carry you the way you know to be wrong, over the belly of reason and conscience? Nay, are not your lusts upon you like fetters, that you cannot move away from carnal things God-ward?

4. Are you not quickly spoiled of any beginnings of good which you sometimes meet with? You hear the word, but do not the fowls pick it away from you? Have not all your convictions and resolutions gone off by degrees like a morning cloud? How quickly has all the noise within your

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breaſt been huſhed, and you as much again in love with your luſts as ever!

Admit the conviction, then, for they who never ſaw themſelves Satan's captives are never yet made Chriſt's free-men, John, viii. 32. 33. 44. 45. What think you, is the work of grace carried on in the ſoul as a morning-dream? Are the devil's captives brought away, and never know that they were his captives? What way can a ſoul embrace the proclaimed liberty to the captives, who never ſaw itſelf in this condition?—Conſider, that this will be the firſt ſtep to your liberty. The goſpel is ſent "to open your eyes, and to turn you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that you may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in Chriſt," Acts, xxvi. 18. Chriſt's Spirit begins his work with conviction of ſin and miſery. He makes the captives to ſee where they are, whoſe they are, and what is their caſe. This rouſes them out of their lethargy, makes them prize this liberty; it makes them glad to come away with their deliverer: "O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help."—This ſubject may be improved,

Secondly, In an uſe of exhortation.

O captive exiles! haſten to be looſed, that you may not die in the pit, and that your bread may not fail, Iſa. li. 14. Stir up yourſelves to regain your liberty, and remain no longer at eaſe in your captive condition.—Conſider,

1. That a ſhort time's continuance in this ſtate will put you beyond a poſſibility of liberty: Eccl. ix. 10. "Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom, in the grave, whither thou goeſt." Thy life is uncertain, and if

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if death carry thee off in this condition, thou wilt be carried to the lower priſon, and then farewell liberty for ever and ever: Luke, xiii. 24. 25 "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto you, I know you not, whence ye are." The ſervant under the law, who, though he refuſed his liberty at the end of ſix years, yet received it in the year of jubilee. But whoſo in this life refuſe to come away from Satan's ſervice, ſhall never ſee a time after for it. And when thou art cloſed up in the net, it muſt be without remedy; it will be no comfort to think that you did not imagine it would have come to this.—Conſider,

2. That now is the time of liberty: 2 Cor. vi. 2. "Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of ſalvation!" Chriſt has paid a ranſom for Satan's captives, and the liberty is proclaimed in the goſpel. Strike in with the ſeaſon of grace, and come away with the Deliverer upon the gracious proclamation. Hear what Chriſt is ſaying to you, Song, ii. 10. "Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

THE

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

SERMON LIII.

ISA. lxi. 1.—*To proclaim liberty to the captives.*

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſe, ſpoke to the firſt of the doctrines which we took from this part of the ſubject, we go on to

DOCT. II. That Jeſus Chriſt, with the expreſs conſent of his Father, has iſſued out his royal proclamation of liberty to Satan's captives: *He hath ſent me to proclaim liberty to the captives.*

IN illuſtrating this doctrine, we ſhall,

I. Shew what this proclamation is.

II. Explain what liberty is proclaimed in the goſpel to Satan's captives.

III. Mention ſome of the circumſtances attending this proclamation. And then,

IV. Subjoin the improvement of the ſubject.

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WE are,

I. To shew what this proclamation is. This royal proclamation issued out by Jesus Christ, is the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation. The gospel is the proclamation of the King of heaven to poor sinners, in which he proclaims liberty to all the captives of Satan, to whom it comes. The law lays the heavy yoke of the curse upon sinners, the gospel brings the offer of liberty.—Here we observe,

1. That it is a jubilee-proclamation. You have the law of jubilee, which was every fiftieth year, when seven times seven were over: Lev. xxv. 10. "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man into his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." It was proclaimed by sound of trumpet, on the day of atonement, ver. 9. then all the poor slaves got their liberty, whether their masters were willing to part with them or not; and all those who had been obliged to mortgage or sell their lands returned to the possession of them again. And so it was a proclamation which made many a heart glad. Now, the gospel is such a proclamation, and the time of it is a year of jubilee. Jesus came, Isa. lxi. 2. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn;" compare 2 Cor. vi. 2. "Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of salvation!" O! good news, sinners, there was a day of atonement on the cross, and now the trumpet of the gospel soundeth, and there is a proclamation, bearing that Satan's captives may now have their liberty, tho' their master be not willing to part with them; that

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that the mortgaged inheritance of heaven and God's favour, though forfeited, may be poſſeſſed; poor criminals and bankrupts may return to them again.

2. It is a conqueror's proclamation to captives. The king of Babylon took the Jews captive, and held them ſeventy years in captivity; but God raiſed up Cyrus, Iſa. xlv. 1.—4. and he overturned the Babylonian empire; the deſtruction of that kingdom was the deliverance of the Jews, for he proclaimed liberty to them to return to their own land. This alſo was a type of the goſpel-proclamation. Satan warred againſt mankind, he carried them all captive into his own kingdom; and there was none to deliver out of his hand. But King Jeſus has engaged him, routed all his forces, overturned his kingdom, and taken the kingdom to himſelf: Col. ii. 15. "And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." 1 John, iii. 8. "For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil." And now being ſettled on his throne, his royal proclamation is iſſued out, that Satan's captives may again return into the kingdom of God.

We ſhall now,

II. Explain what liberty is proclaimed in the goſpel to Sátan's captives.

This is the great ſubject of the proclamation; and that you may ſee the riches of this proclamation, *know* that Chriſt by the goſpel proclaims to every poor ſinner to whom it comes,

1. Liberty from the power and ſlavery of Satan: Acts, xxvi. 18. "He turns them from the power of Satan unto God." Every one who is willing

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willing to quit their old maſter the devil, may come away without his leave. You are welcome to Jeſus the conqueror, and the conquered tyrant ſhall not have power to keep you. Now, "the Spirit and the bride ſay unto you, Come; and let him that heareth ſay, Come; and let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. He is a ſtrong one, but there is a ſtronger one than he, who will break his yoke from off your necks, make his iron fetters to give way, like ropes which are burnt with fire. And though, as long as you are here, he will be moleſting you, yet he ſhall never, never gain his former power over you, and you ſhall at length be completely freed from the leaſt moleſtation by him: "The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly," Rom. xvi. 20.—He proclaims,

2. Liberty from the law as a covenant of works: Rom. vi. 14. "You are not under the law, but under grace." Satan's captives are under the law as a covenant of works, and it lays a heavy yoke upon them, namely, perfect obedience, under the pain of the curſe, Gal. iii. 10. "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe, for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." This curſe they carried away with them when they went into captivity, and it abides on them always, till they be looſed from it. Now, Chriſt proclaims liberty from this curſe, offers to bring ſinners from under the dominion of the law, to be under grace, where there is no more curſe: Gal. iii. 13. "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law." Here they are provided with a righteouſneſs imputed to them, and not ſet to ſeek it by their own works; where,

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in caſe of ſinning, the utmoſt penalty is fatherly chaſtiſement, Pſal. lxxxix. 30.—33. Thus he offers to take off the law's yoke, to ſet you without the reach of its curſe, and to lay on his own yoke, which is eaſy, Matth. xi. 29.—Jeſus proclaims,

3. Liberty from the dominion and bondage of ſin: Rom. vi. 14. "Sin ſhall not have dominion over you." Satan's captives are all the drudges of ſin. It does not only dwell in them, as it does in the beſt, but it reigns over them, fills their hearts and hands continually with its work, ſo that they can do nothing elſe but ſin: Pſal. xiv. 3. "There is none that doeth good, no not one." It lays its commands on them, which are a law which they cannot diſpute, but muſt obey; it has its ſeveral luſts in the heart, which are chains to them as its captives, the handles by which it holds them, and drags them after it. Now, Chriſt proclaims liberty from this, and his Spirit effects it: Rom. viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, makes them free from the law of ſin and death." He will break ſin's dominion, looſe the chains of unmortified luſts, and ſet the priſoners free: John, viii. 32. "Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free." And though ſin may dwell for a ſeaſon, as an unclean, unwelcome gueſt, he will at length extirpate it wholly. He proclaims,

4. Liberty from the ruining influence of this preſent evil world: Gal. i. 4. "Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." This world has a ruining influence on Satan's captives. The things of this world work their deſtruction, the ſmiles of it are killing: Prov. i. 32. "The proſperity of fools ſhall

ſhall deſtroy them;" their bleſſings are turned to curſes; the frowns of it are ensnaring and deſtructive. The god of this world mixes every cup with poiſon. The men of this world are ruining one another; and therefore it is ſaid, "Save yourſelves from this untoward generation," Acts ii. 40. There is a plague in Satan's family, and each member ſerves to infect another, to convey ſin and death to his fellow. But Jeſus proclaims liberty from this peſt-houſe; you may be drawn out of it, Jeſus will pluck you as a brand out of the fire; why ſtay in it, while he proclaims liberty to you from it?—Jeſus proclaims,

5. Liberty from the fear, the terror of death and hell: Heb. ii. 15. "He delivers them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime ſubject to bondage." Satan's captives may for a time be ſecure, fearing nothing; but as ſoon as their conſcience awakens, they will be filled with horror, as perceiving the approach of death and hell towards them; they can have no comfortable view of another life. Chriſt proclaims liberty from this; if you will come to him, conſcience ſhall be pacified with the ſprinkling of his blood, ye ſhall be ſet beyond the poſſibility of periſhing; he will be to you an Almighty Saviour. —He proclaims,

6. Liberty from the ſting of death and the evil of afflictions. Though Chriſt, in his gracious proclamation, does not promiſe that ſuch as obey his will in it ſhall never be afflicted; yet he promiſes that afflictions ſhall be ſo far from doing them hurt, that they ſhall do them good: Rom. viii. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe:" That though they die, death ſhall be to them unſtinged,

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John, viii. 51. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." So that they may meet it with that triumphant song, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" It shall not be to them what it is to Satan's captives; the serpent's sting, with which it kills the serpent's seed, shall be taken away ere it comes near them. —Jesus proclaims,

7. Liberty from the power of the grave: 1 Cor. xv. 55. quoted above. Ver. 57. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Satan's captives are laid up in their graves as in prisons; and when they come out of them at the resurrection, death and the power of the grave will be still hanging about them; so that they shall but change one grave for a worse, namely, for the lake of fire. But Christ's ransomed ones, who come away on his proclamation of liberty, though they go to the grave, yet the power of it over them shall be broken, death shall have no more power over them for ever.— He proclaims,

8. Liberty from condemnation: Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." All Satan's captives are condemned malefactors: John, iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." And the sentence shall be solemnly pronounced against them at the great day; and so they shall be led away "into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matth. xxv. This is terrible; but Christ proclaims liberty from it. So soon as thou embracest the offered liberty, the guilt of eternal wrath shall be done away, thou shalt be beyond the reach of condemnation; your standing on the right hand is secured, and the sentence

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tence of solemn absolution shall follow.—He proclaims,

9. Liberty of free access to God, with holy boldness: Rom. v. 1. 2. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now, the captive exiles are banished from the presence of God; they can have no access to him, nor communion with him. But our Lord, by his death, has opened the two-leaved gates of his Father's house, and gives free liberty, by open proclamation, to Satan's captives, leaving their master to come in. They have access by one Spirit to the Father.—Jesus proclaims,

Lastly, Liberty, that is, freedom of spirit in the service of God: 2 Cor. iii. 17. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Spirit of Christ is called a free spirit, because he makes free. Satan's captives may yield some obedience to God, but it is burdensome, because they act therein as slaves, from a slavish fear of hell and wrath. But Christ's free men act from a nobler principle, love: Rom. viii. 15. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father:"—1 John, iv. 18. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love."—We now proceed,

III. To mention some of the circumstances attending this proclamation.—Here we observe,

1. That the law on which it is founded was the eternal agreement of the glorious Trinity for man's redemption. The eternal law of love and good-will to poor sinners, by which it was provided,

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that upon the Son of God's laying down his life a ranſom for an elect world, they ſhould be delivered from the captivity of ſin and Satan, and be made God's freemen; which the eternal Son engaged to do. Accordingly, in the fulneſs of time he did it, and thereby purchaſed their liberty.—We obſerve,

2. That the proclamation was drawn up, and is recorded in the Bible, by the Holy Spirit: Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." And what is the whole Bible but a declaration of this liberty, with promiſes to thoſe who accept of, and threatenings to thoſe who refuſe it. The truth and reality of this declaration is ſealed by the blood of Chriſt: "This," ſaid he, "is the New Teſtament in my blood." So that there is not the leaſt ground to doubt its truth.—We obſerve,

3. That this proclamation is iſſued out by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with the conſent of his Father and the Spirit. The Father has ſent him to proclaim liberty to the captives. The Spirit ſays, Come. A whole Trinity invites Satan's captives to liberty. They have no will that the captive exile ſhould die in the pit: Ezek. xviii. 23. "Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God; and not that he ſhould return from his ways, and live?"—We obſerve,

4. That this proclamation is directed to men, to the ſons of men: Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men." Not to fallen angels, they are excluded from the benefit of the purchaſed liberty. But the captives in the land of the living, theſe priſoners of hope, to them is the proclamation directed, without exception

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ception of great, yea, even the greateſt of ſinners: Rev. xxii. 17. "Whoſoever will, may take of the water of life freely."—Iſa. i. 18. "Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool." Such are invited, though they have often refuſed their liberty, and though they have gone back into their captivity.——We obſerve,

5. That the firſt crier of this proclamation was the Son of God in his own perſon. He made this proclamation firſt in paradiſe: Gen. iii. 15. "The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent." Afterwards he took on him man's nature: Then came and proclaimed it: Heb. ii. 3. "The goſpel at the firſt began to be ſpoken unto us by the Lord." And he ſealed it with his moſt precious blood, though there were but few who came away upon the proclamation made by him: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" is the complaint of the prophet Iſaiah.—We obſerve,

6. That, being aſcended into heaven, he has appointed criers in his name, the miniſters of the goſpel, to publiſh this proclamation, and to invite ſinners to accept of this liberty: 2 Cor. v. 20. "Now then, we are embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you, in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled unto God." This is our work, to proclaim it unto you, to make you ſenſible that liberty is purchaſed, and offered unto you. We are the voice of the great crier; Chriſt cries to you by us.—We obſerve,

Laſtly, That the place where the proclamation is ordered to be made is in this world: Mark, xvi. 15. "Go ye," ſaid Jeſus to his diſciples, "into

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all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." As for those who are gone into the other world, the proclamation can reach them no more; the prisoners there are without hope. But while you are in this world, the proclamation is to you, and particularly when in those public assemblies, where the Lord's people are gathered together to hear it: Prov. i. 20. 21. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the city she uttereth her words."——It only remains,

IV. That we make some improvement of the subject. This shall be confined to an use of exhortation.

We would exhort you, O captives of Satan! to comply with the design of this proclamation of liberty; we beseech you, receive not this grace of God in vain.—To be more particular, we exhort you,

1. To be convinced of your state of captivity, deceive not yourselves with thoughts of liberty, while you are really serving divers lusts. Till you see your captive state, what hope can there be of good to be obtained by the proclamation of liberty?—We exhort you,

2. To be willing to come away and forsake your old master and his service. Ah! may not the time past suffice to have done the will of the flesh? 1 Pet. iv. 3. You have been long under this captivity; had the youngest of you been as long a slave to any man as you have been to Satan, you would have been weary of your situation long ere now. O! strive that your spirits may be raised towards your being free, and walk no more contentedly in your chains of divers lusts. You will say, you

you are not able to come away; but if you were willing, you would not be allowed to remain in your captive ſtate.—We exhort you,

3. To be affected at the heart with the news of the proclamation of liberty. Do not hear it unconcernedly, but hear as thoſe who are nearly concerned in the matter. Take a view of the wretched ſtate you are in, and wonder that there is yet hope. How glad were the Iſraelites in Egypt and Babylon of the notice they had of their liberty! Thy captivity is a thouſand times worſe, and thy heart ſhould leap within thee at the voice of the deliverer.—We exhort you,

Laſtly, To accept of the proclaimed liberty, and come away with the deliverer. Give up with your old maſter, lay by his work, bid farewell to his kingdom, as never to remain more in it. Shake off your fetters reſolutely, and embrace cordially the offered liberty of the ſons of God.—To prevail with you in doing this, we preſent you with the following MOTIVES.

Mot. 1. Conſider that the captivity you are in is a moſt miſerable bondage and ſlavery; Egyptian, Babyloniſh, and Turkiſh ſlavery and captivity, all in one, are not ſufficient to repreſent it. And this will appear, if you conſider,

(1.) That the maſter is the devil. While thou art in thy natural ſtate, thou art the devil's captive and bond-ſervant, 2 Tim. ii. 26. and that by a threefold title,—as taken in war, 2 Pet. ii. 19.—as bought by him at a low rate, "ye ſold yourſelves for nought," Iſa. lii. 3. and—as born in his houſe, Matth. xxiii. 15. Therefore ye are called to forget that houſe, Pſal. xlv. 10. and to come out of his family, and 'touch not the unclean thing, 2 Cor. vi. 17. How wretched muſt that bondage be where the devil is maſter! Sure he is a cruel and

and mercileſs maſter, who will take pleaſure in thy miſeries. Do we eſteem the caſe of thoſe wretches ſo horrible, who, by expreſs compact, are become his? and will we yet contentedly continue in bondage to the ſame maſter?—Conſider,

(2.) That the work is ſin, called the works of darkneſs, Rom. xiii. 12. None of his captives are ſuffered to be idle, he puts a taſk in their hands, which they muſt fulfil. One of two things they are always doing, while out of Chriſt;—either weaving the ſpider's web, working that which will not profit at the latter end, more than ſuch a web will be a garment; or—hatching the cockatrice-egg, doing miſchief and wickedneſs, that will recoil upon you, to your own deſtruction. This dunghill-work Satan employs his captives in, is moſt unbecoming the heaven-born ſoul.——Conſider,

(3.) That the proviſion and entertainment, is bad and unſatisfying: Iſa. lv. 2. "Wherefore do you ſpend money for that which is not bread; and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?" The beſt of this ſort, which the natural man has, is to eat duſt with the ſerpent, to ſuck the breaſt of filthy luſts, which, though it may feaſt one's corruptions, poiſons the ſoul; or to eat huſks with the ſwine, Luke, xv. 16. to feed on the empty things of the world, which can afford no nouriſhment. Thus, while you aſk from him bread, he gives you a ſtone; while you aſk a fiſh, he gives you a ſcorpion.—Conſider,

(4.) That the wages of this work is death: Rom. vi. 23. "For the wages of ſin is death." Preſent death, ſpiritual, in the ſeparation of their ſouls from God, for from every natural man God is departed, whether he knows it or not. Death temporal, to come, armed with its ſting, and provided with

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with the envenomed arrows of the curſe. And death eternal in hell, where they ſhall be ever dying, but never ſhall die. O! ſhall not the conſideration of theſe things move you to accept of liberty, and come away from ſuch a maſter, ſuch work, ſuch proviſions, and ſuch wages?

Mot. 2. The liberty proclaimed is moſt excellent and glorious liberty, Rom. viii. 21.; the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; which may create the moſt ſurpaſſing joy in the world. The glory and excellency of it will appear, if we conſider,

(1.) The purchaſer of it is Chriſt the King of glory. He it is by whom we have the goſpel-jubilee proclaimed in the text. He is the victorious Monarch, who has overcome Satan, and gives liberty to his captives. He is our near kinſman, who has redeemed us by payment of a price, a coſtly price, even his own precious blood. It was the honour of the Jews, that they had their liberty by Cyrus; but how much more honourable is it, to have liberty by Chriſt! And when ſuch an one has purchaſed for us liberty, will not you accept it?—Conſider,

(2.) The ranſom paid for it: 1 Peter, i. 18. 19. "Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot." Never was ſuch a ranſom paid for the greateſt captive king among men, as for us wretched ſinners; even the blood of God. He compaſſionated the caſe of the poor captives, laid by the robes of his glory, put his neck under the yoke of the law, endured the wrath of God, the ſting of death, and the rage of hell, and all to purchaſe this liberty for us.—Conſider,

(3.) The

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(3.) The party to whom it was paid, to God, even his own Father: Ephes. v. 2. "He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour." Satan is but the jailor and executioner, into whose hands men fell, being condemned by the Judge, to whom alone the ransom was due. Hence, in respect of Satan, his captives are said to be redeemed without money, Is. lii. 3. They are to be set at liberty by main force, being violently wrested out of his hand, Isa. xlix. 25 —Consider,

(4.) The glorious privileges attending this liberty. It is not a naked freedom, which yet would be valuable, but pregnant with many precious privileges. I have told you already, that it is a liberty from the power of Satan, from the law as a covenant, &c. But besides these, many positive blessings and privileges attend it; such as, the freed captives are made free men of the New Jerusalem, they are made citizens of heaven on earth, and are burgesses there: Ephes. ii. 19. "They are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They are incorporated with the society of saints and angels, of whom Christ is the head. They who had their lot before in the kingdom of darkness, their lot then falls in these pleasant places.—The freed captives are made children of the family of heaven: 2 Cor. vi. 18. "And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." So it is the liberty of the sons of God. For God makes all the freed slaves, sons of his house; and whatever children may expect from a father, able and willing to do for them, this they may expect from God.—The freed captives are all made first-born: Heb. xii. 23. "The general assembly and church of

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of the first-born, which are written in heaven." This excellence of dignity and power is put upon them, they are thus highly advanced. As it was with Joseph, he not only got his liberty, but was made lord over Egypt, where he had been a slave: so the freed captive is made king: Rev. i. 6. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." This is accomplished in them all, Isa. xiv. 2. "They shall rule over their oppressors." They get mastery over their lusts, and shall at last triumph over Satan, Rom. xvi. 20. They shall sit and judge him, 1 Cor. vi. 3. They are made priests also, to offer up sacrifices of praise to God, Rom. xii. 1. O what a change of their work! They are all heirs of God, and receive the double portion. There is not any thing which such an one gets, but it is twice as much and good as that which a captive of Satan has. The blessing is the best half; this the captives of Satan want.—*Lastly*, When their minority is over, they shall have a perfect liberty, with the affluence of all things, to an entire completing of their happiness, Rom. viii. 21. O the glorious day abiding Christ's free men! Now they have got the word, Roll away the stone, Lazarus come forth: but then this will be added, Loose him and let him go. The great day will begin their eternal jubilee; when death the last enemy shall be destroyed, then shall soul and body return to the full possession of the mortgaged inheritance, and the perfect freedom from their captivity.—Consider,

(5.) The unchangeableness of this liberty. When once a captive is freed by Christ, all the power and policy of hell cannot bring him back again into bondage: John, x. 28. "And I will give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish;

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periſh; neither ſhall any one pluck them out of my hand." See how Paul boaſts of this, Rom. viii. 38. 39. It is true, were there none to preſerve this liberty but the believer himſelf, it might be loſt; but it is infallibly guarded againſt the gates of hell, by the unalterable decree of God, 2 Tim. ii. 19.; by his unchangeable love and covenant; by the continual indwelling of the Spirit, and the prevalent interceſſion of Chriſt.

Laſtly, Conſider the eternity of this liberty. Death does not put a cloſe to this liberty, but rather gives a new beginning to it; it ſhall continue for ever, they ſhall live for ever and ever in the enjoyment of it.

Thus life and death are ſet before you, will you accept this liberty or not? May I not ſay, "How ſhall ye eſcape, if ye neglect ſo great ſalvation?" Heb. ii. 3.—Conſider,

1. That it is moſt unreaſonable to refuſe it, to remain in captivity after the proclamation of liberty is iſſued. Would men but make their reaſon judge betwixt Chriſt and them, there would be no fear of the cauſe, Joſh. xxiv. 15. Who would refuſe their liberty, if they might be made free? liberty from ſuch a maſter and ſuch work, &c.; liberty purchaſed from ſuch a glorious perſon, by the glorious King, at ſuch a ranſom, &c. Conſult your reaſon, your intereſt, and will you prefer the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, to the eternal rivers of pleaſures at God's right hand?—Conſider,

2. That every refuſal makes your captivity the more firm and hopeleſs. Satan bores the ear of ſinners anew to his door-poſt on every refuſal. Hence none ſo hard to win, as thoſe who have refuſed many goſpel-calls. Tyre and Sidon would be much eaſier wrought upon, than Chorazin and Bethſaida,

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Bethſaida, Matth. xi. 21. Ezek. iii. 7.; wild Americans, than Scotſmen. For when the goſpel does not ſoften the heart, it is hardened under it. —Conſider,

3. That by refuſing this liberty, you become the murderers of your own ſouls: Prov. viii. 39 "He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate me, love death." Hear, ſinners, how our Lord expoſtulates with you on this point, Ezek. xviii. 31. 32. "Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael? For I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God: Wherefore turn yourſelves, and live ye." You have the poiſonous cup of your ſins at your head, will ye drink it? ye ſay, ye cannot help it, ye muſt drink it off: Our Lord ſays, Throw it away, it will be your death if you do not. Come to me, and I will free you from this miſerable bondage to Satan and your luſts, ſo that they ſhall not have that power over you which they have had. Well, if you will not comply, you are murderers of your own ſoul with a witneſs, as really as if ye did wilfully drink up a cup of poiſon, or ſtabbed yourſelves with a ſword.—Conſider,

4. That if you refuſe, you make the Deliverer your enemy, and ſhall not eſcape, Heb. ii. 3. The Deliverer will turn your deſtroyer, for neglecting his ſalvation. The Lamb of God will be as a lion to you, for ſlighting his offers of grace. They who know not God, and who obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. 9. As the ſoureſt vinegar is made of the beſt

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wine, ſo the fierceſt wrath ariſes from ſlighting the greateſt grace, Prov. i. 24.—31.—Conſider,

5. That ye know not how ſoon ye may be beyond the reach of the proclamation of liberty, Luke, xiii. 24. 25. The voice of it is not heard on the other ſide of death, to which we are faſt making way. Do you not ſee, as in Pſal. xc. 9. that "we ſpend our days as a tale that is told?" A new-year's day, and other days adjoining to it, are very ill choſen for revelling, jollity, and carnal mirth; they ſuit it nearly as ill, as does the pretended day of Chriſt's birth, commonly called Yule-day. Alas! they will give themſelves the looſe run in theſe things, becauſe they are now a year nearer the grave and eternity than they were; becauſe they are entered on a new year, the end of which it may be they ſhall never ſee. If people will make a difference between ſuch days and others, it would be moſt ſuitable in theſe days, to take a ſolemn ſerious view of eternity, and to be making preparations for that day, which will put an end to their years. However, let this time put you in mind of death's approach, and refuſe not the offer of grace, which you will have no more, when once death has carried you off the ſtage *.—Conſider,

Laſtly, That your judgement will be more grievous than that of thoſe who never heard the goſpel, if you do not come away upon the proclamation: Matth. xi. 22. "But I ſay unto you, It ſhall more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgement, than for you." Remember double ſtripes are for him who knew his maſter's will, and did it not; and the hotteſt place in hell

* It would appear, that this diſcourſe was delivered the firſt day, or at leaſt the firſt Sabbath of a new year.

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hell will be for gospel-despisers. Men may have their lusts and sinful courses cheaper in the dark corner of the earth, than in a land of light.

We conclude with the following advices.—Labour to get a just esteem of your souls, and a due sense of what concerns another life. The soul is the man, as being the best part of the man, the loss of which nothing can ever counterbalance: Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The other life is the life chiefly to be cared for, since that only is the life which will have no end; and a man is happy or unhappy, as his plan for that life is well or ill laid.—Be sensible of the real drudgery of sin. It is as real a servitude as ever was in the world, while men serve divers lusts. This is clear from the very light of nature: the consideration of the noble nature of the soul, with the experience of the tyranny of unruly passions, made some heathen moralists to lay it down as a principle, That a wise man is a free man.—Wherefore, believe that a holy life is the only true liberty: Psal. cxix. 44. 45. "So shall I keep thy law continually, for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts." He, then, who has the mastery over his own corrupt will and inclinations, who walks in the way of God's commandments, is a person the most free and easy.—*Lastly*, Come to Christ for his redeeming blood and free Spirit. Renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. Receive and improve Jesus as made of God unto you, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Amen.

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JESUS OPENS THE PRISON-DOORS TO THE PRISONERS.

SERMON LIV.

ISA. lxi. 1.—*And the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

HERE is another benefit which, in the gospel, is brought by Christ to sinners who are in their natural state, namely, a proclamation as to opening the prison to the prisoners. In this there are two things.

1. The misery of a natural state, which is here laid out in its full extent, in three particulars. You have heard that unconverted sinners are Satan's captives; this is a sad case, but it is yet worse; for,

(1.) They are also prisoners. Every captive is not a prisoner, but all natural men, being Satan's captives, are held prisoners, shut up in the prison of their natural state. This is Satan's prison, crammed full of his prisoners of war. But this is not all; for,

(2.) They are prisoners in chains, they are bound in

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in the prison. Satan has his irons on them, as malefactors under sentence of death, that they may not escape. This is still worse than being a prisoner. But worse than all this is here stated; for,

(3.) They are blinded too in their prison. For the word rendered opening, does particularly relate to the opening the eyes; and therefore the prophet uses it to express the relieving of such prisoners perfectly. This is evident by comparing Luke, iv. 18. "And recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them who are bruised." It was a custom much used in the eastern nations, and retained among the Turks to this day, to put out the eyes of some of their prisoners, adding this misery to their imprisonment. So the Philistines did with Samson, Judges, xvi. 21.; and Nebuchadnezzar with Zedekiah, 2 Kings, xxv. 7. This, in a spiritual sense, is the case of all prisoners in their natural state. To sum up all, O unconverted sinner! thou art Satan's captive, a captive in prison, and a prisoner in chains; and withal thine eyes are put out, thou art in darkness, even darkness itself.—In the words there is,

2. A suitable remedy, full help proclaimed by Christ in the gospel. God has seen the misery of the prisoners, his Son has paid the ransom for them, and thereupon he is sent to proclaim the opening of the prison-doors to them, opening every way to them; for this expression comprehends the affording full remedy to their case; namely, opening their prison,—opening their chains,—and opening their eyes. By his word he offers it, by his Spirit he effects it, in all his elect.—From this subject we propose to your consideration the following DOCTRINES:

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DOCT. I. That every unconverted ſinner is a bound man in the priſon of a natural ſtate, with his eyes put out.

DOCT. II. That by open proclamation in the goſpel, Chriſt offers to the priſoners in a natural ſtate, an opening of their eyes, of their bands, and of their priſon-doors.

WE begin with

DOCT. I. That every unconverted ſinner is a bound man in the priſon of a natural ſtate, with his eyes put out.

FOR illuſtrating this doctrine, we ſhall,

I. Speak of the impriſonment in which guilty ſinners are.

II. Mention the bands, chains, and fetters wherewith they are bound in the priſon of a natural ſtate.

III. Point out the darkneſs and blindneſs of the priſoners in their natural ſtate.

I. We are to conſider the impriſonment in which unconverted ſinners are.

This priſon is the natural unconverted ſtate; and thus that word, 1 Pet. iii. 19. "By which alſo he went and preached to the ſpirits in priſon," is by ſome underſtood. However, it is plain that this is meant in our text. Thus Peter ſaid to Simon the ſorcerer: Acts, viii. 23. "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity." Thus ſinners in their natural ſtate, are ſaid to be all concluded under ſin, and ſhut up under the law, Gal. iii. 22. 23. Concluded or ſhut up, that is, declared to be ſo. Let us conſider, then, the natural ſtate as a ſtate of impriſonment.

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imprisonment. Here we shall answer the three following QUESTIONS:

1. Whose prisoners are they?

2. What are the causes of this imprisonment? —And,

3. In what condition are natural men, as prisoners in this their natural state?——We begin with,

Quest. 1. Whose prisoners are they?

(1.) Unconverted sinners are God's prisoners, as the great Judge and party whom they have offended: Rom. xi. 32. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief." There are two things in a natural state.—The sinfulness of it; they can do nothing but sin. Move they cannot without that circle, more than a prisoner out of his prison. —The misery of it. They are under the curse: Gal. iii. 10. This last, God, as a just Judge, inflicted on mankind for the breach of the covenant of works; and while this lies upon them, there can be no communion betwixt God and them, and consequently nothing but sin in them; and so they are all concluded under sin.

(2.) They are Satan's prisoners. He acts as the jailor, and is therefore said to have the power of death, Heb. ii. 14. Man, having freely yielded to Satan, and become his captive, was delivered up into his hand by the Judge. They are under the power of Satan, Acts, xxvi. 18. He keeps the keys of this prison, and watchfully marks his prisoners, that none of them escape. Nay, when the commandment is come, to deliver the elect out of his hand, he will not yield them up, till the prison-doors be broke open, and they are forcibly taken out of his hand.

Quest. 2. What are the causes of this imprisonment?

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ſonment?—As to this we obſerve, that they are in priſon,

(1.) As debtors to divine juſtice. Sin is a debt, and the worſt of all debts; committing ſin is contracting a debt, which ſinners are unable to pay. But it muſt be paid; a ſatisfaction muſt be made to juſtice to the utmoſt farthing. As to natural men, their debt is not forgiven. All their accounts ſtand uncancelled. They have as yet no ſhare in the Cautioner's payment. Therefore they are kept in this priſon juſtly for their debt, and they cannot eſcape. They were laid up there for our father Adam's debt. This debt brought all mankind into the priſon, Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned." The covenant being broken, we became liable to pay the penalty, and, being unable to relieve ourſelves, were ſhut up in priſon under the wrath and curſe of God. They are alſo arreſted there for their own debt, contracted in their own perſons. Every ſinful thought, word, or action, is a new item in our accounts. And at the inſtance of every broken commandment, the law arreſts the natural man in the priſon, clapping its curſe upon the ſinner; ſo that the longer one remains in their natural ſtate, there is always the leſs hope of their delivery. Nay, their delivery is impoſſible, till the Cautioner looſe all the arreſts, by paying the whole debt.

(2.) They are in priſon as malefactors condemned in law: John, iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already. There is a ſentence of death paſſed upon all men in a natural ſtate, they are condemned to die eternally; and therefore are committed to the jailor, to keep them in the priſon

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prison to the day of execution, which they know not how soon it may be appointed, how soon death may lead out the prisoner to have the sentence fully executed upon him.—I go on to,

Quest. 3. In what condition are natural men as prisoners in this their natural state?—Their condition is most dismal; for,

(1.) They are under the wrath of God, as the malefactor put in prison is under the wrath of his judge. Hence it is said, Eph. ii. 3. "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." A natural state is a state of wrath. God bears a legal enmity against thee as long as thou art out of Christ. There is a black cloud of wrath which always hovers over the head of the natural man, and never will scatter till he be a new creature. God is ever angry, never pleased with him: Psal. vii. 11. "God is angry with the wicked every day."—His person is not acceptable to God: Psal. v. 5. "The foolish shall not stand in his sight, and he hateth all the workers of iniquity." Nor are his performances acceptable to God, Isa. lxvi. 3. God will have no communion nor fellowship with him: Amos, iii. 3. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" There is wrath in his word, his looks, and dispensations towards him.

(2.) They are both under the dominion of the law, and also under the the lash of it: Gal. iii. 10. "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." It has him as fast in its hands as ever a prisoner was. It has him by the neck, saying, Pay what thou owest; and will never quit the hold through the ages of eternity, unless he get the Surety that is able to take it off his

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his hand. Its demands are high, quite above his reach; perfect satisfaction for what is past; perfect obedience for what is to come. It is a merciless creditor, and will abate thee nothing. As long as thou art in its power, (and that is as long as thou art in this prison), thou must lay thy account with the payment of the utmost farthing. What though the sentence is not speedily executed? a reprieve is no pardon, Deut. xxxii. 35.

(3.) They are under the power of Satan, as the keeper of the prison, Acts, xxvi. 18. He has a commanding and a restraining power over them, 2 Tim. ii. 26. "They are in the snare of the devil, and taken captive by him at his will." They cannot move out without the bounds of his jurisdiction, more than the prisoner out of the dungeon. It is true, Satan keeps not all alike close, some have the liberty of the form of godliness, on account of which they reckon themselves secure as to the goodness of their state, and by this delusion they are held the faster in his hands.

(4.) They are in a most uncomfortable condition. If a person was in a palace as a prison, it would be uncomfortable; far more in this case, the pit wherein is no water has nothing to refresh the soul, Zech. ix. 11. It is true, most natural men are stupid, they consider it not; they are blind, and they see not the shadow of death about them. But when once their eyes are opened, there is no more rest for them there; they cry, "What shall we do to be saved?" They see the filthy prison-garments of unmortified, unpardoned sins about them, which they can no longer wear at ease. The scanty allowance of the prisoner's diet, unblessed mercies, which can serve for nothing but to keep in the wretched life till the day of execution.

(5.) They

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(5.) They have no security for a moment's safety; but if their eyes were opened, they would see themselves every moment in hazard of dropping into the pit of hell; see the natural man's case, Psal. vii. 11.—16. He is ever standing before God's bent bow, and has nothing to secure him for a moment from the drawing of it. He is condemned already, and the sentence is past; no day known for the execution, uncertain but every day the dead-warrant may be given out against him, and he led forth to execution. What can he see to put it off, but long abused patience which will wear out at length?

(6.) They are so secured, that they can never get away without satisfaction for their debts and crimes. There is no breaking this prison. Sooner may bars of iron and gates of brass be got over, than a prisoner can get out of the state of wrath without satisfying the demands of the law. And therefore the sinner will die in this prison, if he come not to Christ. There is no getting out of this pit but by the blood of the covenant.

For the improvement of this part of the subject,—O! Sirs, be concerned to look to the state of sin in this glass, and be ye duly affected with it, as the matter requires. Consider, sinner, where you are, and in what condition.—Is the state of sin a prison-state? Then who are the men that walk at liberty? Is it not these whose consciences are purged by faith in Christ, whose guilt is removed, who walk after the Spirit, and lead a holy, heavenly, circumspect life? Or is it those who, scorning to be bound up to the rules of a holy walk, can stretch their consciences at their pleasure, and take to themselves a sinful liberty, which others dare not for their souls, who can laugh at those things for which others mourn, and follow their lusts

lusts to the ruin of their souls? Truly no. All that sinful liberty which those do take, and all the pleasures which they have in it, is but the rattling of the chains of the devil's prisoners, while they go up and down in their prison.—Is the state of sin a state in which ye can quietly sleep another night? It is a Sodom on which fire and brimstone will come down. Haste ye, and escape for your life. Ah! sinner, canst thou be at ease in a state of wrath? The world, it may be, smiles upon thee; it may be that it frowns; but what of either of these, while God is angry with thee every day? Thou hast perhaps something for many years for thy body, it may be nothing; but what security hast thou for thy soul, when death shall call thee hence, thou knowest not how soon? —Is the work of conversion to God a slight business, about which persons are under small necessity to trouble their heads? Surely it is a most weighty business, which, if it be not done, there is nothing at all done for eternity. Let men in an unconverted state put on what appearances of religion they will, perform what duties they will, they are but dead works, wrought in Satan's prison, and leave the worker in a state of death. Turn, turn ye, then, from your sins unto God, cry for regenerating sanctifying grace, rest not till you get it.—Will you not eagerly embrace the offer made you in the proclamation of opening the prison to these that are bound? Christ is come to your prison-door, offering by his blood and Spirit to set you free. Are you willing to come away? or are you so in love with your prison as not to care for deliverance.—We are,

II. To mention the bands, chains, and fetters, with

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with which unconverted ſinners are bound in the priſon of a natural ſtate. Theſe are twofold, God's and Satan's.—There are,

1. God's bands, for they are his priſoners; and theſe are heavier than the heavieſt irons ever were on priſoners; for,

(1.) There are bands of guilt and the curſe on them all, by which the law binds them over to wrath, Gal. iii. 10. Guilt is a bond binding over the ſinner to deſerved puniſhment. The curſe of the law devotes him to deſtruction. Theſe, worſe than iron fetters, enter into the ſoul; and while they lie on perſons, they cannot ſtir out of the priſon, nor make their eſcape. No ſooner is the ſoul awakened to feel them, than it feels them heavier than can be borne.

(2.) There are the bands of judicial hardneſs on ſome. Thoſe with whom the Lord has been long dealing, who will not hear, but harden themſelves againſt calls, warnings, and reproofs; many times the Lord judicially hardens them, makes hardneſs of heart their puniſhment, as it is their ſin; recals the motions of his Spirit, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." He gives them over, ſaying, "He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill," Rev. xxii. 11.; he gives them up to their own luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 12. "So I gave them up unto their own hearts luſt; and they walked in their own counſels;" and he gives them up to Satan to harden them, 2. Cor. iv. 4. "He hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them." So that under the moſt ſoftening means they grow worſe and worſe, harder and harder, Iſa. vi. 9. 10.

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9. 10. These are fearful bands; but besides these there are,

2. The devil's bands, which he puts on his prisoners in their natural state, to secure them, that they may not come out of it to Christ, may not be converted, may not be turned from their sins unto God. These are many; such as,

(1.) The band of prejudices. These are so fixed on natural men, that Jesus says, Matth. xi. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Satan dresses up religion and true holiness in such a monstrous shape, that they are affrighted at it, they cannot wish it, they can never get a heart to it; and therefore they entertain Christ's message, as Nabal did David's, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. 'Shall we,' say they, 'give up with that pleasant or profitable way, in which we are, and betake ourselves to a way that must needs be a continual weariness?' This is a strong band, but when the eyes are opened, and God's ways are tried in earnest, it would break like an untwined thread: Prov. iii. 17. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Come and see. —There is,

(2.) The band of ill company. Satan does as the Romans did with some of their prisoners, he binds his prisoners together, so that one helps to hold fast another, to their ruin: Prov. xiii. 20. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." Thus there are bundles of drunkards, swearers, Sabbath profaners, despisers of what is good, worldlings, to whom the world is the chief good; and every one of the bundle is a snare to the soul of another. With an eye to this is the terrible sentence given, Matth. xiii. 30. "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." Therefore is the gospel-invitation, Prov. ix. 5. 6.

"Come,

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"Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forſake the fooliſh, and live, and go in the way of underſtanding."—— There is,

3. The band of earthly-mindedneſs. This held them faſt who were bidden to the goſpel-ſupper, Luke, xiv. 16.—20. The wretched world had its bands on every one of them, ſo that they could not ſtir to come. They muſt look to this and the other buſineſs, that they do not loſe their advantage; and while the devil's ſervant is thus buſy here and there, looking well to this and that, the immortal ſoul, with the keeping of which God charges him, is loſt. The pleaſures of the world, like Syren ſongs, arreſt them like iron fetters covered with ſilk; theſe ſecure them. The cares of the world, like a thicket, entangle them, they cannot get leiſure for them to mind their ſouls; and the weary earth ever interpoſing betwixt them and the Sun of Righteouſneſs, they are thus kept in a dark priſon.—There is,

4. The band of unbelief. This is ſuch an one as no leſs than the arm of the Lord can take off: Iſa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Men hear the word, but they do not believe it; they believe not the doctrine of the goſpel, they count it fooliſhneſs, 1 Cor. i. 23. The promiſes they do not believe, they count them but fair words, and will not quit their certainty in a ſinful courſe for the hope of them, Heb. iv. 1. 2. 11. The threatenings they conſider as mere ſcarecrows, and in ſpite of them promiſe themſelves peace: Deut. xxix. 19. "And it ſhall come to paſs, when he heareth the words of this curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart,

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to add drunkenneſs to thirſt." They believe not their need of Chriſt, and therefore they ſlight and reject him.—There is,

5. The band of ſlothfulneſs. This ties down the natural man in his priſon-bed, ſaying, Prov. vi. 10. "Yet a little ſleep, yet a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep." It hangs ſo heavy upon his legs, that he cannot move them in the way of God: Prov. xxvi. 13. "The ſlothful man ſaith, There is a lion in the way." "A lion is in the ſtreets, yet his feet are ſwift to evil," Iſa. lix. 7. This band is ſo heavy on his head, that he cannot lift up his eyes; and on his hands, that he cannot lift them to his mouth for his ſoul's behoof: Prov. xxvi. 15. "The ſlothful hideth his hand in his boſom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." This is a helliſh gulph on earth, that ſwallows up convictions, reſolutions, motions of good, and the like. They could be content to be better, if God would work with them as with ſtocks and ſtones, which are at no pains for their own poliſhing. They can ſpend whole days, and even nights, for the world and for their luſts; but to ſpend a day, or a conſiderable part of a day, in clearing their accounts, and laying down their meaſures for eternity, this is what they cannot be troubled with.—There is,

6. The band of delays. This held Felix faſt, when the reſt of the bands on him were like to give way, Acts, xxiv. 25. When trembling under Paul's preaching, he ſaid, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee." The priſoners, many of them, are not reſolved not to come out, only they put it off, reſolving to do it afterwards. The young put it off till they be old, the old till death come to their bed-ſide. Some make one reſolution, and ſome

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ſome another, to turn to the Lord; and though the time comes which they had ſet, yet they ſtill put it off again to another time; and ſo on, till death comes at length, and ſweeps them off, ere they have power to execute their good purpoſes.—There is,

7. The band of deluſion: Iſa. xliv. 20. "He feedeth on aſhes; a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"—They are under a fearful deluſion as to their ſtate, like Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. "Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed in goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked." As one is refuſed admiſſion by miſtake, ſo Chriſt is often kept at the door; for the poor deluded ſinner thinks he is in already.—They abide faſt in the gall of bitterneſs, becauſe they imagine themſelves to be got out of it already. They remain unconverted, becauſe they reckon themſelves already converted. This is a moſt dangerous caſe, which ſhould ſtir us all up to an impartial examination of our ſtate: Iſa. l. 11. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks which you have kindled. This ye ſhall have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow."—There is,

Laſtly, The band of divers luſts: 2 Tim. iii. 6. "Laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts." They are laden with them, as ever a priſoner was with irons, ſo that by them Satan holds them faſt. Unmortified luſts crawl up and down, preying on their ſouls, and keeping them in a ſtate of death. They hang about them, crying, Give, give, ſo that they can get nothing done to purpoſe for eter-

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nity. And so many unmortified lusts as there are about a man, Satan has so many handles to hold him by. A lust of covetousness, of pride, sensuality, and the like, will hold a man fast.

This part of the subject may be improved in an use of lamentation.

This is a lamentation, and may be for a lamentation, over all the unconverted, as bound men in the prison of a natural state. Thou art little concerned with it, but the misery of the case deserves tears of blood. For—thou art laid up in custody at the instance of God's law and justice, as a debtor and criminal. As a debtor, thou shalt not be let out till thou hast paid the utmost farthing. But, alas! thou hast nothing wherewith to pay; men and angels cannot help thee; their united stock is not sufficient to pay off the debt of sin. As a criminal, thou canst not be let out, till thou abide thy trial; and terrible will it be whenever God calls thee to it; when thy indictment is read, and thou art tried for thy life according to law, what canst thou say? thy crimes are undeniable. —Thou canst not get out by force or fraud, slight or might. Thou art God's prisoner, as the offended party. What canst thou do or say that is not known to him who sees all things? Whither canst thou flee, where his hand will not find thee out.—Thou art Satan's prisoner as thy jailor. He has malice enough to prompt him to watch and keep thee, power enough to hold thee still. His iron-bands and chains are upon thee in the prison-house, how canst thou escape? Look to the bands on thee in the prison; look on them, and mourn, and lament thy case. There are bands on thee of God's laying on, and who but he then can take them off? for he shutteth, and no man can open, Rev. iii. 7. Thou art bound under the curse of the

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the law, and God has bound thee; to whom canſt thou apply to looſe thee? If men lay on bands, God can looſe the priſoner, whether they will or not: "The Lord looſeth the priſoners," Pſal. cxlvi. 7. But if God lay on the bands, the whole creation may ſtand and commiſerate the priſoner. They may drop a tear, but neither angels nor men can looſe him. There are bands on thee of Satan's laying on; and theſe muſt be ſad ones which are laid on by that hand. He is the ſtrong man; it muſt be a ſtronger than he who can looſe them; this is beyond thy reach. Thou doſt not feel God's bands, but walkeſt lightly under them. Thou entertaineſt and takeſt a pleaſure in Satan's chains, in your company, ſinful pleaſures, and the like. This makes thy eſcape the more hopeleſs; while thou rejoiceſt in thine iron fetters, as if they were chains of gold, it is an evidence that thou art beſide thyſelf.—Finally, Theſe bands will infallibly ſecure thy ruin, if thou be not looſed in time; thou wilt die in the priſon, if thou be not timeouſly brought out. There is but one ſtep betwixt thee and death, eternal death. If thou die in the priſon of an unconverted ſtate, thou wilt go to the priſon of hell, where the priſoners are kept without hope of any releaſe.

This being the caſe, ſee to yourſelves in time, O priſoners of hope! Labour to be looſed from your bands, that you die not in the pit.—To ſuch I would offer the following ADVICES.

1. Awake, and feel the weight of the bands on thee; there is no hope of thy deliverance while thou walkeſt lightly under them. Mourn over your guilt, your unbelief, and long for deliverance.

2. Put your caſe in the hand of the great Cautioner, who is willing and able to relieve you. Employ

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Employ the Advocate, who will certainly carry the plea in your favour. He will not do as the butler who forgot Joseph, though employed to use his interest to bring him out of prison; but by the blood of his covenant Jesus will deliver you.

3. Give in your petition to your Judge: Job, ix. 15. "I would," says Job, "make my supplication to my Judge." Pray, pray, ye prayerless persons; pray every day, pray always, ye who pray only now and then; a sign that ye have to begin this exercise, to pray to purpose. Pray seriously, fervently, importunately, ye that are formal in prayer. Your life lies at stake; there is no time to trifle.

4. Hasten your trial, that your plea may be heard before a throne of grace; for if you miss that tribunal, it will come before another at death and judgement, when it will be impossible for you to stand. There are two tribunals for such prisoners,—the tribunal of mercy and grace, and the tribunal of justice.——There is, the tribunal of mercy and grace, to which the sinner is brought in the work of conversion, in time, in this world. Hither the elect prisoner is brought, and stands trembling, while other prisoners lie still in the prison, jovial and easy. Here he is accused, convicted, and condemned; he subscribes to the equity of the sentence; but, by the provision made in this court for criminals, he comes off acquitted from the sentence of death, to return to the prison no more.——There is the tribunal of justice, to which the sinner is brought at death and the last day. Here the prisoner, in his natural state, is sifted, accused, convicted, and condemned without remedy: Matth. xxii. 13. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him (that wants the wedding-garment) hand and foot, and take him away,

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away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth." And from hence he is ſent into the priſon of hell. At the one or the other of theſe tribunals, all the priſoners muſt appear for their trial. To the firſt, I would have you to haſten your cauſe; for it has advantages which the other has not. In the firſt, the law is ſubſervient to the goſpel, and condemns, to make the ſinner flee to the Mediator: Gal. iii. 24. "Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith." In the ſecond, the law condemns, to make the ſinner's caſe abſolutely hopeleſs. The one makes the ſinner ſick unto life and everlaſting health, the other to death. At the one, a perſon may have the advantage of a Surety to undertake for his debt, of an Advocate to plead for him, 1 John, ii. 1. "If any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins." He never fails to bring his client's cauſe to a comfortable iſſue. But at the other, there is no Cautioner, no Advocate; the priſoner muſt act all for himſelf; yea, the Cautioner and Advocate is judge to condemn him.—Finally, at the one, there is a covert of blood for the condemned man to flee under, where the ſentence of death cannot take effect. There are horns of an altar, from which juſtice cannot take him, and a city of refuge, where he ſhall be ſafe. But none of theſe are to be had at the other; therefore haſte the trial.——We now proceed,

III. To conſider the darkneſs and blindneſs of the priſoners in a natural ſtate. Here it will be neceſſary to attend to three things. *Firſt*, The nature of this blindneſs. *Secondly*, The kinds of it

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it incident to these prisoners. And, *thirdly*, The effects of it upon them. – Let us attend,

First, To the nature of this blindness. And here we may observe, that it is a spiritual, and not a bodily defect. Though they have their eyes in their heads, their poor souls are full of darkness: Eph. v. 8. "Ye were sometimes darkness." Though they may have a natural and literal knowledge of spiritual things, yet they want the spiritual and saving light of life: 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." How manifestly are these distinguished! Though they have the knowledge of the history of these things, yet they are strangers to the mystery of them. Thus it is said, Deut. xxix. 4. "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." —Again, it is total blindness. They are not only dark, but darkness itself, Eph. v. 8. There is not the least gleam of saving light in their souls; they are absolute strangers to, and unacquainted with God in Christ. Their service in religion is to an unknown God. They know not Christ; there is a transcendent glory in him, but they cannot perceive it. They are strangers to themselves; they are wretched and miserable, but know it not, Rev. iii. 17. They see not their sins in their own ugly colours, in their natural deformity.—Let us,

Secondly, Attend to the kinds of blindness incident to these prisoners. There is—a natural blindness common to all of them. All Adam's children are born blind: Rom. iii. 11. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Our minds naturally are void of saving light, we have lost saving knowledge, with other parts

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parts of God's image. Hence, whenever grace opens the eyes, people are as it were brought into a new world, ſeeing things they never ſaw before, and ſeeing them in that manner in which they never ſaw them before.—Again, There is an acquired blindneſs, which they procure to themſelves. Eph. iv. 18. "Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart." The power and prevalence of luſts blind them more and more to the true intereſt of their ſouls. The light ſhines about them, but they hate it; it glances in their faces from the word and providence, but they ſhut their eyes, and will not let it in: Iſa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee." They by this means ſtrengthen their diſeaſes; and the longer they continue in it, there is the leſs hope. —Finally, There is a judicial blindneſs: Iſa. vi. 9. 10. "And he ſaid, Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes." They rebel againſt the light, they abuſe that light which they have, they will not open their eyes to clear light, and God judicially ſhuts them. He withdraws the common influence of his Spirit from them, and they are infatuated, ſo that they cannot ſee their own true intereſt, but act as fools and madmen in matters of the greateſt importance. They are "delivered over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient," Rom. i. 28. They are alſo delivered to Satan, who, as the executioner of juſtice, binds them more and more: 2 Cor. iv. 4. "He blinds the minds of them that believe not."—We are to attend,

Thirdly, To the effects of this blindneſs on the priſoners.

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priſoners. Theſe are many: I mention the following.——There is,

1. A ſituation truly uncomfortable and piteous. They are ſitting in darkneſs, and in the region and ſhadow of death, Matth. iv. 16. What a melancholy caſe were the Egyptians in during the three days darkneſs, while the Iſraelites had light in all their dwellings! It was among the laſt and worſt of their plagues. Surely light is ſweet; and the more excellent the light is, it muſt be the ſadder to be deprived of it. The light of God's grace and favour is the moſt excellent light, and therefore heaven is called light, and hell is darkneſs, utter darkneſs; no gleam of comfort in hell. A natural ſtate is the ſuburbs of hell, and no real comfort in this condition, but a poſſibility of help. Therefore the ſaints pity them, as in a moſt piteous condition. Jeruſalem's caſe drew tears from our Saviour's eyes, Luke, xix. 41. 42.——There is,

2. Unacquaintedneſs with their own ſtate of ſinfulneſs and miſery, Rev. iii. 17.—Their miſery; they are blind, they ſee not the hazard they are in of dropping every moment into the pit. The meſſengers of death are approaching them, the ſword of juſtice is hanging over their heads, ſigns of approaching ruin are on them and about them; others ſee it, but not themſelves: Hoſ. vii. 9. "Strangers have devoured his ſtrength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not." The prodigal never ſaw his ſtarving condition, till he came to himſelf, Luke, xv. 17.—Their ſinfulneſs alſo; of this they are ignorant: Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died." As in a houſe, the motes flying thick there are not perceived till the ſun-beams enlighten it; ſo, till the

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the Lord open the eyes of the blinded ſinner, he ſees not thoſe ſwarms of living luſts which are preying on his dead ſoul, the innumerable evils which compaſs him about, thoſe multiplied pieces of guilt which are binding him over to deſtruction.

3. They are eaſily enſnared and deceived in matters of the greateſt concern. Our Lord Jeſus pronounces a woe to the world becauſe of offences, Matth. xviii. 7. becauſe ſtumbling-blocks laid before the blind cannot but have moſt pernicious effects. The world is full of ſnares laid by Satan and his inſtruments; and the blindneſs of the mind expoſes men to the utmoſt hazard by them. How eaſily are they cheated out of their greateſt intereſts for another world, and made to hug a ſhadow inſtead of the ſubſtance, and embrace a ſcorpion inſtead of a fiſh, and ſtones inſtead of bread; becauſe, though they be eagle-eyed in the things of time, they are like bats and owls as to the light of life. Like Eſau, for one morſel of meat they ſell this birth-right, Heb. xii. 16.

4. They get no good of the light of the goſpel, but ſtumble at noon-day, as in the dark. They receive this grace in vain. The night and day are alike to the blind, winter and ſpring to the dead tree. And hence men live under the goſpel as looſely, profanely, and careleſsly, as if they were living in the dark corners of the earth. The light of the goſpel, like a ſhining ſun, has ariſen, teaching us, that, "denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world," Titus, ii. 12. But inſtead of going like men to their proper work, they like wild beaſts go to their dens, and lie at eaſe, neither working out their own ſalvation, nor doing any good to others. The light is ſet up to

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them, but their works are works of darkness, and so they hate the light.

5. They are precipitating themselves into the utmost hazard to their souls, without fear: Psal. xxxvi. 1. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." How fearlessly do men venture themselves into the forbidden ground, rush in the way of sin on the sword-point of justice: Jerem. viii. 6. "I hearkened, and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." They drink up iniquity as the ox the water, being in that case as blind men drinking up a cup of poison, which they know not to be such.—There is,

6. Deep security in the most dangerous condition, as not seeing what is before them. They go on in their courses, as the sinners did before the flood, Matth. xxiv. 38. They are exposed every day to the utmost hazard, yet they are secure. They stand before God's bent bow, as a mark to his arrows, yet they are at ease. Wrath is pursuing them, yet they are not concerned to flee from the wrath to come. They are jovial while about the pit's mouth, and even though they are in hazard every moment of falling into it.

Lastly, To sum up all in a word, this blindness fills the whole man in heart and life with darkness and confusion: Matth. vi. 23. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness; if, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" A person can do nothing which is good in this case, he lies open to all evil both of sin and misery. And this darkness, unremoved, will make way for eternal darkness.

Having,

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Having, as we proceeded, made ſome practical improvement, in concluſion, we ſhall only exhort you,

1. To be convinced of this your natural darkneſs; believe it from the Lord's word, and believe your hazard from it, though otherwiſe ye do not ſee it.

2. See your need of Chriſt to open your eyes. Pray for the Spirit; ſay, with the blind man, "Lord, that mine eyes may be opened."

Laſtly, From what has been ſaid on the ſeveral parts of Chriſt's commiſſion with reſpect to natural men, unconverted ſinners may get a broad view of their miſery. Ye are Satan's captives, yea, priſoners, God's priſoners, the devil's priſoners, priſoners in bands, and blinded priſoners. Be deeply affected with your condition, and be perſuaded, as priſoners of hope, to turn to your ſtrong-holds, while you have acceſs to them. — While it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, but hearken to his voice, proclaiming that he is "anointed to open the priſon to them that are bound."

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SERMON LV.

Isa. lxi. 1.—*And the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

HAVING attended to the first doctrinal point on this subject, we now go on to

Doct. II. That, by open proclamation in the gospel, Jesus offers to prisoners in a natural state, an opening of their eyes, a loosing of their bands, and a bringing them out of their prisons.

We shall illustrate the different parts of this doctrine, under the following heads.

I. We shall shew, that Christ offers to such an opening of their eyes, the recovery of their spiritual sight, and to bring them from darkness unto light.

II. We shall shew how Christ takes off the devil's bands from these prisoners.

III. We

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III. We ſhall ſhew, that Chriſt offers to priſoners in a natural ſtate, an opening of their priſons, and a bringing them out of theſe.

The improvement of each will be added as we proceed.—We are then,

I. To ſhew, that Chriſt offers to priſoners in a natural ſtate, an opening of their eyes, the recovery of their ſpiritual ſight, and ſo to bring them from darkneſs unto light.

What, do ſuch ſay, is in this offer? Certain it is that ſaving illumination is hereby offered to you: Rev. iii. 18. "I counſel thee," ſays he, "to anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee." This is a glorious and moſt neceſſary benefit, a thouſand times more neceſſary than light to thoſe who are naturally blind. The unrenewed world lie in darkneſs, they will not, they cannot ſee. There is a long and dark night upon them. Chriſt offers to bring a morning unto their ſouls, to make the day-ſtar ariſe there; yea, the Sun of righteouſneſs to ſhine there. There is a thick miſt about you, ſo that you cannot ſee your way, but ſpend your life in endleſs wanderings among deep pits. He will, by the ſpirit of his mouth, diſpel it, and make light to ariſe up, that ye may ſee clearly about you. Your eyes are clouded and blinded: he will make the ſcales to fall off from them; and this will give you a threefold ſight.—There is,

1. A ſad and melancholy ſight, the ſaddeſt ever you ſaw, which will make the lighteſt heart among us all heavy; and this is a ſight of yourſelves in your univerſal ſinfulneſs and defilement. This pricked Paul's hearers to the heart, Acts, ii. 37. It ſtruck Paul with the paleneſs of death; for "I was alive," ſaid he, "without the law once: but when

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the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," Rom. vii. 9. Men naturally are strangers to themselves, but when the prisoner's eyes are opened, he gets a broad view of his sinful self. He sees a corrupt nature, from which no good can come; averse to good, and prone to evil; not to be changed, but by a miracle of grace: Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He sees a corrupt, desperately wicked heart: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. There is an emptiness of all good; a fulness of all evil, the seed and root of all abominations which are done in the world, living lusts of all kinds, like so many vermin in their nest, Mark, vii. 21.; a continual steam of actual sinning and lusting, arising from hence on the steam of a dunghill.—Further, he sees a sinful life and conversation, woven into one continued piece of sin, where the parts sometime thought good will appear even black as hell, like the rest; unclean lips, all over defiled with vanity or vileness; an unclean life, which is unfruitful and unprofitable for God and for themselves; full of sins against the holy law of God, committed against much light and love, as well as checks by word and providence, &c. When the Lord comes to the prisoner, and opens his eyes, he takes him and leads him through his heart and life; then what a sad sight does he get! then will he cry, as in Job, xl. 4. "Behold, I am vile: What shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Then is accomplished these words "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and a bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,

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God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord of hoſts," Jer, ii. 19.—There is,

2. A terrible and frightful ſight, which will make the ſtouteſt heart to tremble, ſo that they ſhall ſay, as Moſes did at the burning mount, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And this ſight is threefold.—There is a ſight of an abſolute God, in the glory of his holineſs and juſtice, Lev. x. 3. Men's eyes are naturally with-held, ſo that they ſee not what a God they have to do with, Pſal. l. 21. They think he is altogether ſuch an one as themſelves; but ſays he, "I will reprove thee, and ſet them (your ſins) in order before you." When their eyes are opened, they are cured of their fatal miſtake: Habbak. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity." They ſee him on a throne of juſtice, angry with the wicked every day; a hater of every ſin, a ſevere avenger of ſin from the leaſt to the greateſt, with whom no ſin is accounted a ſmall thing. There is a fiery ſtream iſſuing out of his mouth, to devour his adverſaries, as engaged, by his word and nature, to magnify the law and make it honourable. This terrible ſight will give the ſinner experience of the pſalmiſt's caſe, Pſal lxxiii. 3. "I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my ſpirit was overwhelmed;" and hence make his heart cry out within him, as in Iſa. xxxiii. 14. "Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?"—Again, he gets a ſight of the fiery law in its abſolute purity, extenſiveneſs, and ſeverity: Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died." The law, to the blinded ſinner, is like a looking-glaſs covered over with duſt, in which

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which the man never ſees the true ſhadow of himſelf. But when the ſinner's eyes are opened, the glaſs is rubbed clean, and ſhines bright, to his terror and aſtoniſhment. Then it diſcovers the damnable nature of ſome things he thought good, the heinouſneſs of what he reckoned ſmall faults, and makes all his ſins greater than ever he thought them. He ſees the threats and curſes of the law, no more as ſcarecrows, or as the ſhadows of the mountains, but more ſure than heaven or earth to have their effect. And then one word of it will go deeper with him, than a thouſand uſed to do.—Further, he gets a ſight of himſelf, in his miſerable, loſt, and undone eſtate. Like the prodigal, he comes to himſelf, and ſees that he is periſhing with hunger. He ſees himſelf to be ruined, to be a ſelf-deſtroyer; a dead man in law, devoted to deſtruction by the curſe of the law; under ſentence of eternal death, pronounced by the Judge of all, and regiſtered in the Bible; bound with the threatenings of the law, as ſo many cords of death; and withal, utterly unable to extricate himſelf out of this gulph of ſin and miſery: Rom. v. 6. "For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly."

3. They get a comforting and heart-reviving ſight, the moſt comfortable they ever ſaw, which will make the moſt heavy heart joyful. And this is a ſight of Chriſt in the glory of his Mediatory office: Iſa. xxxiii. 17. "Thine eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty, they ſhall behold the land that is very far off." They ſee Jeſus ſtanding—as a Prophet, diſcovering thoſe thoughts of love, which were from eternity in the breaſt of Chriſt's Father, toward theſe priſoners.—Standing as a Prieſt as he had been ſlain, at the Father's right hand, making

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making interceſſion for the priſoner's freedom.—And as a King, having the ſovereign command of life and death, and having the keys of the priſon in his hand, to take out the priſoner when he will. O glorious ſight for the priſoners! when their eyes are opened. It is a threefold ſight.—It is a ſight of the tranſcendant excellency and lovelineſs of Jeſus, Iſa. xxxiii. 17. (quoted above.) While the priſoner lay in darkneſs, he was ready to ſay to every lover of Chriſt, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Cant. v. 9. There was then to him more glory in a vain world, in the luſt of the eye and the pride of life, than in Chriſt. But now that his eyes are opened, he ſees a glory in him, which darkens all created excellency, as the riſing ſun makes the ſtars to hide their heads. He appears now as the pearl of great price, Matth. xiii. 46. All the perfections of the divine glory ſhine forth in him; theſe appear in the face of Chriſt, as in a glaſs, of which the priſoner now gets a view. And then none but Chriſt for him: Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee."—Again, he gets a ſight of his fulneſs for, and ſuitableneſs to the caſe of the priſoner. Like the prodigal, Luke, xv. 17. he ſees that in his father's houſe there is bread enough and to ſpare. He ſees then that he needs look to no other quarter for help; that there is an all-ſufficient fulneſs of it in Chriſt. Does the priſoner conſider his vaſt debts? Chriſt is a cautioner, a mighty one. Does he conſider his crimes? Chriſt died to ſatisfy for them. He has power over the jailor, and can bind the ſtrong man, looſe and bring out the priſoner. Is he defiled in his priſon-garments? Chriſt has white raiment to put on him, in exchange for theſe. Are there iron gates in the way?

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way? yea, irons on the prisoner's legs? He breaks the bars of iron, and brings out the prisoner.—Once more, he gets a sight of the willingness and readiness of Christ to communicate of his fulness: Heb. iv. 15. 16. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." He now sees the truth and reality of gospel-invitations and promises, that they are not only fair words, as he sometime thought them, but sure and tried words: Psal. xii. 6. "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." This revives the fainting heart, is the great cordial for a soul ready to perish; so that the prisoner resolves to venture himself, and lay his whole weight on the glorious Deliverer.

Before leaving this head, it may be of importance to inquire, what ground the blinded prisoner has to rest upon and embrace this offer in the proclamation of the gospel?—As to this we observe,

1. That there is nothing offered but what our Lord can perform and make good: Numb. xxiii. 19. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall not he do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Jesus is the true light, the light of the world; the star that came out of Jacob, Num. xxiv. 17.; the bright and morning star, which puts an end to the dark night in the soul, Rev. xxii. 16.; the sun of righteousness, Mal. iv. 2. He has a fulness of the spirit of light in

in him, to communicate to dark ſouls, Rev. iii. 1. —We obſerve,

2. That there is nothing offered but what he has already performed in the experience of thouſands, who have been Satan's cloſe priſoners as well as you: Iſa. xxxv. 4. 5. 6. "He will come and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped: Then the lame man ſhall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing: for in the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſart." Paul was a blind Phariſee, but O how wonderfully were his eyes opened! There have been many who were as ſtupid, ſecure, and blind as any, whom the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited; who ſat in darkneſs, but are now turned from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.—We obſerve,

3. That there is nothing propoſed to us but what he has his Father's commiſſion to offer and make good: Iſa. xlix. 6. "And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant, to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation to the ends of the earth." Ver. 9. "That thou mayeſt ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves. They ſhall feed in their ways, and their paſtures ſhall be in all high places." Again, to the ſame purport, ſee Iſa. xlii. 6. 7. And therefore his coming into the world is compared to the day-ſpring, Luke, i. 78. which comes at its appointed time.—We obſerve,

4. That what is offered is offered to you. Ye are all comprehended in the proclamation: Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters."

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waters." Whatever be your case, though you be in the innermost room of Satan's prison in the world, ye are men, ye are sons of men: Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men! do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." And the offer is very particular, Eph. v. 14. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—We observe,

5. That there is the greatest reality, truth, and sincerity in the offer: Rev. iii. 14. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Never one embraced this offer who was refused. It grieves his Spirit that sinners do not fall in with it. He wept over Jerusalem for this; and he has lost no bowels of compassion by going to heaven.

This part of the subject we would improve, by urging you to embrace the offered light, the saving illumination proclaimed in the gospel; and to come to Christ with this errand, That your eyes may be opened. And here I would exhort you to the following things.

Be convinced of your natural darkness and blindness in the things of God. Say not, with the Pharisees, Are we blind also? The less thou seest of this darkness about thee, the greater is the darkness upon thee. The best see but in part, and most men see none at all in a saving manner. —Love not darkness: John, iii. 19. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." As the owl loves not the shining sun, so men wedded to their lusts hate the light, and loves to be in darkness. They do not know God, nor his law, nor his Son, nor themselves, and they care not for the knowledge of them: Job, xxi. 14. "Therefore they say unto God,

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God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They are at little pains with their Bibles, and far less with their hearts and lives, to make them agreeable to the light of the word. Do not resist and rebel against the light, Job, xxiv. 13. "They are of those who rebel against the light; they know not the way thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof." Let not your lusts carry you over the belly of what light you have, lest ye be judicially blinded. What light God offers you by his word, by providences, or by inward motions and convictions within your breasts, beware of fighting against it, beware of resisting and putting it out. Sometimes the Spirit of the Lord begins to throw in beams of light into the soul, at a sermon, under a rod, or some rebuke of providence. But the sinner cannot be easy till this be again darkened.—Be satisfied with no light, which has not a sanctifying and purifying heat with it. The true light is called the light of life, John, viii. 12. When the Spirit of the Lord fell on the disciples, Acts, ii. there appeared tongues of fire, enlightening and warming. Dangerous is the case of men who keep truth a prisoner: Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."—*Lastly*, Go to the Lord for the Spirit of illumination. Pray, search for the same as for hid treasures, and believe for it in the Lord Jesus. Look to him that ye may be enlightened with this saving illumination of his word and Spirit.—To prevail with you in all these points, I would mention the following MOTIVES.

Mot. 1. This illumination is absolutely necessary for salvation. A sinner will never prize Christ, nor come to him, till his eyes are opened to see his

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ſin and miſery, what a juſt God and a ſtrict law he has to deal with, what a precious and ſuitable Saviour Chriſt is: John, iv. 10. "Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto her, If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water." While Satan keeps his priſoner bound, he will hold him faſt. That which the eye ſees not, the heart receives not. The danger may be very great, but when unknown the ſinner is ſecure.

Mot. 2. Blindneſs under the goſpel is moſt inexcuſeable: John, ix. 41. "Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee: therefore your ſin remaineth." It is wilful blindneſs. Thoſe who live in the dark corners of the earth, where the light of the goſpel is not known, what wonder is it that they walk on in darkneſs? But the light of the goſpel ſhines about us. Chriſt offers to enlighten us by his Spirit, Eph. v. 14. If we chuſe darkneſs rather than light, we muſt lay our account with our choice being our ruin, John, iii. 19.

Mot. 3. Saving illumination is the only way to true comfort, and the want of it the way to utter miſery: Col. i. 12. 13. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." At the blinding of the ſoul, Satan completes the ſecurity of the priſoner; and at the enlightening of him, Chriſt begins his deliverance. In them who are ſaved, the light is carried on to the light of glory. In them who are loſt, the darkneſs is continued, till they come to endleſs and utter darkneſs.—We are now,

II. To

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II. To ſhew, that Chriſt offers to the priſoners a looſing of thoſe bands wherewith they are bound.

Here it will be neceſſary to ſhew,—1. How he looſes God's bands from off the priſoners.—And, 2. How he takes off the devil's bands from them. Let us then,

1. Shew how he looſes God's bands from off the priſoners. The unconverted ſinner is God's priſoner under the bands of guilt, and of the curſe of the law, which bind him over to deſtruction. Theſe he looſes and takes off the ſinner by the application of his own blood: Zech. ix. 11. "As for thee alſo, by the blood of thy covenant, I have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Here we obſerve,

(1.) That Jeſus purchaſed their freedom from theſe bands by his death and ſufferings. Guilt is a ſtrong tie, the curſe is a heavy chain on the priſoner; in theſe the power of ſpiritual death lay. But Jeſus, by his death, procured the ſinner's relaxation: Gal. iii. 13. "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, having been made a curſe for us." His compaſſion for the priſoners made him pay for them a ranſom of his own blood. He took their bands of guilt and the curſe upon himſelf, that he might looſe them from off them. Now he has ranſomed the priſoners, who will accept of his delivery, and has a right to looſe them from their bands; juſtice and the law having nothing to object.—We obſerve,

(2.) That Jeſus comes in the goſpel to the priſon-door, proclaims and makes offer of liberty to the priſoners. This he does in the text. In his name the offer is made by his meſſengers; his authority to looſe the priſoners is aſſerted, Matth.

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xxviii. 18. "Jesus came and said unto them, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." His ability and willingness to do it is confirmed, Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." They are pressed to consent to the offer; charged upon their peril to comply with it; and all this to make them willing to come away out of the prison with the deliverer.—We observe,

(3.) That though the most part give a deaf ear to the gospel-call, will not believe their danger, but sit at ease in their fetters, yet some are made a willing people in a day of power, Ps. cx. 3. By the word, faith is wrought in their hearts, Rom. x. 17.; even that faith whereby the soul lays hold upon, and unites with Christ, flees in under the covert of his blood, lays over the weight of all its guilt upon Jesus, believing his blood to be sufficient to take it all away, and, renouncing all other pleas, betakes itself to this: Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Thus this blood is applied.—We observe,

(4.) That when this blood is thus applied, the chains are ordered to be taken off the prisoner: Job, xxxiii. 24. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Yea, the chains fall off of course, since, as in Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The Cautioner's payment is pled for the debtor, and he is discharged; the criminal's cause is carried by the Surety and Advocate, and he is absolved. He is under the covert of blood, therefore neither law nor justice

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juſtice can reach him. He is brought into the bond of the covenant of grace, and ſo the guilt of eternal wrath, which is the bond of the firſt covenant, can hold him no longer; guilt and the curſe being removed, judicial hardneſs has no place.

2. Let us ſhew how Chriſt looſes and takes off the devil's bands from the priſoners. The unconverted ſinner is alſo the devil's priſoner; he likewiſe lays bands on the ſinner. Theſe are in themſelves ſinful luſts and practices, &c. by which he holds them as by bands. Chriſt looſes from theſe by the powerful workings of his Spirit, giving them grace, which breaks their bands aſunder.—He gives them,

(1.) Awakening grace, which rouſes them up, and burſts the bands of ſloth, wherewith they were held, Eph. v. 14. (quoted above), and cures them of the fatal deluſion which they were under as to their ſtate. Like the prodigal, they come to themſelves, Luke, xv. 17. The ſinner ſleeps ſecurely in his ſins and in his chains; but the Spirit of God gives him a ſound awakening, ſo that his reſt in ſin is diſturbed, and he can no longer get lived at eaſe in his former courſes. His conſcience ſets upon him, and ſounds a terrible alarm of wrath in his ears, which ceaſeth not till he has fled to Chriſt for refuge, and he flees without delay.—Jeſus gives them,

(2.) Enlightening grace, Eph. v. 14. by which the ſinner gets a diſcovery of himſelf, and a diſcovery of God and Chriſt. He is brought, as it were, into a new world, in which every thing appears in other colours than it did before. The maſk which Satan put upon the ways of God and the ways of ſin, is pulled off, and he ſees the beauty, the excellence of religion. Thus the band of preju-

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dice is broken, the evil and danger of the ways of ſin are expoſed to them, ſo that the ſinful company he before delighted in becomes a terror to him, and he ſays, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping," Pſal. vi. 8. He ſees the vanity and emptineſs of all time's things, ſo that Satan can hold him no longer by this pitiful handle.—Jeſus gives them,

(3.) Quickening and regenerating grace, by which they receive a new principle of ſpiritual life: 2 Pet. i. 4. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt." So that the bands of death in which they were held give way, and they become new creatures: 2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore, if any man be in Chriſt Jeſus, he is a new creature; old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new." They are endowed with a new nature, having new motions and inclinations heavenward; ſo that the band of earthly-mindedneſs is broken; their will is renewed; Chriſt becomes their choice above all, and they lay hold upon him with heart and good will, ſo as that the bands of unbelief give way; their hearts are ſoftened; they get the heart of ſtone removed, and a heart of fleſh given unto them; their affections are changed, ſo that they now love the things which they before hated, and now hate thoſe luſts and ſinful courſes which they formerly loved. Jeſus gives them,

(4.) Sanctifying grace, by which the power of ſin is more and more weakened in them, and the divers luſts with which they were held are mortified, ſo that luſts cannot command them as they were

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were wont to do. Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace. The new principle ſtirs in them to the practice of holineſs in all manner of life and converſation. Thus Chriſt, entering into the ſoul, ſtrikes off the devil's bands, and ſets the ſinner at liberty.

As an improvement of this part of our ſubject, it may juſt be obſerved,

That this lets us ſee that none are ſo faſt bound under guilt, or the power of ſin and Satan, but they may be looſed. And therefore we have ground of hope in the moſt hopeleſs caſe. A ſight of guilt is ready to make the awakened ſinner deſpond; but the blood of Chriſt is ſufficient to remove it, whatever it be: "This blood cleanſeth from all ſin," 1 John, i. 7. Though the cords of guilt be manifold, which cannot be looſed from off the conſcience by floods of tears, the moſt bitter mournings; yea, though above the power of men and angels; yet the blood of Chriſt is of infinite value and efficacy: Iſa. i. 18. "Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool."—In like manner as to the power of ſin. The awakened ſinner will ſee that it is as eaſy for the leopard to change his ſpots, and the Ethiopian his colour, as for him to change his heart, or free himſelf from the power of ſin. He will ſee that it is hard to get out from under the power of Satan and his own luſts. But remember, Chriſt is the ſtronger man, he can bind Satan and ſpoil him of his goods. There is nothing too hard for him to do. Grace is powerful, and will always be victorious where it once begins: it converted Paul from a perſecutor into a preacher; Manaſſeh,

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Manaſſeh, who was like a lion, was changed into a lamb. Therefore look to him that ye may be looſed.

We proceed now, with the

III. General head, to ſhew that Chriſt offers to the priſoners in a natural ſtate, an opening of their priſons, and to bring them out.

Here I ſhall ſhew what is in this offer, 1. More generally; and then, 2. More particularly.

1. More generally, it is the bringing the ſinner into a ſtate of grace. There are two things in it. The Lord Jeſus opening the ſinner's priſon brings him,

(1.) Out of the ſtate of condemnation, in which he lay from his birth till that happy hour: Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus." The ſentence of the law condemning him to eternal death is annulled, is taken off, and can affect him no more. He is made a free man, delivered from the curſe by him who was made a curſe. He is brought out from under the law as a covenant of works: Rom. vi. 14. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." Though it continues to be a rule to him, yet he is neither left to ſeek life by his obedience to it, nor can he any more be doomed by it to eternal death for his diſobedience; the law being dead to him, and he to it, in this reſpect.—Jeſus brings him,

(2.) Out of that ſtate of ſin in which he lay all his days before, incapable of doing any thing truly good, capable of nothing but ſinning. But now the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made him free from the law of ſin and death, Rom. viii. 2. The priſoner in his natural ſtate, with the reſt of the world, lieth in wickedneſs, 1 John,

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John, v. 19.; like a dead man in his grave, rotting and consuming. Christ quickens the sinners, opens their graves, and brings them out from under the reigning power of sin. In the day of conversion, Christ comes to the prison-door as to the grave of Lazarus, and says, as he did to him, Come forth. So the dead man lives, the prisoner comes out of the dungeon, out of a state of sin into a state of grace.

2. Let us consider what is in this offer more particularly. There are several great benefits which it proposes to us; such as,

(1.) The prisoner's debts are discharged, even to the last farthing: Col. ii. 13. "And you being dead in your sins, and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." They were God's prisoners, and could never come out without payment of that debt for which they were imprisoned. But the Deliverer takes all the debt on himself; he says to his Father, as in Philem. 18. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." And so it is accounted as if they had paid it.

(2.) The prisoner's crimes are forgiven, which otherwise would have taken away his life: Isa. xxxiii. 24. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." The prisoner's pardon is written in the blood of his Redeemer, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Heb. viii. 12. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The King's seal is appended to it, so that neither law nor justice can quarrel it: Eph. i. 13. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with

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with that holy Spirit of promiſe." This is the white ſtone given to him that overcometh, of which none knows the ſweetneſs but thoſe who have it.

(3.) The priſoner is delivered from the power of Satan, Acts. xxvi. 18. "They are turned from the power of Satan unto God." The jailor has no more power to keep the priſoner, nay, nor ever to bring him back; becauſe he is not delivered by fraud, but in a legal way, by the ſovereign authority of the King's Son, who has all power in heaven and earth. The demands which law and juſtice had on the priſoner have all been ſatisfied by the Deliverer, therefore he can be no longer held.—As to the priſoner,

(4.) His priſon-garments are taken away, and he is cloathed with change of raiment. The rags of his own righteouſneſs are thrown away, and he is cloathed with the fair white raiment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs put on by the hand of faith, "I counſel thee," ſays Jeſus, as in Rev. iii. 18. "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich, and white raiment that thou mayeſt be cloathed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear." The old man with his deeds is put off, the body of ſin is deſtroyed, and the new man is put on. The priſoner ſtands before his deliverer, like Joſhua before the angel: Zech. iii. 3. 4. "Now Joſhua was cloathed with filthy garments, and ſtood before the angel; and he anſwered and ſpake to them that ſtood before him, Take away the filthy garments from him; and unto him he ſaid, Behold I have cauſed thine iniquity to paſs from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

(5.) The priſoner is brought forth into the light of God's countenance, Iſa. xlix. 9. "That thou mayſt ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that

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that are in darkneſs, ſhew yourſelves. They ſhall feed in the ways, and their paſtures ſhall be in all high places." God is in Chriſt reconciled to him. He is no more his enemy, but the ſinner's friend, his confederate in the covenant of peace. The peace is made up through the great Peace-maker, Rom. v. 1. "Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Though the world henceforth may hate him, and become his enemy, he has friendſhip with heaven, which may ſupport him under all their hatred.

(6.) The priſoner is reſtored to all his forfeited privileges: Eph. ii. 17. "Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſehold of God." As Joſeph, being a ſlave, was brought out of the dungeon to Pharaoh's court, and made the ruler over Egypt; ſo in that day in which the ſoul is brought to the ſtate of grace, he is freed from his ſlavery, brought out of priſon, and advanced in the court of heaven. Like the poor and wiſe child out of priſon, he comes to reign, as in Eccleſ. iv. 13. 14. for they are all made kings who are delivered by Chriſt. We ſhall ſhut up this ſubject with a practical improvement of the whole.—And this,

1. In an uſe of inſtruction.

This ſubject affords ſome leſſons to us all; as,

(1.) To be living in a ſtate of ſin is the moſt miſerable life in the world, the moſt miſerable life out of hell. Why are all thoſe ſimilitudes uſed, of a captivity, an impriſonment, and this of the worſt kind, but becauſe no captivity, no impriſonment is ſufficient to expreſs the miſery of this captivity? Therefore theſe ſimilitudes are multiplied, that what is wanting in one may be made up by another. And whenever the ſinner's eyes are

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are opened to see his misery, he will see that the worst case of captives and prisoners on earth comes infinitely short of the miserable state he is in, so soon as eternity succeeds time. For,

[1.] Of all persons in the world, an unconverted person has the least ground to be joyful: John, iii. 36. "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Some think they are young and in their bloom, and therefore they may be allowed a pleasant jovial life. Some think like him who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Every one who is not held down with worldly cares or crosses, is ready to take his ease, though a stranger to Christ and a state of grace. But I would say to thee as Jehu did to Joram, 2 Kings, ix. 18. "What hast thou to do with peace?" Let them live joyfully whose prison-doors have been opened; they are set free, to whom God is a friend, and who are beyond the hazard of eternal condemnation. But what reason have you to live joyfully, who are captives, prisoners, condemned criminals, and know not but this day you may be led out to the execution? If there were a drawn sword hanging over your heads wherever you went, would it not mar your mirth and jollity? The sword of God's justice is thus suspended over all those who are out of Christ.

[2.] It would be impossible for one to live at ease in an unconverted state, if they were not blind to their own hazard and misery: Luke, xix. 41.—43. Ye may as well bid a malefactor be easy under the sentence of death and the sight of the gibbet, or a man hanging over a deep gulf by a slender twig, as to bid an awakened sinner be easy in his case, before he get out of it. But many

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many are posting to destruction down the hill, and yet are very easy, because they see not the frightful case they are in. And why do they not see it, but because they shut their eyes? It is told them, but they will not believe it; so after all they are as easy as if they had been hearing an idle tale.— We are instructed,

(2.) That the delivery of a sinner out of the state of nature into a state of grace, from under the guilt and reigning power of sin, is no easy business, but business of the greatest weight and difficulty, which ever the world was witness to. Consider the ransom which had to be paid for the captives and prisoners; the greatest ransom ever given by men is not once to be named with it. Silver and gold, crowns and kingdoms, would not do here, but blood, even the precious blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19.; angels nor men could not furnish it. Consider the power by which the deliverance is to be effected, no less than an infinite power can do it. What is the storming of towns, the breaking down of iron gates, and the recovering the prey from a lion, to the recovering a sinner from the power of the devil? No less than an omnipotent power can do this, Isa. xlix. 24. 25. For,

[1.] What way can men think ever to be delivered in that careless thoughtless way with which most part satisfy themselves? Luke, xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Will drowsy wishes and sluggish desires, unaccompanied with suitable endeavours, do it? Will the leading of a careless life, and then begging mercy from God when they come to die, be sufficient? Will these things serve instead of the work of grace, to pluck the prey out of Satan's

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mouth, to knock the devil's chains off the prisoners, and set them free? By no means.

[2] With what face can sinners delay the work of conversion to God? Is it not work hard enough to get out of Satan's grips, begin as soon as we will? Will men venture to stay till he has loaded them with heavier chains, till stronger fetters of guilt be wreathed about their necks? Up, and be doing, lose no time, you will find the work already hard enough. To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.—We are instructed,

(3.) That there is no deliverance out of the state of sin and wrath but through Jesus Christ, Acts, iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Had there been another name, another person, Jesus had not been employed in this work. There was none but he who could do it; and we may add, that the worst of sinners may be delivered in and by him. There is no guilt above the efficacy of his blood, no power of sin above the efficacy of his Spirit. At the same time, without him the most blameless person who lives will be ruined for ever: John, xiv. 6. "I am the way," said Jesus, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Death will prey upon them in time, though insensibly, and devour them for ever, to their everlasting misery.—This subject instructs us,

Lastly, That none are delivered by Christ, but those who are made willing to come out of their sins away with the Deliverer, and who, with the most solemn seriousness, embrace the covenant. He does not say that he will break open the prison-doors, and bring away the prisoners, sleeping or waking, willing or unwilling, careless to be away, or careful. No; he deals with them in a rational way,

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way, proclaims the liberty; if they accept of it as he offers it, well and good; if they will not have it but on terms of their own making, they must remain in prison, and perish: John, v. 40. "And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."—Then,

(1.) If any be careless as to their getting out of this state, Satan is in no danger of losing them. Though the liberty be proclaimed, they trouble not themselves about the matter, further than to hear it. Satan keeps his prisoners, and Christ will never bring them away who are not made desirous to come. Having the offer of liberty, Jesus will leave the soul still in bonds, if there be not a compliance with it.

(2.) It concerns all who would be saved, deliberately to consider the gospel-offer and their own case, and make the most solemn, serious work of closing with Christ, of entering into the covenant, and transacting with the Deliverer, as upon a matter of the utmost importance. Here eternity lies at stake; if they manage it to purpose, they are happy for ever; if they mismanage it, they are undone. If the prisoner manages his business right with this Deliverer, he will be got out of prison; if he altogether miss this opportunity, he must lie still there for ever.

This subject instructs particularly those who are under bands of which they would fain be rid, what course they are to take.

1. Those who have sometimes walked at liberty, having had their souls brought out of prison by the Redeemer's blood and Spirit; but seem to themselves now to be carried back into Satan's prison again, and feel his chains heavy upon them. The Lord sometimes suffers his own people to fall into this case, because of their careless walking,

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their grieving and vexing his Holy Spirit, whereby the Spirit is quenched, corruption is ſtrengthened, and Satan gets advantage: Iſa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." What ſhould they do in this caſe, but own the juſtice of the ſtroke, apply themſelves to the Deliverer, who alone can looſe ſpiritual bonds? This is the deſign of the diſpenſation: Hoſ. v. 15. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face; in their affliction they will ſeek me early." Make new application of this blood by faith, and breathe after the communications of his Holy Spirit: Iſa. lvii. 18. "I have ſeen his ways, and will heal heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts to him and his mourners." He delivered them out of a miſerable ſtate, and will alſo deliver them out of their preſent uncomfortable condition.

2. Thoſe who feel the bands of guilt ſtrong upon their ſouls, and are ready to deſpond under them as bands which can never be looſed. Such ſhould conſider, that there is no exception of bands from which Chriſt is ſent to looſe; be they weak, be they ſtrong bands, with which the ſinner is bound, Chriſt proclaims liberty from them; and it is an intolerable affront to the Mediator's dignity, to entertain a thought of bands from which the infinite merit of his blood, and the all-powerful efficacy of his Spirit, cannot looſe. The dead corpſe caſt into the prophet's grave was reſtored to life; and ſhall not the ſoul bound with the ſtrongeſt fetters of death, be ſet free ſo ſoon as quickening virtue comes from a crucified Chriſt. Such, then, ſhould labour to believe, that they may thus ſee the glory of God.

3. Thoſe

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3. Thoſe who feel the bands of raging and unruly luſts ſo ſtrengthened by Satan and their own corruptions, that they are ready to think that there is no breaking of them. Such ſhould conſider, that our Lord often ſingles out thoſe in the moſt hopeleſs condition, to make them monuments of his rich grace. Such was the caſe of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11. In the text, thoſe who are blinded in the priſon have opening proclaimed to them. Though the heart may be agitated like a raging ſea with temptations and corruptions, it will coſt Jeſus but a word to ſtill them all in a moment: Iſa. lvii. 19. "I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord, and I will heal him." The ſtrongeſt luſts ſhall yield to the power of his grace, and the ſtrong man flee at the rebuke of the ſtronger. We ſhall only add,

Secondly, An uſe of exhortation.

You who are delivered, and have been made partakers of the liberty proclaimed in the goſpel, we exhort you to walk ſuitably to the great deliverance. If you be thus diſtinguiſhed,—you will prize the Deliverer above all: 1 Pet. ii. 7. "Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious." You will ſay, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſide thee." And the more you look back on the hazard to which you were expoſed, you will love him the more.—You will prize the deliverance above all which you ever met with, or can meet with in this world: "Yea, doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord." Look on this time as the time of loves.—You will long for the perfecting of this deliverance, and be endeavouring to get it advanced and carried on, till you be

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completely freed from indwelling sin: Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—If thus distinguished, it is your duty to walk humbly and thankfully, to the praise of your Deliverer; to carry yourselves as children of light, in a holy and heavenly conversation, and to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. In short, it is your duty to be concerned for those who are still prisoners, to pity them, to pray for them, and help forward their deliverance.

As to you who are yet Satan's captives and prisoners, hasten to be loosed; while the proclamation of liberty sounds in your ears, accept of deliverance. Consider that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Now liberty is in your offer, but it will not always be so; the day comes for transporting the prisoners into another prison, where there are no offers nor possibility of escape; and how soon this may be, you know not. —Refuse the liberty to-day, delay it but till to-morrow, and ye may be beyond hope. But now the captives may be loosed, the prisoners enlarged, and thus be blessed with an eternal freedom. Kiss, therefore, the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him *.

* This subject was finished in the end of February 1715.

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DEPARTING FROM INIQUITY THE DUTY OF ALL WHO NAME THE NAME OF JESUS*.

SERMON LVI.

2 TIM. ii. 19. *And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

A SOLEMN occasion of renewing our covenant with God being before us, it is necessary that we count the cost ere we begin to build. A Christian profession is easy, a Christian practice not so. It is melancholy to see how many in their practice do yoke together the name of Christ and the working of iniquity, as if they had found out that secret of conjoining light and darkness, Christ and Belial, which is hid from all saints. Our text confounds this mystery of iniquity, shewing that men must either part with Christ, or depart from iniquity: *And*, says the apostle, *let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

In this verse, the apostle obviates that scandal, and that shaking discouragement, which arose to the

* This and the following discourses on this text were delivered in May and June 1719.

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the saints from the apostacy of Hymeneus and Philetus, mentioned in ver. 17. Satan would stand on the ruins of these men, and affright the saints with this temptation, Behold! what loose ground you stand upon! these who are now ship-wrecked stood once as fair for the harbour as you. To drive the bottom out of this temptation, the apostle tells them, that for all this, the foundation of the perseverance of real saints stands firm, as in ver. 19. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." As if he had said, The devil has got but his own, he has got none of Christ's. They were among Christ's sheep indeed; they were, however, nothing but the devil's goats, of whom he ever had a sure hold by some iniquity or other, one lust or other; and now by this bond of iniquity he has drawn them out from among the sheep of Christ: 1 John, ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." But the foundation upon which every real saint is built is sure, and can never be overturned. This is the decree of election: (1.) A foundation of God's own laying; (2.) A sealed foundation of God's own sealing; and therefore affording the most ample security. A seal is for confirming and ratifying a decree and purpose; the decree of election, including the perseverance of the saints, as the means to the end, is sealed for this end, and that with a twofold seal: "Having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," and, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

First, It is sealed with God's knowledge, "The Lord

Lord knoweth them that are his." Amongſt the mixed multitude in the church, the Lord knows his own.—He knows thoſe whom he has choſen, he cannot miſtake them, though men may, and ſometimes do, take others for them. He knows them practically, that is, he knows them, to diſtinguiſh them from others, he will take care of them that they be not loſt, as one does with what he knows to be his own; and this ſecures them.

Secondly, It is ſealed with effectual ſanctification: Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption." "Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity." He ſees to the ſanctification of his own, cauſing them to depart from iniquity, which is the only thing which can ruin them; and thus again they are ſecured.

For underſtanding of this, conſider, that the apoſtle here has an eye to the hiſtory of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Numb. xvi. theſe Old-Teſtament apoſtates who periſhed in their ſin. There was a diſpute betwixt them and Moſes and Aaron for the prieſthood; the congregation at length thought the former as much the Lord's as the latter, ver. 19.; though at firſt it ſeems they knew not in whoſe favour to decide. Moſes refers it to God's judgement, ver. 5. "The Lord will ſhew (Heb. make known) who are his, and who are holy;" importing, that the Lord knew who were his. This was the ſecurity of Moſes and Aaron when the ſtroke came. When the earth was to ſwallow up Korah and his company, as in a ſpiritual ſenſe it does all apoſtates, the congregation was, by God's appointment, charged to depart from the tents of theſe wicked men, and to touch nothing that was theirs, ver. 26. This charge was effectual to the congregation, but not

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to these men's wives and their children, ver. 27.; so the latter perished, and the former were secured. It seems this was a typical event, an emblem of the sure standing of the saints, while hypocrites fall away and perish.

This double seal answers to the two parts of the covenant: Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." This covenant shall not fail on God's part, for it hath this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" nor on the part of the saints, for it hath this seal, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—Let us attend,

1. To the seal itself, which, in its general nature, is a command of sanctification; in which consider, —to whom it is directed, upon whom this awful charge is laid. They are the Lord's own words, directed to every one that nameth the name of his Son, that is, to all who profess Christ. And this character of professors serves not only to distinguish them from those without the church, who are incapable of apostacy; but also shews the obligation laid on them to holiness by their profession, the holy name named by them binding them to a holy life. The inconsistency between the holy profession and an unholy life, which, though men join together, God will have separated sooner or later, for he will strip them either of their fair name, or their foul heart and life, in time or in eternity. Consider—the duty commanded, "to depart from iniquity," as from a thing one formerly stood to and followed. Iniquity is that thing which we all naturally follow as a master and leader; but there must be a falling off from it, an apostacy,

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apoſtacy, or falling away from ſin, (as the word imports). And this is the way to prevent apoſtacy from the Lord; for this does import, that it is ſome one iniquity or other indulged, and left to reign in the heart, which betrays profeſſors into apoſtacy, as Judas, Demas, &c.—Conſider,

2. How this can be a ſeal to ſecure the ſaints and elect ones from apoſtacy, ſince it is but a commandment?—To this I anſwer, That the nature of the preceding ſeal would ſeem to have required this expreſſion, "And they that are his depart from iniquity." But it is in form of a command, to ſhew that the ſaints depart from iniquity by choice, and that they are by the Lord himſelf powerfully determined to this choice; ſo that their perſeverance is both rational and gracious.—It is a command, at the ſame time it is a powerful and efficacious command of God, like that in Gen. i. 3. "And God ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light;" a command which effects what it requires in all who are his. It is ſuch a command as that in Numb. xvi. 26. (quoted above), which brought away from the tents of Dathan and Abiram, all who were not to be ſwallowed up with them. And this command is going through wherever the goſpel is preached, and will go till the laſt day; like a briſk wind ſeparating the corn from the chaff, carrying away from the tents of ſin all who are ordained to eternal life, though others dwell on in them ſtill. Thus, though the profane and hypocrital, and all who are not the Lord's, are ſtill held by ſome one bond of ſin or other which is never broken; yet this powerful word looſes the bands of all ſin, ſets them and their ſins aſunder, and keeps them aſunder, who, being ſealed with the firſt ſeal, are his. And all this God's efficacious word can do,

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as well as keep the world from returning into its primitive mass of confusion: Heb. i. 3. "Upholding all things by the word of his power." And so it is a seal securing them from apostacy.—From this subject two general doctrines may be proposed:

DOCT. I. That God doth charge all who name the name of Christ to depart from iniquity.

DOCT. II. That God's charge to depart from iniquity becomes infallibly effectual in all who are his, so as that they do truly depart from iniquity, while others hold it fast to their utter ruin.——I begin with the

First, That God doth charge all that name the name of Christ to depart from iniquity.

IN illustrating this point, I shall shew,

I. Who they are whom the Lord charges to depart from iniquity.

II. What is implied in departing from iniquity, which God chargeth these to do.

III. How he charges these who name the name of Christ to depart from iniquity.

IV. Why these particularly who name the name of Christ are charged to do so.—And then add the practical improvement.

WE are,

I. To shew who they are whom the Lord charges to depart from iniquity.

The text tells you it is every one who names the name of Christ. Thus, it is every one of you, whatever your character be. The poor pagans, amongst whom Christ is not named, God winks

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at them; but he charges you, and every one of you, to depart from iniquity.—This charge is to you,

1. Baptiſed perſons, capable to diſcern betwixt good and evil; the name of Chriſt is called upon you, and you name him; God charges you to depart from iniquity. You are engaged to be the Lord's, to fight againſt the devil, the world, and the fleſh. You have no liberty to follow your luſts and the vanity of your minds. You are charged, as God's ſubjects, to have no more converſe with his enemies; ſince you have given up your names to Chriſt, you are to dwell no more in the tents of ſin. There is no exception of the young more than the old, but every one who nameth the name of Chriſt is to depart from iniquity.—The charge is to you,

2. Who profeſs faith in Chriſt, and hope of ſalvation through him. You name his name, and therefore you are charged. Although, perhaps, you will not ſo much as bow a knee to God, nor have ſo much as a form of godlineſs, yet you have not renounced the faith, nor your part in Chriſt; therefore, ſince you retain his name, and will be called Chriſtians, depart from iniquity; live like Chriſtians, and not like thoſe who never heard of Chriſt.—The charge is to you,

3. Who pray to God through Chriſt. You name the name of Chriſt, and therefore are charged to depart from iniquity. Some of you, perhaps, pray only ſometimes, as if you had more neceſſary buſineſs than ſerving the Lord; ſome pray ordinarily, yet go on in ſome ſinful courſe or other; as if God was only to be ſerved with fair words, and your luſts with the whole courſe of your life. But though this be your ſituation, this charge God lays on you notwithſtanding, Depart from iniquity.—This charge is to you,

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4. Who profeſs faith in Chriſt, and holineſs of life alſo. You name the name of Chriſt, and therefore you ſhould depart from iniquity. Are there not many ſuch, whoſe lives are miſerably ſtained in points of immorality, who walk moſt unſuitably to their character, by reaſon of whom the way of truth is evil ſpoken of? Rom. ii. 23. "Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law through breaking the law, diſhonoureſt thou God?" God charges you to walk up to your character, to your profeſſion, and to depart from iniquity.—This charge is,

Laſtly, To communicants, who name the name of Chriſt in a moſt ſolemn manner, by ſitting down at his table, before God, angels, and men. This charge is to you. You have named this name, and gone back to thoſe iniquities of which you were convinced. Are there not ſome who have adventured to ſtretch forth their hand to the Lord at his table, and have quickly again ſtretched it out to their luſts? To you the Lord is ſaying, Quit your communicating, or your iniquity; join no more an unholy life to ſuch a fair and flaming profeſſion.

WE are now,

II. To ſhew what is implied in this departing from iniquity which God chargeth us to aim at.—Here,

1*ſt*, Let us inquire in what this departure, this happy apoſtacy lies. And,

2*dly*, What of iniquity God charges us to depart from.—We are,

1*ſt*, To inquire in what this departure, this happy apoſtacy lies. There are five things which belong to it.—There is,

1. A giving up with our reſt in ſin. God ſays of

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of sin to all who name Christ, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction." Sinners, ye are settled on your lees, as wine on the dregs, but there must be a separation; you are dwelling in a dangerous place, like Lot in Sodom; lying among the pots, as the Israelites in Egypt; sleeping securely like the sluggard on his bed, "while his poverty cometh as one that travaileth, and his want as an armed man." God chargeth you to awake and bestir yourself, to spring to your feet, and prepare to make progress in the ways of holiness.—There is,

2. A going off from sin, and giving up with it: Job, xxxiv. 32. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." God is saying to you of sin's dominion, as he said to the Israelites at Horeb, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount; therefore up and be gone from the tents of wickedness; ye have dwelt too long in the tents of Mesech and Kedar." May not the time past suffice to have done the will of the flesh? 1 Pet. iv. 3. Ye "have long wandered on the mountains of vanity, come away from them now: Song, iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." Bid a long farewell now, and turn your backs on the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.—There is,

3. A standing off from sin, as the word properly signifies: Prov. iv. 15. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Keep yourselves at a distance. Stand off from it as from a fire that will consume you, as from a leprosy that will infect you, as from an unclean thing that will defile you, as from a sword and arrow which will pierce and wound you to death, as from a serpent whose biting and

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ſtinging is poiſonous, painful, and deadly.—There is,

4. A going off to the other ſide, namely, to Chriſt and holineſs: Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." There can be no neutrality in the matter betwixt ſin and holineſs, no ſtanding between the two: "He that is not with me is againſt me," ſaith Jeſus; "and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad," Matth. xii. 30. Sin and holineſs are ſuch oppoſites, that one of them muſt be predominant in every ſubject capable of either. Apoſtates from religion betake themſelves to the other ſide, and they who run away from Chriſt, they liſt themſelves under Satan's banner; and ſo do thoſe who fall away from ſin, fall in with Chriſt and newneſs of life.—There is,

Laſtly, A going farther and farther from ſin. Even the ſaints muſt always be departing from it: Job, xi. 14. "If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedneſs dwell in thy tabernacles." The firſt departure of the ſaints in converſion, though it be ſincere, is not perfect; but what is then begun, muſt be held on in the progreſs of ſanctification, as a ſpring when opened, runs and runs on, till the mud be wholly removed out of the fountain. Prov. iv. 18. "The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day." They, having this hope, purify themſelves, even as God is pure, 1 John, iii. 3. And hence their departing from ſin conſiſts in daily mortification, and living more and more to righteouſneſs.

Secondly, Let us inquire what of iniquity God charges us to depart from. It is the accurſed thing,

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thing, with which we have nothing to do. We must depart from all sin, from the whole of it.—We must depart,

1. From under the dominion of sin: Rom. vi. 12. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Sin has a dominion over all who are out of Christ. It commands their whole man. The motions of it are the laws they obey. It is a dominion which is opposed to Christ's; in the one, grace reigns unto life; but in the other, sin reigns unto death. Christ offers to break the bands of your yoke; come then to him, and shake off the yoke of your sins, renounce your allegiance, withdraw and refuse obedience to your old masters; say, 'What have I any more to do with idols?'—We must depart,

2. From the practice of sin, Isa. lv. 7. quoted above. Give up with and put an end to your sinful courses; be no longer workers of iniquity, for such workers will get a sad reward of their work, Matth. vii. 23. "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." To what purpose do men pretend to believe in Christ, while they are the servants of sin? How can one serve two such contrary masters? What avails the pretended belief of the truth, which purges not the heart and life of ungodliness and unrighteousness: Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Depart then from the practice of sin,—in your outward man, your life and conversation. God is saying to you this day, James, iv. 8. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Reform your lives, if ever you would have communion with God here or hereafter, Psal. xxiv. 3. 4. Isa. i. 16. "Wash you, make you clean; put

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away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil." Look to your converſation, ſee what is in it offenſive to God, and diſhonouring to his name, and depart from all this: Lam. iii. 40. "Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."——Turn from groſs pollutions of the outward man, and live the Chriſtian life, or give over the Chriſtian name, Jer. vii. 9.—11. There have been ſober Heathens, who were remarkable for their temperance, their juſtice in dealings, and, in a word, regular lives according to the precepts of morality. But how many Chriſtians are there, whoſe lives are ſtained with profane ſwearing and curſing, drunkenneſs, injuſtice, diſhoneſty, filthineſs, and other groſs pollutions, by reaſon of which the way of truth is evil ſpoken of! God charges you, ſince ye name the name of Chriſt, to depart from theſe, upon the pain of eternal excluſion from his preſence, 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Gal. v. 19.—21. Wherefore, let him that did theſe things do ſo no more.——Turn from the leſſer pollutions of the outward man: Acts, xxiv. 16. "And herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward men." A perſon may be drowned in a rivulet, as well as in the deep ſea, if they take not heed to themſelves. Vain and idle words, as well as vile and wicked ones, may ruin a man: Matth. xii. 36. 37. "But I ſay unto you, that every idle word that a man ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned." There is a careleſs way of living, though not the way of open profanity, which yet is offenſive to tender Chriſtians, in which men ſwim to deſtruction in a ſtream of ſins that few in the world

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world make any account of, and they go to hell without making the ſound of their feet to be heard by the way. Hear their doom, Pſal. cxxv. 5. "As for ſuch that turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." "This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind," Eph. iv. 17. Look to the law and to the teſtimony; cleanſe your way by theſe, Pſal. cxix. 9. If the word of God condemn your practice, though all the world juſtify it, God charges you to depart from it.--Depart from the practice of ſin in the inner man, James, iv. 8. (quoted above), Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. Sin may be beaten from the outworks, while it has retired in ſafety to the heart: there may in appearance be a clean life, while the heart is foul all over, and wickedneſs is practiſed at eaſe in the ſecret chambers of imagery. Therefore God charges you, as Jer. iv. 14. "O Jeruſalem! waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved; how long ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?"——Turn, then, from *heart vileneſs*. Since the heart is as open to God as the life it is of little uſe to be as a whited ſepulchre, while within we are full of rottenneſs, to clean the outſide of the cup while the inſide is full of ravening. Purge your hearts of ſpeculative filthineſs; away with filthy imaginations, impure thoughts, envy, covetouſneſs, malice, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 2. Be as much concerned to cruſh theſe vipers in the ſhell, as to reſiſt external actions.——Turn from heart-vanity, Eph. iv. 17. (quoted above). Vain thoughts are like idle words, offenſive to God, and therefore hated and reſiſted by the godly: Pſal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts." Vanity of heart is the next ſtep to, and paves the way for vile-

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neſs of heart and life. It is the houſe ſwept and garniſhed, to which the devil returns with ſeven other ſpirits worſe than himſelf. Therefore labour to get your hearts filled with good motions and holy deſires, regulated by the fear of God, warmed with his love, guarded by watchfulneſs, and ſo buſied as that ye may not feed on wind, but may be taken up about what may be of good uſe, both profitable and pleaſing.

3. Depart from the deviſing and contriving of ſin. A good man may be ſurpriſed into ſin, but for a man to ſit down and contrive ſinful actions, is to make his heart a forge for Satan. To ſleep and wake in purſuing the contrivance of ſin, is the character of a wicked man: Pſal. xxxvi. 4. "He deviſeth miſchief upon his bed, he ſetteth himſelf in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil." Thus men ſet themſelves wilfully in an ill way, which grieves the Spirit, extinguiſhes his motions, and waſtes the conſcience. Men may ſhew their worldly wit in this way, that they are wiſe to do evil; and they may, for a time, proſper in their ways, and bring their wicked devices to paſs, Pſal. xxxvii. 7. But ſuch a habitual practice will prove a man graceleſs, 1 John, iii. 8. 9. and will be bitterneſs in the end, for evil doers ſhall be cut off, Pſal. xxxvii. 9. Depart then from the deviſing of ſin, or quit the name of Chriſtians.

4. Depart from the love of ſin: Ezek. xiv. 6. "Thus ſaith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourſelves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations." 1 John, ii. 15. 16. While the love of ſin reigns in the heart, though they may ſeem to depart from it, the devil has a pledge of them that they will not go far away, but that they will come again back to him. This is that which makes ſo many communicants a ſcandal to their

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their profeſſion; ſo many who put their hand to the plough, to look back. They ſtill love ſinful liberty, their hearts are not divorced from their luſts, and ſo they return to their idols. If you name the name of Chriſt, and profeſs love to him, God charges you,——To turn your eſteem of ſin into diſdain and contempt of it, Iſa. ii. 20. "Caſt your idols to the moles and to the bats." Let grace and holineſs have the aſcendant of ſin and wickedneſs in your eſteem. Account them no more the happy men who take to themſelves a liberty in ſinful courſes, but as men who are moſt miſerable, vile, and pitiful, as ſlaves to ſin, and in the road to deſtruction, Pſal. xv. 4.—— You are charged to turn your love of ſin into hatred and abhorrence of it, Pſal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Hate it as evil, as the worſt of evils, worſe than any ſufferings; hate it as hell: Rom. xii. 9. "Abhor that which is evil." Hate it as deſtructive to the ſoul, as diſhonouring and diſpleaſing to God. Abhor it as you would do a cup of poiſon, though a golden cup. Your love of it muſt be turned into loathing. Look not only upon it as an ill thing, but as a filthy and a loathſome thing, at which one's heart is apt to ſtand, Iſa. xxx. 22. Ezek. xviii. 31. You have long kept at it as a ſweet morſel. Let your ſoul apprehend its real filthineſs, ſo as that you may vomit it up again.—Your former cleaving unto ſin muſt be turned into longing to get rid of it, Rom. vii. 24. "O! wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" Long to be free of it, as a priſoner longs for the opening of the priſon-doors, as a captive for his liberty. Look on it as a burden on your back, which makes you ſtoop; as a burden on your head, which perplexes you how to get free of it; as a burden

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burden on your ſtomach, which you will endeavour to caſt up. This is the heart's departing from ſin, without which all other departures from it will be to little purpoſe.

5. Depart from the enjoyment of the fruits of ſin. The righteous man is one who deſpiſes the gain of oppreſſion, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing of evil. When lovers part, they give back their tokens; and when a ſinner parts with his ſin in earneſt, he will part with its fruits, whatever advantages he has by them. This is ſo evident even to a natural conſcience awakened, that Judas, repenting of his betraying of Chriſt, could not longer bruik the thirty pieces he had made by his ſin; and Zaccheus, ſincerely repenting, is ready to make reſtitution, Luke, xix. 8. It was Balaam's character, he loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs. And he who wilfully keeps the fruit of his ſin, thereby nails down his own foul in a ſtate of impenitency, ſo that he cannot repent of that ſin; he binds the guilt of it on himſelf as with bands of iron and braſs, ſo that it cannot be forgiven while this diſpoſition remains. Wherefore purge out this leaven, and caſt away the fruits with the tree.

6. Depart from the occaſions of ſin, and all temptations to it, Ezek. xiv. 6. (quoted above): It is vain to pretend to depart from ſin, when men do not watch againſt the occaſions to it. They who in a ſiege reſolve really not to give up the town, will defend the outworks as long as they can. Theſe do not depart from, but run into ſin, who caſt themſelves into the way of temptations. Therefore ſays Solomon: Prov. iv. 14. 15. "Enter

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ter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass over it, turn from it, and pass away." Mind the apostle's advice, 1 Thes. v. 22. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Occasions and temptations will seek us out while in this evil world; but let every one who nameth the name of Christ be upon his guard against them.

Lastly, Depart from the workers of iniquity: 2 Cor. vi. 17. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." Let birds of a feather flock together; but if ye name the name of Christ, depart from the tents of wicked men. True, we cannot altogether shun them while we are in the world: but to make choice of ungodly persons for our companions, is the way to ruin: Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Wherefore, if you be setting your faces heavenward, depart from those whose faces are towards hell: Acts, ii. 40. "With many words did Peter testify and exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Psal. xii. 7. "Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

THE

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

SERMON LVII.

2 TIM. ii. 19. *And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, considered to whom the charge is addressed, and what is imported in the charge, "depart from iniquity,"

WE now proceed,

III. To explain the nature of this charge, or to shew how the Lord charges those who name the name of Christ to depart from iniquity.—You may know the nature of this charge given to them in the text, by these following properties.—It is,

1. An universal charge, and this in two respects. *1st*, In respect of the persons naming. *Every one*, says the text, *who nameth the name of Christ:* there is no exception in the charge, it is directed to all and sundry who profess Christ, or who

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who are called Chriſtians, whether ye be communicants or not. Since you are Chriſtians by name, you are charged by the God who made you, to betake yourſelves to the Chriſtian life, and depart from iniquity. Whether you be high and honourable, or low and mean in the world, whatever difference is betwixt you and others, God makes none in this charge. But whether young or old, you are included in the charge, and you cannot reſiſt it, but at your higheſt peril.—2*dly*, The charge is univerſal in reſpect of the ſins which you are to depart from: Ezek. xviii. 31. "Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby you have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart and a new ſpirit: for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?" They are all and every one of them diſhonouring to God, diſpleaſing to him, diſagreeable to the holy name by which you are called, and therefore all of them are to be departed from.—You muſt part with your faſhionable ſins, (with which, to be neighbour-like, you comply, though you ſhould be a wonder to many), as well as with unfaſhionable ones, to which you have no temptation: Rom. xii. 2. "And be not conformed to this world."—You muſt depart from your gainful ſins, as well as thoſe by which you make no profit: Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?"—You muſt part with the ſins of your calling and ſtation in the world, as well as thoſe which lie out of your road. This is an ordinary ſcreen for ſin; but ſee Luke, iii. 12. 13. 14. You muſt part with little ſins, as well as with great ſins; with your darling ſin, your boſom-idol, as well as with others leſs beloved; with the ſins of your conſtitution, that ſin which moſt eaſily beſets you,

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Heb. xii. 1.; in one word, with all your ſins of heart and life.—It is,

2. A peremptory charge: Acts, xvii. 30. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." There are no *ifs* or *ands* for your keeping your ſins, or any of them. Many go about to compound the matter with God. They will part with ſuch and ſuch a ſin, they will only harbour this and that, which is but a little one, a right eye, &c; but in vain, you muſt part with all. If you would give rivers of oil, or the fruit of your body for your ſins, you cannot be allowed to keep any one of theſe accurſed things.—It is,

3. A charge for the preſent time: Pſal. xcv. 7. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." It requires obedience upon hearing of it, a ſpeedy and quick compliance, like that, Pſal. cxix. 60, "I made haſte, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments." You are not allowed to adviſe another day, whether you will depart from iniquity or not. For ought you know, it is now or never with you: 2 Cor. vi. 2. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation." And if you refuſe this once more, God may take you at your refuſal, and determine your eternal ſtate by it, Prov. i. 24. and downwards. Often refuſals are moſt dangerous: Prov. xxix. 1. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy."—It is,

4. A charge with certification, a charge upon your higheſt peril: Heb. xii. 25. "See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh. For if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven." You are charged to depart from

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from iniquity, as you will anſwer it before the Judge of the quick and dead. There is in this inſtance a fivefold certification.—There is this certification,

(1.) That if you do it not, you ſhall incur the high diſpleaſure of God: Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs." Who knows the power of His wrath who is able to frown the creature into the loweſt abyſs of miſery? His anger makes the hills to tremble, the mountains to ſmoke; alas! how can worm man bear it?—There is this certification,

(2.) That if you do it not, you ſhall have no communion with God in duties: Amos, iii. 3. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" You may go to your prayers, but God will not be found of you; he will turn the back and not the face to you: Pſal. lxvi. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." You ſhall find a ſeparation-wall built up between God and you: Iſa. lix. 2. "But your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." You may come to a communion-table, but your harboured luſts ſhall ſeparate betwixt God and you: this will make it a ſapleſs meal to you.—There is this certification,

(3.) That if you do it not, your beſt ſervices and duties will not be accepted, but rejected as an abomination. Remember that God requires obedience rather than ſacrifices; and it is in vain for men to think to pleaſe God in the external acts of devotion, while they do not make conſcience of obeying his commandments in holineſs of life: Prov. xxviii. 9. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer ſhall be an

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abomination." Will men dare to go over the belly of their duty enjoined them from the Lord's word, without ever aiming to comply with it, and yet think to communicate acceptably?—There is this certification,

(4.) That if you do it not, you will get a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing in your approaches to God, Mal. ii. 2. 3. God has made ſome monuments of his vengeance, who have preſumed in their ſins unrepented of to approach his preſence in a ſolemn manner, Levit. x. 1. 3. But becauſe God does not ſtrike men often this way, there are found thoſe who, living in ſecret wickedneſs, come to the Lord's table to cloak their wickedneſs, little conſidering the blaſting curſe to which they expoſe their ſouls.—There is this certification,

(5.) That if you do it not, you ſhall periſh in your iniquity: Heb. xii. 14. "Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord." True holineſs is in all manner of converſation. One thing lacking will ruin and ſink the ſhip of your ſouls, as well as a thouſand.

WE are now,

IV. To ſhew why thoſe particularly who name the name of Chriſt, are charged to depart from iniquity. All to whom the goſpel comes are ſo charged, but thoſe who profeſs Chriſt are in a ſpecial manner thus charged.—For,

1. The practice of iniquity is a contradiction to their profeſſion; ſo that they cannot have this practice, but they give the lie to their profeſſion. An holy profeſſion, and an unholy practice, are ſuch inconſiſtencies, as that the one overthrows the other; "for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion

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munion hath light with darkneſs? and what concord hath Chriſt with Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. By their profeſſion they are friends of God, by their practice they are enemies; by the one they carry Chriſt's yoke, by the other ſin and Satan's. Thus the life is woven into one practical lie.

2. Whoſoever partakes of Chriſt's ſalvation, departs from iniquity; for ſalvation from ſin is the leading and chief part of Chriſt's ſalvation: "Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins." Therefore none can juſtly claim Chriſt as his Saviour, who ſtill lives in ſin. Hence we are told, James, ii. 17. "That faith without works is dead." And a holy life is juſt as neceſſary to evidence our intereſt in Chriſt, as light is neceſſary to evidence that the ſun is riſen.

3. The practice of iniquity in ſuch, is in a peculiar manner offenſive to God, and grieving to his Spirit. Sin is offenſive to his holineſs, wherever it is found; but the offence is doubled in thoſe who name the name of Chriſt: Amos, iii. 2. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: Therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities." Friends wounds pierce deepeſt; and the nearer that the relation is betwixt the offender and the offended, the offence is the worſe taken, Pſal. xli. 9, and lv. 12. 13. The treachery of a traitor is more grievous than the enmity of an open enemy, and more ſeverely puniſhed; and accordingly the impiety of thoſe who name the name of Chriſt, is more heinous than that of others who do not: Matth. xi. 22. "But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgement, than for you." The breaking of a covenant, which all the baptiſed as well as communicants have entered into,

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is moſt aggravating, both in reſpect of ſin and puniſhment. See Matth. xxiv. 51. Compare Jerem. xviii. 34.

Laſtly, It reflects a peculiar diſhonour upon God; ſuch ſins bring a ſcandal upon that holy name and religion which they profeſs: Rom. ii. 24. "For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you." The looſe lives of profeſſors expoſe religion to the ridicule and reproach of its enemies; ſo that they are the Judaſes by whom the Son of man was betrayed. Religion is the worſe of them; and it meets with worſe entertainment in the world, that workers of iniquity do profeſs it.

WE are now,

V. To make ſome practical improvement; and this,

Firſt, In an uſe of information.—This doctrine ſhews us,

1. That all and every one amongſt us, by the authority of God who made us, and in whoſe name we were baptiſed, are obliged to depart from iniquity. You cannot keep it without rebellion againſt your ſovereign Lord, without treachery and breach of your covenant. O that men would ſeriouſly reflect on the authority they are under! conſider the charge given them from heaven, and how they will anſwer for their diſobedience to it, when God riſes up to judgement.—This ſhews us,

2. That for men to abſtain from the ſacrament of the Supper, to this end that they may not be abridged of their liberty in ſinful courſes, is not only impious, but childiſh and fooliſh. It is impious, as it is a determined diſobedience to God's expreſs charge.—It is fooliſh, becauſe this liberty is already cut off from them, and renounced by them

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them, by their taking on the profeſſion and badge of Chriſtianity.—Their abſtaining from the ſacrament of the Supper, unleſs alſo they renounce their baptiſm, and all their part in Chriſt, will not take their name out of this charge from heaven.—We are inſtructed,

3. That they are bold adventurers, and run a dreadful riſk, who come in their ſins, unrepented of, and not ſincerely reſolved againſt, and ſit down at the Lord's table: 1 Cor. xi. 29. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body." It is one of the moſt ſolemn ways of naming the name of Chriſt, to communicate at his table. Whoſo partakes of this bread and cup do ſolemnly and practically confeſs, before God, angels, and men, that they take Chriſt, and part with their luſts, that they proclaim an irreconcileable war againſt the devil, the world, and the fleſh, according to this charge. And for ſuch to be ſtill in the enemy's camp, or to return after the ſacrament to their former known ſinful courſes, is ſolemnly to lie, and to mock God, the conſequences of which will be moſt terrible: Gal. vi. 7. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap."

4. Behold here how the Lord's table is fenced, by a fence of God's own making: "Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity." There is a great privilege before us, the making a moſt ſolemn profeſſion of the name of Chriſt, and our communion with him. Here in the text are God's terms of admiſſion to the privileges, and theſe are moſt reaſonable; which are, that thoſe who ſhall profeſs their coming over to Chriſt's ſide, ſhall deſert the enemy's camp; if they be for the light, they muſt renounce the works

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works of darkneſs; if they take Chriſt, they muſt let theſe go. You hear the terms; lay your hand to your heart, and ſee what you will do. If men will not depart from iniquity, let them not take Chriſt's name in vain. Our text debars from this holy table, whoſoever will indulge themſelves in, and will not part with, any known ſin whatſoever; particularly,

(1.) All neglecters of the duties of piety towards God. Surely prayerleſs perſons, and ſuch as only call on God now and then, ſlighters of God's ordinances, his word, his Sabbaths, depart not from iniquity, but live in it, and cannot with a good conſcience ſit down at his table. Though they may deceive men, they cannot deceive God, who ſays to them, Pſal. l. 16. 17. "What haſt thou to do, to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my covenant in thy mouth? ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee." Depart from theſe, then, or preſume not to ſit down at the Lord's table.

(2.) All who make not conſcience of their duty towards men, righteouſneſs, mercy, and charity. Thoſe who can wrong their neighbours, by undermining and cheating them, picking and ſtealing from them, by unfaithfulneſs in what they have of other men's among their hands, are fitter to join a ſociety of robbers, than to ſit down at a communion-table: Jerem. vii. 11. "Is this houſe, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? behold, I have ſeen it, ſaith the Lord." See 1 Cor. vi. 9.—Thoſe who ſhut up their bowels from the poor and needy, who oppreſs and grind the faces of others, are utterly unfit for this ſeal of God's mercy.—Thoſe who live in hatred of their neighbours, in malice and envy, and who cannot be reconciled to, nor forgive

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forgive those who have done them a wrong, are unfit for this seal of God's pardon: Matth. vi. 15. "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Depart from these, or presume not to go to the table of the Lord; for with a good conscience you cannot come there, unless you be resolved from the heart to be conscientious in all your relations, conscientious neighbours, parents, children, masters, servants, &c.

3. All those who are not sober in their lives: Titus, ii. 12. The gospel "teaches, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Can a man who will not quit the table of drunkenness, be fit for the Lord's table. Do but imagine, a person sitting at the Lord's table one day, and getting drunk another day; what a monstrous and horrible thing is this! Cor. x. 21. "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils." Those who are wedded to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, will but get a stroke to their souls by such a solemn approach. Depart from intemperance, then, and from the vain way of the world, or presume not to approach this holy table.

4. All those who suffer their tongues to go at random, and make no conscience of their words. It is the character of persons very different from the people of God, which you have: Psal. xii. 2. 3. 4. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart do they speak: the Lord will cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things; who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" Let swearers and cursers take heed to this, and let them not deceive themselves with this,

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this, that they do it only in a paſſion; let them ſoberly conſider what agreement there is betwixt a ſolemn profeſſion of the holy name one day, and a profaning it another; betwixt their profeſſing faith in Chriſt, bringing their conſciences to his blood, and their endeavours for God's bleſſing one day, and another day ſwearing by their faith, their conſcience, and curſing themſelves or others. Let liars, filthy ſpeakers, ſlanderers, and backbiters, who uſe their tongues ſo buſily in the ſervice of the devil, know what they have to expect, if they approach the table of the Lord, Pſal. l. 16.—23. And let all know, that a looſe unbridled tongue will prove a man's religion vain; and this vain religion will leave him in the lurch at length: James, i. 26. "If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart; this man's religion is vain." Depart therefore from all theſe, or preſume not to approach the Lord's table.

5. All thoſe who make no conſcience of inward purity, the keeping of the heart: Matth. v. 8. "Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God." Outſide religion may give you outward privileges, but it will leave you to break your teeth on the ſhell, without ever enjoying the kernel of them. Speculative impurities and ſins entertained in the heart, will exclude you out of heaven; and, before the Lord, will exclude you from his table, if you are not repenting of them, and reſolving, through grace, to wreſtle againſt them. Depart alſo from theſe, or venture not to approach this holy table.

6. All thoſe who entertain and indulge themſelves in any known ſin, or in the neglect of any known duty, or are not content to have their ſin and

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and duty discovered to them: Psal. lxvi. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." One thing may mar all in the bargain betwixt Christ and your souls. If one lust be reserved and excepted, it is no bargain: Mark, x. 21. 22. "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions." Men, then, should soberly consider, with what conscience they can sit down at the Lord's table, while they are living in sin, in that which they are convinced to be sin, and yet are never endeavouring to amend it.

5. Behold how the door of access to the Lord's table is opened to all true penitents, whose hearts are loosed from, and set against, all sin. Those who would now sincerely depart from their iniquity, and turn from it without reserve to the Lord, are welcome to name the name of Christ, they have his Father's allowance for it: Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." He saith not, that they who will name the name of Christ must be without iniquity; there are none such in this lower world; but they must depart from it, they must turn their backs on it, though it may tempt them; they are to flee from it, though it may follow; they are to resist it, nay, even though it attack them. Whosoever, then, is brought to be weary of their former sinful courses, are sincerely desirous of, and are resolving through grace to be the Lord's only, wholly, and for ever, to take Christ for their Saviour

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viour from sin and wrath, to take holiness for their way, and God's word for their rule, they have access to the covenant, and to the seal of the covenant, in a comfortable way.

Lastly, This shews us the necessity of self-searching, examining ourselves, on this occasion, 1 Cor. xi. 28. Communicants should examine themselves beforehand as to their sins, as well as with respect to their graces, since God has commanded every one that nameth the name of Christ to depart from iniquity. Make not superficial work of communicating, but examine your heart and life for the time past, that ye may discover what has been and what is your iniquity or iniquities, from which you are now to depart: Lamen. iii. 40. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." One reason why there is so little reformation on the back of communions is, that people do not beforehand take a view of what is wrong, they do not consider what they are to endeavour the reformation of. Now, if a person do not know what he should depart from, how can he depart from it? Wherefore, the same authority which charges you to depart from iniquity, charges you to take a view of what has been amiss in your ways. Take some time for this, and be as particular as you can, to search out the old leaven, and devote to a curse what you find out. Examine how your hearts stand affected to your sins for the time present, whether you really repent of them or not, whether you be ashamed of them before the Lord, are heartily grieved for them, hate them, and are longing to be rid of them, to be delivered from the guilt, the stain, the power, and the indwelling of them, or not. If you have not attained to this, you are, while in this case, utterly unfit for a communion-table. If you have, the master of the

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the feaſt makes you welcome. If your repentance be real, it will reach to all your known ſins whatſoever, without exception, both the root and the branches, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?—Examine how your hearts ſtand affected to them for the time to come; if you be ſincerely reſolved, through grace, on newneſs of life. Surely it is meet at all times, but eſpecially before a communion-occaſion, to be thus reſolved: Job, xxxiv. 31. 32. "Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have borne chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." If you cannot think to give up with your ſinful courſes, or to live without them, do not mock God, and bring more guilt upon your ſouls, by ſitting down at his table: But if you would wiſh to be holy as God is holy, and, under a ſenſe of your inability to ſubdue ſin, deſire to betake yourſelf to Chriſt for his ſanctifying Spirit, reſolving through grace to watch againſt ſin, and reſiſt the motions of it, ye are welcome gueſts to the Lord's table.—We ſhall only add,

Secondly, An uſe of exhortation. We exhort you to depart from iniquity, turn from your ſins, ſince you name the name of Chriſt. Let none think to find ſhelter for their ſins under this, namely, that they intend not to take the ſacrament. You have taken a ſacrament already, which obliges you to this, and therefore I charge one and all of you to depart from your iniquity this day.——If you will not, know the ſame Chriſt, whoſe name you name, while you will not depart from iniquity, will be your great enemy: Luke, xix. 27. "But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither and ſlay them before me." Sin is the great make-bate betwixt God and the ſinner,

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and the friendſhip with your luſts will be enmity with the Lord. Hereupon I would aſk you, How think ye to live on God's ground, amongſt the midſt of his creatures, while God is your enemy? Know ye not that all the creatures are banded together againſt him to whom God is an enemy? Does not the meat thou eateſt ſay, Lord, if thou wilt allow me, I will chock this rebel? The earth, I will ſwallow him up who will not depart from iniquity?—Again, let me aſk you, How will you look the king of terrors in the face? What comfort will theſe ſins which thou now holdeſt faſt leave thee, when the old ſinful tabernacle begins to fall down, the ſoul to flee away, and the carcaſe is brought down to a grave, both to be impriſoned, the former in hell, the latter in the grave, till the reſurrection? How will you bear to be raiſed up, and ſiſted before the great tribunal, to anſwer for all thoſe ſins you will not now depart from, and to receive the eternal reward of your works?

Particularly, O communicants! preſume not to ſit down at the Lord's table, without departing from iniquity. Purge out the old leaven, that ye may keep the feaſt.—O communicants! will ye betray the Son of man with a kiſs? When ſitting down at his table, you profeſs yourſelves to be his friends, members of his family. But if you depart not from iniquity, you will betray him as ſure as Judas did, for you are in league with his enemies. And your vows at the communion-table will become like Sampſon's green withs, which were broken at the firſt onſet, and you will return back again with more eagerneſs to theſe ſins from which you never really departed: you know what will be the end of ſuch conduct.—Will ye go out againſt Chriſt as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves? You do it by going in your ſins unrepented

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repented of to his table. We are to commemorate his love in dying for our ſins, ſins which furniſhed a Judas to betray him, nails to pierce him, and a ſpear to enter into his ſide. And will you preſume on this exerciſe, holding faſt theſe ſins, and refuſing to let them go? If you would proclaim war againſt Chriſt, inſtead of ſitting down at his table, you could reach him no other way, than you will do by holding faſt iniquity. It is the day of his eſpouſals, of his coronation; let us not make it a day of crucifying him afreſh.—Would you ſee Jeſus, and in him God reconciled to your ſouls, bleſſing you with the ſeal of your pardon, peace, and right to eternal life? Come away to Chriſt freely from your ſins, make your moſt beloved luſts ſtepping-ſtones, over the belly of which you will come to his table, putting a bill of divorce into the hand of them all, with a ſincere reſolution, through grace, never to entertain them willingly again. In this event, I know nothing to make the ſeparation betwixt him and you: Iſa. lix. 1. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not ſhortened, that it cannot ſave; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." But, alas! ſome ſay, I cannot get rid of my ſins. To this I anſwer, Is thine iniquity thy burden, which thou wouldſt as fain be rid of, as of an oppreſſing weight? Then thy heart is away from it, and God accepts thee in this caſe, ſincerely, though not perfectly, to be departed from it. It is one thing to be ſitting ſtill in a houſe, willingly entertaining a gueſt; another, to be labouring to get away, though the troubleſome gueſt will not part with us. If the latter be thy caſe, you may come to the Lord at his table, with hopes of welcome, you will then be ſtrengthened for the ſtruggle, and ſhall get the ſeal of complete victory in due time. Amen.

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THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

SERMON LVIII.

2 TIM. ii. 19. *And let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.*

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſes, offered all that was intended on the firſt doctrine taken from this ſubject, I now proceed to a conſideration of

DOCT. II. That God's charge to depart from iniquity is infallibly effectual in all who are his, ſo as that they do truly depart from iniquity, while others hold it faſt to their own ruin, Acts, xiii. 48. Matth. i. 21.—or briefly thus, That all the elect of God ſhall depart from iniquity.

IN explaining this, I ſhall,

I. Shew when and how far this charge is effectual in all who are his.

II. Evince

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II. Evince the truth of this doctrine, that the charge is effectual in all who belong to God.

III. We shall, in the conclusion, make some practical improvement.

We are,

I. To shew when and how far this charge is effectual in all who are his. I shewed before, from what of sin we are to depart. And, in general, this charge is effectual, in all the parts of it, in them who are the Lord's. But more particularly,

1. It is effectual in them who are his, in this life. Here the work is truly and happily begun; they all become saints on earth, who shall be saints in heaven, Psal. xvi. 3. Though by nature they are wild olives, growing in the forest of the world lying in wickedness, they are plucked up and planted in the nursery of grace, where they grow till transplanted into paradise; while their fellows stand still in that forest till cut down for the fire. It is effectual in this life, in a gospel-sense, though not in a law-sense, in respect of a perfection of parts, though not of degrees. And this in three repects:

(1.) It is effectual in all who belong to God, in so far as they come freely away from sin in conversion. Some may be longer in coming away than others, they may abide in the tents of wickedness, after other sealed ones are gone, but they shall infallibly follow sooner or later: For, says Jehovah, Joel, iii. 21. "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." This one and the other may often be passed by; while others are taken, who shall certainly have a place in the building of mercy.

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Here consider the following things:—That all mankind by nature lie in wickedness: They are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. They are in the devil's camp, they are bound with the bands of wickedness, estranged from God and all that is truly good. They will not leave it, because it is their element.—Consider also, that yet among them God has some which he has chosen to life, and whom, in his eternal purpose of love to their souls, he has sealed as his own, to bring them away, and to make them partakers of his glory. —Consider farther, that the alarm of the gospel comes indefinitely to all, whether they be the Lord's or not. It comes to the devil's camp, and says, 2 Cor. vi. 17. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separated, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." It says as Moses to Israel, in respect of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." Or as the angel to Lot, "Escape for thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain," Gen. xix. 17.—Consider, that as God knows who among them are his, so he infallibly brings them away from among the rest, in obedience to the gospel-alarm: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believe," Acts, xiii. 48. This march out of the devil's camp, was begun at the first preaching of the gospel in paradise, and is continued to this day, though sometimes more, sometimes fewer go off together. And it will be continued until there be not one of them that belong to God left among them; and then comes the end.

Now, in conversion, the Spirit sounding the alarm, Depart ye, depart ye; they that are the Lord's are impressed by it: so the dead soul awakes, the

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the impenitent heart melts, they ſpring to their feet, reſolved and determined to depart from the tents of ſin. The devil and thoſe who are his, do what they can, by allurements and threats, to hold them ſtill; but under the conduct of the Captain of the Lord's hoſt, they march out with banners diſplayed, and depart freely from iniquity; the trumpet ſtill ſounding, "Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity." As to the nature of their departure, we obſerve the following things.

[1.] They depart from ſin ſincerely. They depart from it, becauſe it is a departing from God, contrary to his holy nature and law; they depart from it as ſin, Luke, xv. 18. They who belong to God, leaving their ſins, leave them not from the inferior motives *only* of danger to themſelves, here or hereafter; but from higher motives alſo, becauſe they are offenſive to God, they diſhonour his Son, grieve his Spirit, tranſgreſs his law, and deface his image. Thus the worthy communicant reforms, and departs from iniquity.—Here, however, there may be propoſed this.

Queſtion, How do they with thoſe ſins from which they formerly departed from lower motives only, or which left them ere they left them?—To this I anſwer, That they do with them as men uſe to do with thoſe who die by their own hands. They bury them diſgracefully, and throw ſtones upon their graves. They look back to them, and loath them. They left them at firſt for their own ſake; they go farther away from them for God's ſake. They neglected them before, as having no uſe for them; they abhor them now for their intrinſic loathſomeneſs. They were hanging before betwixt heaven and earth, like Abſalom on the oak; now they thruſt the darts into their hearts, and throw them into a pit.

[2.] They

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[2.] They depart from iniquity voluntarily: not out of conſtraint, but choice: Pſ. cxix. 30. "I have choſen the way of truth: thy judgements have I laid before me." They do not caſt away ſin only as one would do a live coal out of his boſom, becauſe it will burn him; or a ſerpent, becauſe it will ſting him; but as a loathſome, unclean thing, becauſe it will defile him. Some depart from their iniquity againſt their wills. They part with it as Phaltiel with his undutiful wife, 2 Sam. iii. 16. They dwell in the tents of ſin, and will not move hence, till there is no abiding longer there for them; as the covetous man parts with the world at death, or when it is violently taken from him; whether he will or not, he muſt let it go. But this departure is not laſting, ſuch will go back again, Pſal. lxxviii. 34.—37.—And ſo hence there occurs a

Queſtion, May not a perſon be driven from his iniquity by the terror of God? To this I anſwer, I conceive that when the time comes, at which a perſon who belongs to God is to depart from iniquity, there are two trumpets which ſound in his ears. The *firſt* trumpet is that of the law, which is ſo terrible, that it makes the man's ſoul quake within him, and makes an earthquake in the devil's camp to him, ſo that he finds no more firm footing there, nor reſt as before, but he muſt flee for his life in conſternation. But if there be no more, he may flee from one part of it to another, but he will ſtill abide within the trenches. The *ſecond* trumpet is that of the goſpel, the ſtill ſmall voice, ſounding pardon, peace, welcome, to Chriſt's camp, and to the feaſt of fat things, to all thoſe who will depart from iniquity. This takes the trembling ſinner by the heart, and makes him come away freely and voluntarily from iniquity:

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iniquity: So that, although the trumpet of the law ſhould ceaſe, this charms him ſo as he can ſtay no longer in the tents of ſin, Hoſea, ii. 14. and iii. 5.

[3.] They depart from iniquity reſolutely, abſolutely, and unconditionally, coſt what it will; they cannot, they will not, they muſt not ſtay. Others may do as they pleaſe; but, with Joſhua, they peremptorily ſay, "We will ſerve the Lord," Joſh. xxiv. 15. If all the world ſhould ſit ſtill, they will go, though they ſhould go alone. Satan may frame many objections againſt their departure, and enter into terms for their ſtaying, as Pharaoh with the Iſraelites, about their departure from Egypt. But converting grace makes their ears deaf to all propoſals of this nature. If they ſhould leave all they have in the world, they muſt leave ſin, Luke, xiv. 26.; if it ſhould be never ſo much to their loſs as to their temporal intereſt, they will depart; if they muſt go through fire and water, make their way out of it through briars and thorns,—any thing but ſin: Rev. xiv. 4. "Theſe are they who follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth." Theſe were redeemed from among men, being the firſt-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. He whoſe departing from iniquity depends on *ifs* and *ands*, effectual grace has not yet reached his heart.

[4.] They depart from iniquity ſpeedily, without delays: Pſal. cxix. 60. "I made haſte, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments." Many good purpoſes come to nothing by delays. The man intends to part with ſuch and ſuch a ſin, to comply with ſuch and ſuch a duty, only he cannot do it yet. And whereas there is one hindrance in his way at preſent, there are two after; and ſo the project flies up for good and all. But they

who

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who belong to God are ſnatched away as brands out of the burning. They will delay no longer to depart from ſin, than one delays to fling a burning coal out of his boſom, or a ſtinging ſerpent. Being determined to depart, they are determined to depart without delay, becauſe a moment's delay in this matter may be an eternal loſs.

[5.] They depart from it univerſally: Pſal. cxix. 104. "Through thy precepts I get underſtanding; therefore I hate every falſe way."—Ezek. xviii. 31. "Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions whereby you have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?" Whoſo departs from one ſin ſincerely, and as ſin, departs from all ſin known to them to be ſuch; becauſe the reaſon moving him to depart from one, is to be found in all. Every ſin is a deadly wound to the ſoul; and therefore, if but one remain uncured, the man is a dead man: Matth. v. 29. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell." One ſin retained will make all our reformation naught, as Abimelech, the ſon of Jerubbaal's concubine, was the death of his ſeventy ſons by his wives, excepting one, Jud. ix. 5. Hence thoſe who belong to God depart from all ſin without exception, however others may have their reſerved idols. Thus they depart from that ſin which is the ſin of their conſtitution, that ſin which attends their calling in the world, that ſin to which they have the ſtrongeſt and moſt frequent temptations: Pſal. xviii. 23. "I was alſo upright before him, and I kept myſelf from mine iniquity." That ſin which moſt eaſily beſets us, Heb. xii. 1. is the predominant evil the heart muſt be

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be looſed from, the right hand, and right eye, the one thing lacking, which mars all other things; from which, however loth they be to part, they will be made willing to part with it in the day of power. Thus, all who belong to God do come freely away from ſin in converſion; and ſo the charge is effectual.

(2.) It is effectual in all who belong to God, in ſo far as they never again return to it as formerly, but perſevere in that courſe of holineſs which is once begun. They who have once freely departed from the tents of wickedneſs, ſhall never again come back to them, they ſhall never mix again with the ungodly world, from among whom they have come out: Pſal. xii. 7. "Thou ſhalt keep them, O Lord, thou ſhalt preſerve them from this generation for ever." Converting grace fixes a gulf betwixt the two, which they ſhall never repaſs. I own a gracious ſoul may fall from its firſt love, to carnal ſluggiſhneſs, remiſſneſs, and indiſpoſition for duties. Thus it was with the church of Epheſus, Rev. ii. 4. Yea, they may fall into ſome enormous offences and groſs tranſgreſſions of the law, as Peter did, and they may for ſome time lie in theſe unrepented of, as David and Solomon did; and they may relapſe into the ſame ſins formerly mourned over, Rev. xxii. 8.; compare ch. xix. 10. Thus, Abraham denied his wife twice. They may thus fall after ſolemn engagements to the Lord, as Peter did, after the firſt communion, and after gracious manifeſtations, Song, v. 1.—3. —To be more particular,

[1.] They ſhall never fall back to ſin, with the ſame heart and good-will which they had to it before; not with a full conſent, but with reluctance: Rom. vii. 19. "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I."

They

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They may be ſin's captives while they are here, driven back to ſome iniquity or other by the force of temptation; but ſin's ready ſubjects they ſhall never more be. There is a principle of grace within them, which, at the loweſt ebb, will check that full ſpring-tide of ſin which they were wont to have before they departed from it, Song, v. 2.

[2.] They ſhall not lie ſtill in ſin, but ſooner or later riſe again to repentance. So did Peter, David, and Solomon. They ſhall not live in the habitual practice of any known ſin. Hypocrites, after ſolemn engagements to God, may return and live in the habitual practice of their former luſts; like the mixed multitude founding a retreat into Egypt, they may fall away, and never recover. But though a ſtraying ſlave never be ſought after, a ſtraying ſon will be. Thoſe who belong to God may fall in the way, but they ſhall never fall out of God's way of holineſs: Job, xvii. 9. "The righteous ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger." Having once departed from iniquity, they ſhall hold on their way; for—he that ſet them on the way ſhall keep them in it: 2 Theſſ. iii. 3. "The Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil." The Lord is the keeper of all thoſe who have departed from iniquity, and he watches night and day, Iſa. xxvii. 2. They are kept by the word of God, which is a ſufficient defence againſt the powers of darkneſs. Their keeper never leaves them, nor forſakes them, Heb. xiii. 5. When once Chriſt takes hold of a ſoul, he will never part with it again, however low the paſs to which they may be brought: Pſal. lxxiii. 23. "Nevertheleſs, I am continually with thee; thou haſt holden me by my right hand." None can looſe his hold, nor pluck them out of his hand,

John,

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John, x. 28.—Again, they have an immortal principle within them for carrying them forward. The Spirit of Chriſt dwells in them for ever, John, xiv. 16. Grace is a never-dying ſeed, which remaineth in them, 1 John, iii. 9. This, by virtue of the covenant, ſecures the continuance of their departure from iniquity, Jer. xxxii. 40. Hence, when the believer ſteps aſide from the Lord, there is ſtill in him a reſtleſſneſs, more or leſs, until he return, like the dove into the ark, Song, v. 2.—Farther, ſin can never recover that dominion over him which it has loſt, and that irrecoverably: Rom. vi. 14. "For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you." And though, in the war with ſin, corruption may ſometimes get the upper hand, yet grace ſhall overcome at length: Gen. xlix. 19. "Gad, a troop ſhall overcome him; but he ſhall overcome at the laſt."

3. It is effectual, in ſo far as they go farther and farther from it in the progreſs of ſanctification: Prov. iv. 18. "But the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day:" Iſa. xl. 31. "But they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength," &c.—Grace is of a growing nature; and though it grows not at all times, yet it does grow. The life of a ſaint is a going up out of the wilderneſs of this world; and the farther he goes, he is the nearer his journey's end. And thus a gracious ſoul is ſtill departing from iniquity, and ſhall depart.—He departs, by watching againſt it; and always the more watchful, the farther from it: Pſal. xxxix. 1. "I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." Any diſtance we can be at from ſin while here, is a diſtance of oppoſition; and the more the Chri-

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ſtian has his eyes in his head, to obſerve the motions of the enemy, to avoid occaſions and temptations to ſin, he is ſet at the greater diſtance from it. Unwatchfulneſs is the ruin of many. They who belong to God ſhall be made to watch; and if they be at a time taken nodding, it ſhall ſerve to make them more awake afterwards.—Again, they ſhall depart, by keeping up a ſtruggle againſt ſin: Gal. v. 17. "For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh." Sin may get quiet harbour in the breaſt of a hypocrite, but in thoſe who are the Lord's it can get no more eaſe than mud in a ſpring-well, where there will be a working it out: John, iv. 14. "The water that I ſhall give him," ſaith Jeſus, "ſhall be in him a well of living water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life." And this ſtruggle will continue as long as there is a Canaanite in the land; for it is not, as in the hypocrite, againſt ſome kind of ſins only, but againſt the whole kind of them. And the gracious ſoul will be groaning, longing, wreſtling for the perfect delivery, no truce being to be made here, but the war undertaken for extirpation, Rom. vii. 24. Phil. iii. 13. 14.—Finally, he departs, by growing in grace: Pſ. xcii. 12. "The righteous ſhall flouriſh like the palm-tree; he ſhall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Many go back to their old luſts again, becauſe, though they ſeem to depart from ſome ſins, yet, being deſtitute of grace, they cannot grow in the oppoſite graces, and therefore it fares with them, as in Matth. xii. 44. 45. "Thus their laſt ſtate is worſe than the firſt." But as a man is always the farther from his diſeaſe, the more that nature is ſtrengthened; ſo the gracious ſoul is ſet the farther from ſin, the more that the contrary graces are made to grow in him.—From this part of the ſubject, we may learn,

1. That

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1. That if ye be the Lord's people by ſincere dedication, his covenant-people, ye have come away freely from all your luſts, unto himſelf. You have been at his table, ſolemnly devoting yourſelves to him: if you have dealt honeſtly with him, and have not eaten and drunk unworthily, your hearts are looſed from all your idols, you have with heart and good-will turned your back on the Sodom of ſinful courſes, with ſincere reſolutions not to look back. However little influence this charge has had on others, it is effectual on you; you have taken the alarm, and have begun your march out of the tents of ſin, you dare no more be diſobedient to the heavenly viſion. If ſo, it is well; if otherwiſe, you have but mocked God, and wronged your own ſouls.—You may learn,

2. That if you be indeed the Lord's people by covenant ſavingly, you will not go back to your former luſts: Luke, ix. 62. "And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." You are not to return to your vain converſation. You have lifted up your hand to the Lord, and you cannot go back in point of right; and unleſs you have been dealing deceitfully with God, you will not go back. Apoſtacy and backſliding take the maſk off hypocrites; and fearful is their condition, for fallen ſtars were never genuine ſtars, but ſtars only in appearance: 1 John, ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt that they were not of us." Think on this when temptations come, that to return into the tents of ſin, is to prove yourſelves not to be the Lord's.—We may learn,

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Laſtly, That if you be the Lord's by election, you ſhall part with thoſe ſins which now part betwixt the Lord Chriſt and you. For though you hide yourſelves from him who came to ſeek you, he notwithſtanding will find you out; and as faſt as your luſts hold you, and you them, the Lord will make you fain to caſt them as fire out of your boſom, if he has any thoughts of eternal love to you. If he has not, you will get them kept, and you may embrace and hug them during life and through eternity; they ſhall claſp about you like ſerpents, ſtinging with endleſs deſpair. But it looks fearfully ill, while the trumpet of the goſpel, day after day, and year after year, is ſounding an alarm to depart from ſin, and others are marching away in your ſight, that you are ſtill ſtaying behind.

The life of a ſaint is a departing from iniquity, and this is their work while here; ſo that, although it ſtill cleaves unto them, yet they are not ſitting down contented in it, but endeavouring the ſeparation for altogether. Thus the charge is effectual, in ſo far as they go farther and farther from it.—Here there is another

Queſtion, But is it not often ſeen, that Chriſtians are farther from iniquity at firſt than ever they are afterwards? hence many complain that their days, after a long ſtanding in religion, are not found to be by far ſo good as when they were but young Chriſtians.—In anſwer to this, I obſerve,

1. That there are not a few who, though never found converts, yet had awakening grace at their firſt ſetting out in a profeſſion, making a mighty reel among their affections, and a great change on their life; which wearing away by degrees, they ſettled on a lifeleſs empty form of godlineſs, and ſo were farther from iniquity then than ever before.

But

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But this will not prove it to be ſo with the truly godly.—I obſerve,

2. That Chriſtians of a long ſtanding in religion have their ſleeping and decaying times, and young Chriſtians alſo have theirs. In Song, v. 2. we find the ſpouſe aſleep after great manifeſtations; and in Matth. xxv. 5. we find the wiſe, as well as the fooliſh virgins, ſlumbering and ſleeping. And if we compare the ſleeping days of aged Chriſtians with the waking days of thoſe who are only young, no doubt the latter has the advantage of the former, even as a working boy is in leſs danger of the enemy's ſurpriſe, than a ſleeping man. But ſince the power of grace effectually ſtirs up both from their ſpiritual ſlumbers, it is but juſt the compariſon paſs betwixt them, in the waking frame.—I obſerve,

3. That there is a difference betwixt the bulk of religion, and the ſolidity and weight of it; the vehement commotions, and its firmneſs and rootedneſs. Young Chriſtians may be of more bulk than the old in reſpect of many gliſtering affections, ariſing from the newneſs of the thing, which are mixed with it, and afterwards go off. But with old Chriſtians, though there be leſs bulk, it is more ſolid and weighty; as the gold, the oftener it is in the fire, is the more refined, though not ſo bulky. Young Chriſtians have more vehement affections, but the old have them more regular, rooted, and firm; thus the old is better. The longer one ſtands in Chriſtianity, certainly he has the more experience of the goodneſs of God, and of the corruption of his own heart, and of the danger from ſpiritual enemies. Hence he muſt be more reſolute in ſolid ſerious dependence upon the Lord for all; more humble, ſelf-denied, and more firm againſt temptation; and, in one word,

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have more of a regular compoſed tenderneſs, with reſpect to ſin and duty. And herein lies the ſtreſs of departing from iniquity: 1 John, v. 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.

Young ſoldiers may ruſh upon the enemy with greater briſkneſs, but the old ones ſtand the ground beſt, and abide the ſhock more firmly. Wherefore, let not Chriſtians of long ſtanding in religion be diſcouraged as if they were not departing from iniquity, becauſe they do not make ſuch viſible progreſs as when religion was new to them, if there remain with them a rooted tenderneſs with reſpect to any thing that may be diſpleaſing to God, with a ſincere purpoſe and endeavour to keep a conſcience void of offence towards God and towards man: 2 Cor. i. 12. "For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world."—Add to this, a ſerious longing to be freed from the body of death, Rom. vii. 24.; and to be perfected in holineſs, Phil. iii. 13. 14. For as the progreſs of the ſhip in the main ocean is not ſo diſcernible as when it was coming off from the ſhore, tho' it may move as faſt; ſo it is no wonder that the progreſs of the Chriſtian of long ſtanding be not ſo viſible as at the firſt; or as the growth of a tree the firſt year is more diſcerned than after, ſo it may be with the Chriſtian.

Having thus ſhewn how far the charge is effectual in this life, we add upon this head,

That it is effectual in all who are the Lord's people, at death; and this in ſo far as that then they perfectly depart from ſin, and ſin from them.

They

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They come then to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. There is a great difference betwixt the godly and the wicked in life, and a ſtill greater at death.—As the wicked do in life hold faſt their iniquities amidſt all the means of juſtification and ſanctification offered them; ſo at death all theſe means are removed for ever out of their ſight; and thus their iniquities meet upon them, to prey on their ſouls for ever. Then ſin is ſettled in its full power in their ſouls as on its own baſe. No more hopes nor poſſibility of ſanctification; and the ſeveral pieces of guilt, as cords of death, are twiſted about them for ever. As ſin in the godly is in their life loofed at the root, ſo at their death it is rooted up; as in life they depart from it ſincerely, ſo at death perfectly. The body of death goes with the death of the body, that as death came in by ſin, ſo ſin may go out by death. Now, ſin is in the godly as the leproſy in the walls of the houſe, which, therefore, being taken down, the leproſy is removed; when the gracious ſoul drops the mantle of the body, it will at the ſame inſtant drop all the uncleanneſs cleaving to it. Amen.

THE

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THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

SERMON LIX.

2 TIM. ii. 19. *And let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.*

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſe, ſhown that this charge is effectual with all who are the Lord's, both in this life and at death, we now proceed, as was propoſed,

II. To evince the truth of the doctrine, that the charge is effectual in all who belong to God. -- With this view, I would have you to conſider the following things.

1. Conſider that it was for this purpoſe that they were elected: Eph. i. 4. "According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame, before him in love." All whom God has choſen to life, are choſen to holineſs; ſo that the decree of election in their favour, ſecures their departure from iniquity. If a perſon had determined to

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to save a certain number of madmen, going about to kill themselves, with knives in their hands, the resolution to save them would import the taking the knives out of their hands; so here, reprobates may get their lusts kept, but the elect shall not. Wherefore,—as sure as the elect cannot perish, and the Lord will lose none who are his, so sure shall all who are his depart from iniquity. There is no separating of the means and the end, which, in God's decree, are firmly joined together. Life is the end, departing from iniquity the means; therefore, they who are ordained to life shall infallibly depart from it.—As sure as the purpose of God cannot be broken or disappointed, so sure shall they who are his depart from iniquity. It is God's purpose in election, to bring them out of their sin, to everlasting life: Eph. i. 4. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love."

This purpose cannot be broken, for says God, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10. Therefore, they shall depart from iniquity; and whoever holds it fast are strangers to the grace of God.—Consider, that,

2. It is the end of their redemption by Christ. Why did Christ give himself for these who are his? It was that "he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify them unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. Why gave he himself for his church? It was, that, "he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word," Eph. v. 26. He came to save them, but from what? From their sins, Math i. 21. Sin had a double hold of those who were his; it held their consciences, by the cords of guilt; and held their heart, will, and affections,

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affections, by the intereſt it had got there. Chriſt ſhed his blood, by the efficacy thereof to looſe the former, and procured the influences of his Spirit, who, by his indwelling, might looſe the latter.

Thoſe for whom Chriſt did not die will continue in their ſins, and periſh in them. They are not willing to part with them, and the influences of the Spirit are not procured for them to make them willing. Had Chriſt been to ſave ſinners in their ſins, then thoſe who will not be ſaved from their ſins might have been ſaved from death. But it is not ſo. Thoſe for whom Chriſt died ſhall infallibly depart from iniquity; and ſuch are all thoſe who are the Lord's: John, x. 15. "I lay down my life for the ſheep." Otherwiſe, the deſign of Chriſt's death is fruſtrated; he died in vain, and all the promiſes of a ſeed, made by the Father to his Son, in the covenant, turn to nothing; to imagine which is blaſphemous.

Chriſt bare a good will to thoſe who were his from eternity, and would have them made happy. But they were unholy, therefore he muſt redeem them from their iniquity, by his blood; otherwiſe, the gates of the city would have remained cloſed for ever on them. And now, that the ranſom of the blood of the Son of God is paid, is it poſſible that the priſoners can remain undelivered? Some may be apt to ſay, O! will ever Chriſt ſanctify ſuch an unholy creature as I am? I will ſurely periſh by the hand of my luſts, and will never get free of them. Why, poor ſoul, if this be thy exerciſe, to depart from thy iniquity, it is an evidence thou art his; and it is his honour and intereſt, to make thee holy, and deliver thee from the dominion and power of thy powerful luſts, in ſo far as he ſhed his blood for this end. And, however worthleſs thou art in thyſelf,

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thyſelf, thou art dear bought, and therefore muſt not, canſt not, be loſt.

3. Conſider, that it is the end of their effectual calling. They are called to be ſaints, Rom. i. 7. The world lies in wickedneſs. Thoſe who are the Lord's by election, lie among them, till the effectual call come, which brings them out from among them: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you," 2 Cor. vi. 17. This call is neceſſarily connected with election, and it can never be effectual without the ſoul's being brought to depart from iniquity: "Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called," Rom. viii. 30. The converſion of all the elect, their regeneration, their tranſlation from the power of darkneſs, are infallible ſecured, and conſequently their departing from iniquity. For what is converſion, but turning from ſin unto God? and regeneration, but ariſing from the death in ſin?

4. Conſider, that it is the end of all providences. Providence has an eye on all the children of men, but has a ſpecial eye on thoſe who are the Lord's people. Favourable diſpenſations are cords of a man, to draw ſinners from their iniquity: Luke, i. 74. 75. "That he would grant us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs, before him, all the days of our life." Afflictive diſpenſations are ſcourges, to drive them from their iniquity: Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin:" Heb. xii. 10. "He chaſteneth for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs." True, they are not effectual on many; mercies do not allure them, judgements

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ments do not affright them. But wisdom is justified of her children. And can it be imagined that they shall not be effectual to them?

5. Consider, that it is the end of all ordinances. Wherefore does the Lord send the gospel to sinners, but that they may depart from iniquity? Titus, ii. 11. 12. "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The word is designed for the sanctification of souls: John, xvii. 17. "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." The promises, the threatenings, the doctrines, all lead away from sin. The sacraments of the New Testament are also appointed for this same end. In a word, all gospel-ordinances whatever, Eph. iv. 12. They are all "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." These will have their effect on those who are his, however they be in vain to others.

Lastly, Consider, that since all who shall be saved shall depart from iniquity, and all who are the Lord's shall be saved, it is evident, that all who are his shall depart from iniquity. Such as continue in their sin can have no communion with God here, much less hereafter, Psal. v. 4.—6. and Psal. xv. throughout. No sooner did the reprobate angels depart from holiness to sin, but God thrust them down to hell, 2 Peter, ii. 4. Adam was driven from the tree of life, on his sinning, Gen. iii. 22. Who then can expect to see the face of God in heaven, without departing from iniquity?—We now come,

III. To make a practical improvement of the whole;—and this,

First,

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First, In an use of information.—This subject informs us,

1. Whence the success of the Gospel is derived. We see it has its effect on some, in turning them from their sins unto God, while others, having the same means of grace, are untouched by them. Trace this to the spring-head, and it must be ascribed, neither to the free-will of the party, the piety or parts of the preacher, but to the eternal love of God terminating on some. There is a time of loves set in the counsel of God, respecting all the elect; and when this time comes, they shall infallibly answer the call.—We may see,

2. That the unsuccessfulness of the gospel, barrenness and impenitency under the means of grace, are matters which draw very deep. Men think little of disobeying God's charge, sounded continually in their ears, by the gospel; think little of going on in sins, from which they are charged to part; but did they consider that the charge must be infallibly complied with, by all who are the Lord's, their own sitting of it would be a terror to themselves. For, in so far as they comply not with it, so far they shew themselves not to belong to God. Where God has much people, the gospel will have much success.—We may learn,

3. That iniquity is that abominable thing which God hates. It is the greatest of all evils, and therefore, as it is that thing which God sets himself particularly against, so we in a special manner should set ourselves against it. Poverty, meanness, and contempt in the world, God suffers in those who are dear to him; but he will not suffer sin to have dominion over them, and at length will quite expel it from those who are his. He will not bear with it in his own, as he hates it for itself.—We are informed,

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4. That there is a divine power comes along with the charge, to all who are the Lord's people, when once the time of love is come. This is that which makes them depart, while others hold faſt their iniquity: Iſa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The elect of God are as much dead in treſpaſſes and ſins as others are; ſin has the ſame dominion over them as over others. But with the word the Spirit enters into them, and brings them away from the tents of ſin, cauſes them to riſe up out of their graves, while others lie ſtill in them.—We may learn,

Laſtly, That departing from iniquity is abſolutely neceſſary to evince that we belong to God, becauſe all ſuch do depart from iniquity. It is the fruit of election and converſion; and ſo the great evidence of intereſt in God's eternal love, and his preſent favour.—For underſtanding this, three things are to be noticed.

(1.) That a perſon's being in his ſin, ſtill under the dominion of it, unſanctified, unholy, is a certain evidence of his being in a ſtate of enmity with God, in a ſtate of wrath, and that he does not actually belong to God, but to Satan. One may pretend faith in Chriſt, and a covenant-intereſt in God, while he is going on in a courſe of ſin. But his pretences are vain, his works diſprove his faith, his unholy life diſcovers his graceleſs ſtate: James, ii. 17. "Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

(2.) That a perſon's being ſtill in his ſin, under its dominion, will not, while he lives, prove him to be none of God's elect, excepting only in the caſe of the unpardonable ſin, which is moſt rare. The reaſon is, that the charge is effectual in all the elect, yet it may be long in taking its effect on ſome,

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ſome, as in the caſe of the thief on the croſs. So that while there is life, there is hope. This I note, to baffle that temptation, with which Satan attacks ſome, namely, That they are not elected, and therefore they need not ſet their minds towards religion, for it will not do with them. This is barefaced reaſoning from hell; for be your caſe never ſo hopeleſs, though ye be quite graceleſs, and this never ſo long continued in, while you do not obſtinately, and altogether maliciouſly, reject ſalvation by Chriſt, it cannot prove you to be none of God's elect; for at the eleventh hour you may be called. Yet,

(3.) Without departing from iniquity, no perſon can certainly know he is elected, or that he belongs to God. By this, indeed, a perſon may know it, 2 Peter, i. 10.: but without it, no man can; for God does not allow us, nor can we at firſt hand go and read our names in the book of life. We muſt learn it by ſanctification, which is the fruit of election, by which we come to know both our election and our effectual calling.—We may improve the ſubject,

Secondly, In an uſe of trial.

Hereby you may try whether you be the Lord's covenanted people or not. This may be known by your departing from iniquity, or your not departing. Here, to aſſiſt you, we ſhall mention the two following marks.

Mark 1. If you are departing from iniquity, there will be a ſincere endeavour after univerſal obedience, Pſal. cxix. 6.; aiming to pleaſe God in all things, and not indulging yourſelf in any known ſin, being content to know, in all caſes, what is ſin and what is duty. The truly godly will ſet themſelves againſt the firſt motions of ſin, Rom. vii. 7.; againſt ſecret ſins, Pſ. xix. 12.; even againſt

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that sin which most easily besets them, Psal. xviii. 23.; and will witness against self, in its various shapes, Matth. v. 3.

Mark 2. If you are departing from iniquity, you will be wearying and groaning under the remains of sin, Rom. vii. 26. However much the hypocrite may content himself with as much grace as seems necessary to secure heaven to him, yet the godly man is going on, and pressing forwards towards perfection, though he cannot reach it; and looks on the remains of sin as iron fetters, which he would fain be quit of, that he may be holy, as God is holy; and perfect, as his Father in heaven is perfect.—We may improve the subject,

Lastly, In an use of exhortation.

We beseech you, O sinners! to depart from iniquity. You have dwelt too long in the tents of sin. You are called now to arise and depart from all your sins, freely to part with them, never to return to them, but to be still departing farther and farther from them. The exhortation concerns both saints and sinners.

There are three motives, which the text affords us to prevail with sinners in drawing them from their sins. These are,—the evil of sin,—the necessary connection betwixt a person's departing from it and their belonging to God, and—the obligation lying on sinners to part with it, from their naming the name of Christ. We shall consider these separately, as in their nature important and weighty; and O that we could improve them, so as to draw you all from your sins!—We begin with,

Mot. 1. Sin is an evil, a great evil, from which you are called to depart. Sinners are deceived with an appearance of goodness, of profit, or of pleasure in their sins. But, God knows, it is the worst

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worſt of evils; and therefore from it by all means God will have his own to depart. O that I could draw the monſtrous evil in its own colours, to bring you all from it to holineſs! Could you get a genuine ſight of it, you would run from it as from a fire; as from hell-fire: Rom. xii. 9. "Abhor that which is evil." Sin is the greateſt evil. This will appear, if the following things are attended to.—Sin is an evil,

1. In the eyes of God: Jer. xliv. 4. "Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate." God, who knows all things, and cannot be deceived with fair appearances, looks on this, which men naturally ſet their hearts on, as the worſt of ills. O! ſhall we not think of it as God does?—Conſider,

(1.) It is the only thing which he condemns, and he every where condemns it in his word. The world cries out on many things which are not ſin, but God on nothing elſe. Many would perſuade themſelves, that God looks on their ſins as they do. But this he takes as an affront to his holineſs: Pſal. l. 21. "Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence; thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes." Look to his word, which is the indication of his mind; and there you will ſee, he never ſpeaks good of ſin.

(2.) It is the only thing which he purſues with his wrath, and he does this wherever it is found. It is the enemy he purſues through the whole creation, wherever it appears. It entered in among the angels, and fixed itſelf in the reprobate ones; wrath immediately purſued it, and tumbled them down to the pit: "God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto the judgement," 2 Peter, ii. 4. It got place with

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mankind in paradiſe; and wrath was at his heels there; Adam's proſperous ſtate was quickly turned into miſery. The very ground on which the ſinner treads, is curſed for its ſake. The ſinner, in his ſinful ſtate, is in a ſtate of wrath. It abides on him, John, iii. 36. The ſky never clears on him, while he is a ſinner. Even with his own children, God writes his indignation on it: John, xlii. 24. "Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he againſt whom we have ſinned?" The earth is made to groan under it; and when the end comes, the defiled creation has to go through the fire to purge it. But above all, ſee how he purſued ſin in his own Son, though it was only on him by imputation: Rom. viii. 32. "He ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." The ſins of the elect met on him, and therefore the ſorrows of wrath met in him, and left him not, till they brought him to the duſt of death.

(3.) Departing from it is the only teſtimony of his creatures love to him which he requires, and nothing leſs can be accepted. He does not ſeek rivers of oil, nor other coſtly ſacrifices: "But he hath ſhewed thee, O man! what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" If he call them to lay down their lives for him, it is only in the way of their ſtanding off from ſin; otherwiſe it is not acceptable, nor required. But his law is, Suffer any thing rather than ſin. Behold it in one word, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," Pſal. xcvii. 10.

2. Sin is an evil, and a great evil, in the eyes of the truly godly. Whenever the eyes of any perſon are opened by grace, then immediately they are of this mind; while the reſt of the deluded world hug the ſerpent in their boſom, they are for flying

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flying from it at any rate. If they lose this opinion of it at any time, it is owing to the loss of their light, their falling asleep. But, in their settled judgement, it is the worst of evils.—For,

(1.) Of all evils it has lain nearest their hearts, and produced the heaviest complaints and groans. Psal. li. 3. Lam. xvi. 17. Hear Paul's complaint: Rom. vii 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Did ever persecutions, prisons, reproaches, or all the ills he suffered, draw such a complaint from him? In tribulations he rejoiced, in a prison he sang; but in the fetters of the body of death, he groans like a dying man.

(2.) Sin or suffer being put to their choice, they have always, when themselves, chused to suffer rather than sin: Acts, xx. 24. "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." It is true, a godly man may sometimes be bemisted, so as not to see a thing to be sin which is sin; nay sometimes, in a hurry of temptation to avoid suffering, he may fall into sin against light; but otherwise, by divine grace, they will chuse poverty, imprisonment, banishment, death, rather than sin; even the greatest temporal evil, rather than the least sin. Thus the cloud of witnesses gave their testimony. From these they did not "accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection," Heb. xi. 35.

3. Sin is indeed in its own nature and properties the greatest of all evils.—To make this evident, consider,

(1.) That of all things sin is most contrary to the nature of God, who is the chief good, and therefore

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therefore it is the chief evil, Lev. xxvi. It is walking contrary to God; it is worſe than all penal evils; theſe met in Jeſus Chriſt, who was God as well as man, but ſin was not found in him: Heb. vii. 26. "For ſuch an High-Prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners." God owns himſelf the author of penal evils, but it is blaſphemy to father ſin upon him. This fights againſt God; and, as one ſays, the ſinner, ſo far as in him lies, deſtroys the nature of God, dethrones him, and ſtrikes at his very being. God, ſwearing by his holineſs, ſwears by himſelf; but nothing is ſo oppoſite to holineſs as ſin is, nothing can be more or as much ſo; nay, it is the very thing which makes the devil evil, and therefore it is more evil itſelf than even the devil.—Conſider,

(2.) That ſin is moſt contrary to the rational nature. Right reaſon condemns it; and no reaſon approves it, but as blinded and prejudiced. It degrades men, and makes them like beaſts, the filthieſt of beaſts, dogs and ſwine, 2 Pet. ii. 22.; more beaſtly than the beaſts themſelves: Iſa. i. 3. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib; but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider." Thus the wicked man is a vile man, though never ſo honourable, Pſ. xv. 4. Hence it is, that although there are ſome who glory in their ſhame, yet ſin is ſuch a work of darkneſs, that no perſon ordinarily is diſpoſed to father the monſtrous brat.—Conſider,

(3.) That ſin is the deformity of the ſoul. That is the ſeat of ſin, which is the nobleſt part of man. But it is the deformity of that part; and the corruption of what is the beſt is certainly the worſt evil. Even a deformity in the face is worſe than in another part; a bloody man on a throne is worſe than ſuch a perſon

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perſon on a dunghill. Thus the ill of ſin appears in what it does to the ſoul; it defaces God's image there, and ſo mars its beauty: Pſal. xiv. 3. "They are all gone aſide, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no, not one." No running ſore, canker, or gangrene, is comparable to it, for theſe do but prey on the body, ſin on the ſoul. It makes men unlike God, and like the devil. God is holy, juſt, and good; the devil is unholy and wicked; and ſo is the ſinner going on in his ſin. It makes a perſon like the devil, as a child is to his father, John, viii. 44. therefore both go to one place in the end: Matth. xxv. 41. "Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—Conſider,

(4.) That ſin is a hereditary evil, and theſe are the worſt of evils, the hardeſt to be cured. We were born with it: Pſal. li. 5. "Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me." It is woven into our very natures, it cannot be taken away without a miracle of grace; even ſuch a power is neceſſary as is required in raiſing the dead, and quickening them. The whole man muſt be born again, new moulded, new framed, ere the perſon can depart from iniquity.—Conſider,

(5.) That ſin is the mother of all thoſe evils which ever were, are, or ſhall be; the teeming womb of all miſchief. What caſt the angels out of heaven, Adam out of paradiſe? What deluged the old world, and burned Sodom? It was ſin. Of all the evils on ſoul and body to which man is liable, ſin leads the van. Behold how death, in numberleſs ſhapes, has overflowed the world! What a flood of miſeries is overflowing mankind, kingdoms,

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kingdoms, churches, families, perſons, ſouls, bodies! What has opened the ſluice of theſe? Rom. v. 12. affords the anſwer, "Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned." There is never a ſigh, nor a groan in this world, under any hardſhip whatſoever, but it riſes from the ſting of this ſerpent; and it has filled hell with groans which will laſt for ever.—Conſider,

(6.) That where ſin is removed in its guilt and power, the greateſt evils cannot harm us: 2 Pet. iii. 13. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Diſeaſes, croſſes, death itſelf, without it, is like a ſerpent without a ſting, 1 Cor. xv. 55. 56. The ſevere laſhes of the juſt Judge of heaven and earth, are turned into the rods of a loving father, Pſal. lxxxix. 31. 32. Death is but the falling aſleep, and dying only the ſhadow of death. Nay, they ſhall do us good: Rom. viii. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe." Out of the moſt dark, troubled, and confounding caſe, God will raiſe a beautiful frame. Every ſtone caſt at them ſhall be a precious ſtone, ſanctified for their good.—Conſider,

(7.) That wherever ſin is in force, it not only ſtrengthens other evils, but blaſts and poiſons all that good which a perſon enjoys. It not only arms diſeaſes, death, and hell, againſt a man, but turns his very bleſſings into curſes: Mal. ii. 2. "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings; yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe ye do not lay it to heart." In all the enjoyments

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joyments and comforts of a ſinner out of Chriſt, there is death in the pot. One man's croſſes ruin him, another man's proſperity enſnares him, and proves his ruin, Prov. xxx. 8. 9. Nay, the very means of grace are a ſavour of death unto death unto ſome, 2 Cor. ii. 16. What is the reaſon why ſin poiſons the fountain? Thus, be the waters ſweet or bitter, they are killing.—Conſider,

(8.) That ſin is the moſt painful and tormenting evil, when once the pain of it is raiſed, and the poiſon begins ſenſibly to operate: Prov. xviii. 14. "The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmity: but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?" It is true, that it is ſo long in working with ſome, that it may never thus work till in hell they lift up their eyes; but O how dreadful muſt it then be! Conſcience is a tender part; and this, ſin torments. What torment was Cain in, when his conſcience got upon him! It made Felix tremble, Belſhazzar's knees to ſmite one againſt another; it involved Judas in utter deſpair, ſo as to make away with himſelf. See Job, xx. 12.—16.—Conſider,

(9.) That ſin is a moſt deadly evil: Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of ſin is death." It brought temporal death into the world; and the body of man, which by its creation was not liable to death, it made mortal. But more than this, it is the cauſe of ſpiritual death. It kills the ſoul, ſeparating it from God and communion with him, and makes many a man dead while he lives, ſo that his living body is but a coffin to a dead ſoul, Epheſ. ii. 1. And, finally, it brings on eternal death.—Conſider,

(10.) That ſin is a moſt infectious evil. No plague nor peſtilence ſo dangerous. Many perſons, in times of a raging plague, have been preſerved. But as for the plague of ſin, when once it ſeized Eve, ſhe infected Adam, and he all his poſterity.

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posterity. And now the world is a pest house, where not one is quite free. Some are under the cure of grace, and in the way of recovery; but the most part are pining away in their iniquity, and every one of them infecting another more and more: Eccles. ix. 18. "One sinner destroys much good." This one sinner may have the blood of many at his door, whom he has ruined by his advice, carelessness, and evil example.—Consider,

(11) That the giving up of a sinner to sin, is the concluding stroke which God gives him, so that it is the worst thing a person can meet with. Here I would have you more particularly to consider,—that when God in wrath gives a man over in this life, he leaves him, and gives him up to his sin. God deals with sinners to part with their sins, they will not; God's offers are slighted, then, as in Psal. lxxxi. 12. "He gives them up to their own hearts lust; and they walk in their own counsels." He is at much pains with them by providences and ordinances, but nothing does with them; then in anger he gives them over: Ezek. xxiv. 13. "In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest on thee." Thus, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone," Hosea, iv. 17. Of the heathen world it is said, "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections," Rom. i. 26. We read of one who was given up to the devil, that he was again recovered. But where find ye a man given up to himself, to his lusts, reclaimed? Wherefore better be given up to the devil, than to sin. Fearful sentence! "Let him that is filthy be filthy still."—Consider, when at death the impenitent sinner is carried out of the world into

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into the pit, there is no more endeavours to separate betwixt him and his sin. In life he would depart from God, and so his doom is, "Depart from me, ye cursed." Then his sins are left to prey upon his soul for ever; no more pardon, no more sanctification: Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." God strives with the man in life to part him and his sins, but he will not part from them; so the whirlwind of death rises, and carries both away together to the pit.—Consider,

(12.) When God has brought in all his elect to himself, and the last man of them has left the tents of sin, then shall the world be at an end. The sheep shall be separate from the goats, the sinners driven away in their wickedness to hell; this world defiled by sin shall be burnt up; and they, and sin, with all its effects, shut up in hell for ever, Rev. xx. 14. 15. Then shall there be new heavens and a new earth, but no sin there, 2 Peter, iii. 13. It shall be settled in hell for ever, as on its own base.—Sin must be an evil, a great evil: For,

4. If you will continue in sin, of all things Satan loves most to have it so. It gratifies the enemy of mankind most; and this in two things, on which he is most particularly set.

(1.) The dishonour of God. Satan is a rebel against God, who has not the smallest hopes of peace, and is utterly desperate, therefore rages and maliciously sets himself against God, sinning against God himself, and tempting men to sin and continue in it, that he may have the satisfaction of their dishonouring God, and despising his Son; thus grieving his Spirit, and trampling on his laws.—Satan is set upon,

(2.) The ruin of souls: 1 Peter, v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the

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devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. He loves to keep them in subjection to himself, that he may reign freely in their hearts, which will be as long as they are under the dominion of sin; and to have them companions with him in eternal misery; which he is sure to accomplish if he can keep them in their sins.—I come now to

Mot. 2. To prevail with you in departing from iniquity, observe this is necessary from your belonging to God, your departing from sin. Whoso are his, infallibly do depart from iniquity, whatever others do. This has been proved before.—Now, upon this consider,—The weight that lies here, whether a person belongs to God or not. You need to have this cleared, whose you are, whether the Lord's people or not.—For consider,

(1.) Your state for time turns upon this point. All the world is divided into two parties; one belonging to God by covenant and dedication, Heb. viii. 10.; another to Satan, the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4. See them distinguished, 1 John, v. 19. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." The one is the family of heaven, the other Satan's family. If you belong to the former, you are justified, adopted, all is yours, and ye are Christ's. If to the latter, ye are in a state of wrath and enmity against God.—Consider,

(2.) Your state for eternity turns upon this point. If ye be the Lord's, ye shall be for ever happy with him. Your names will be found written in the book of life. If not, your names will not be found there; and see the doom of such: Rev. xx. 15. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." You shall infallibly evidence, by your departing from

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from iniquity, that you are the Lord's, Rev. xiv. 1.—5. Sanctification is an infallible proof of election and juſtification, and an infallible pledge of glorification. It is a middle link of the indiſſoluble chain which begins with election and ends with glorification, Rom. viii. 29. 30. 2 Theſ. ii. 13. The ſpirit of holineſs is God's ſeal upon them that are his, by which they come to be owned and diſcerned to be his: Eph. i. 13. "In whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that Holy Spirit of promiſe." But as long as you depart not from ſin, it is a poſitive evidence that you belong not to God by accepting of the covenant, Jerem. xxxii. 30. Your cleaving to ſin is an evidence you are not united to Chriſt, and you can have no poſitive concluding evidence that you belong to God by election. It is but at beſt a peradventure it may be. And as always the longer that a perſon continues in ſin, there are the leſs hopes of his recovery, ſo there is the leſs probability of his belonging to the election of grace. And if you die in your ſin, it will be beyond diſpute, that you do not belong to God at all.

Depart, then, from iniquity, as ever you would have any concern for ſhewing yourſelves to be the Lord's. Upon this let me aſk you, Is it a matter of indifference to you whether you be the Lord's or not? Truly this is the language of ſouls careleſs about their ſalvation, and particularly about their ſanctification. It is declared to you, that all who are the Lord's depart from iniquity. Yet you are careleſs about your departing from it. This ſpeaks your indifference.—I would further aſk you, Can you ever be happy if you be not the Lord's? How can you live without his favour, living on his ground, and at his coſt? Acts, xvii. 25. "He giveth to all, life and breath, and all

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things." How can you think to look the king of terrors in the face, without the favour of the King of heaven, which you can never have, while you do not depart from iniquity? Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs."—I would aſk you, *laſtly*, Is it not a miſerable office againſt your own ſouls, to diſpute away any ſaving relation betwixt God and you? Every new diſobedience to this heavenly charge, is a new argument againſt yourſelves, that you are not his. This charge in the goſpel is addreſſed to all to whom the goſpel comes; it is like a fanning wind ſeparating the wheat from the chaff. By it the grace of God brings away the elect out of the tents of ſin, leaving others to periſh there. What a diſmal thought, then, is it to be left, time after time, in iniquity!—I come now to urge the

3. And laſt motive, which is, that obligation which is lying on thoſe who name the name of Chriſt to depart from iniquity. The Chriſtian profeſſion obliges all who make it to be holy, and to walk as Chriſtians.—And here I would conſider,

1*ſt*, The obligation which lies on all to depart from ſin who name the name of Chriſt, who are Chriſtians by profeſſion, as we all are.

2*dly*, The obligation which ſpecially lies on communicants.—I would conſider,

1*ſt*, The obligation which lies on all to depart from ſin who name the name of Chriſt, who are Chriſtians by profeſſion, as we all are.—Here conſider,

1. That your baptiſm in the name of the Holy Trinity, by which you were taken engaged to renounce the devil, the world, and the fleſh, and to obey the Lord Jeſus, Matth. xxviii. 19. 20. This

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is a seal of God's covenant, to which you have thereby consented. And since you bear the badge of Christianity, you ought to live Christian and holy lives. And God will treat you as covenant-breakers if you do not.—Consider,

2. The author of your profession, from whom you take your name: Acts, xi. 26. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." From Christ we are called Christians. And pity it is that ever those who profess Christ should be called by the names of sinful or wicked men. You know those who are named for men, are so named, because they are followers of them. And so, the name Christian signifies a follower of Christ, one who follows that way which Christ taught. Now, consider him, the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession Jesus Christ, Heb. iii. 1. What was the author of your profession? He was holy, Heb. vii. 26. His name is a name of holiness: Anointed of God, for a Prophet, Priest, and King. A Christian indeed partakes of the anointing of the Holy Spirit: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," 1 John, ii. 20. They are made kings and priests unto God and his Father, Rev. i. 6. Now, how does a sinful life agree with the holy name, example, and doctrine of Christ?—Consider,

3. The faith and religion you profess. Surely the principles of our religion are holy, and teach us to depart from iniquity, and give no allowance to live in sin. Even reason says, men ought not to live, nor can they rationally live, in contradiction to their profession and its principles. Other religions allow something sinful, but the Christian religion, proceeding from him who is holiness and truth itself, condemns every even the least evil; and therefore Christians by their pro-

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feſſion are obliged to depart from iniquity.—Conſider,

Laſtly, The end of your faith and profeſſion, the way to which it directs, namely, heaven, which is a holy place. The goſpel has diſcovered life and immortality, 2 Tim. i. 10. A happy ſtate after this life, where holineſs is perfected, Heb. xii. 23. And meanwhile it directs to a life agreeable to this holy and happy ſtate; for it "teaches to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world," Titus, ii. 12. Have you no hopes, no expectations of heaven? If you have, ſurely you ought to depart from iniquity; for it cannot be expected that that holy place is for dogs and ſwine, for ſuch as are ſtrangers to holineſs here.

2*dly*, I would conſider the obligations to depart from iniquity which lie on communicants in a ſpecial manner. You have in a very ſolemn manner named the holy name of Jeſus, by partaking of the ſacrament of our Lord's body and blood. Let this then engage you to depart from iniquity.—Conſider,

1. That theſe additional vows of God are upon you to depart from iniquity. You have lifted up your hand to God, and you cannot go back. The terms of the Chriſtian life were told you, and you have, after deliberation, engaged yourſelves to the Lord. Beware that after vows you begin to make inquiry, Luke, ix. 62.—Conſider,

2. That religion will be wounded by you if you do not depart from iniquity: Rom. ii. 24. "For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you." You will be accounted betrayers of Chriſt, for you will give falſe teſtimony againſt his way in favour of ſin, as if you had tried the way of religion, and after trial found cauſe to caſt

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caſt it off. And therefore, as you would not more than ever diſhonour the Lord and his way, depart from iniquity.—Conſider,

3. That you will be great loſers if you do not depart from iniquity. You will loſe all the pains which you have been at in religion: 2 John, 8. "Look to yourſelves that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought." It may be, you have been at ſome pains to get ſomething, and have done much in the way of God, but one thing lacking will mar all. You will loſe your ſouls, for it is only they who depart from iniquity, ſo as never to return to it, that are ſaved: "He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved." Backſliding is moſt dangerous: Heb. x. 38. "If any man draw back, my ſoul," ſays God, "ſhall have no pleaſure in him." The very ſetting off once in the Lord's way obliges to hold forward. They can never ſin at ſuch a cheap rate as before; heavier vengeance abides backſliders, and a fall from heaven's threſhold is worſt of all.

Now, the Lord is ſaying to the ſinners in Zion, as Jerem. vi. 8. "Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem! leſt my ſoul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited." He is threatening to depart from the generation, ſince they will not depart from iniquity; and ſad will the departure be: Hoſea, ix. 12. "Woe alſo be to them when I depart from them."—There are three ſad conſequents of God's departure when provoked to it, with which we are threatened this day.—There is,

(1.) Confuſion in the church, the breaking of the ſtaves of beauty and bands. There is a melancholy account of this conſequence of the Lord's departure, Rev. viii. 7. 8. We have already felt the former, and were threatened with the Lord's making, in his wrath, the whole mountain of his houſe,

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houſe, a burning mountain with the fire of diviſion. A ſad ſight it will be, come when it will, however fond of it many have appeared. Zion's work will be heavy work, when Zion's builders are by the Lord's anger made like Babel builders. —There is,

(2.) Calamity in the ſtate. Many perhaps would little value what ſhould become of the church, if they might otherwiſe live at eaſe. But God's departure from a generation, often brings nations into the deepeſt perplexity and diſtreſs, 2 Chron. xv. 3.—6. When God departs from a generation, to ſee what their end will be, it will be a ſad end, Deut xxxii. 19. 20.—There is,

(3.) The ruin of many ſouls and bodies alſo. When God ſo leaves a generation, there are many ſnares for the ſoul. Confuſion in the church brings deadneſs and darkneſs on, and makes havock of the caſe of many ſouls. Calamity in the ſtate, which removes peace far away, tends always to the ruining of temporal concerns, and often of mens ſouls concerns alſo.

O then depart from iniquity, as ever you would that God ſhould not depart from you, nor from the generation! Our iniquities are the Achans in the camp which trouble us; the Jonah in our ſhip which threatens to raiſe the ſtorm. God has been long calling by his word and providence to us to depart from iniquity, and reform. But inſtead of this, the generation has been filling up the cup of their iniquity, and want but ſome one thing or other to make it run over. But whatever befal us, departing from ſin will be your ſecurity: Iſa. iii. 10. "Say ye to the righteous, that it ſhall be well with him; for they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings." God's way is the only way

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way of safety: Prov. x. 9. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, but he that perverteth his ways shall be known." And a good conscience will be a feast in midst of trouble, 2 Cor. i. 12. Whereas an evil conscience, made such by continuing in sin, will be a bad companion at any time, more especially in the evil day.—If any should propose this

Question, What shall we do that we may depart from iniquity? I answer, Impress your spirits with your own sinfulness. Consider your sinful nature, Psal. li. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Observe how it spreads itself through the whole of your hearts and lives: Isa. lxiv. 6. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities as the whirlwind have taken us away." How contrary is it to God's nature and law, how inconsistent with your interests for time and eternity! Make application to Christ by faith for its removal. To his blood to remove the guilt of sin, 1 John, i. 7. To his Spirit to break the power of it, and to sanctify you. Faith is the great mean of sanctification: "Purifying their hearts by faith," Acts, xv. 9.—We exhort you,

Lastly, To watch. Be ever on your watch-tower. Your spiritual enemies are still about your hands. Watch therefore against all occasions, temptations, and appearances of evil. Improve the season of duties. Study to be always doing good, and so your hand will be filled with other work. When departing from evil, you will do good, you will seek peace, and pursue it earnestly. Amen.

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THE INWARD FRAME SHOULD CORRESPOND WITH THE OUTWARD PROFESSION *.

SERMON LX.

DEUT. v. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.*

THAT dreadful appearance which God made on mount Sinai, in the giving of the law, and that effect it had upon the Israelites, Moses here puts them in mind of. When the Lord spoke with a great and terrible voice out of the darkness and fire, the people were affrighted, and they see their absolute need of a mediator, and therefore desire Moses would mediate betwixt God and them; and in this event they promise all obedience. The Lord gives his verdict concerning this, which consists of two parts.

1. That the words were very good. If words could

* This and the following discourses were delivered in 1709.

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could have proved them saints, they would have been among the foremost. If promises could have passed for performances, they had wanted neither faith nor good works: Ver. 28. "They have well said all that they have spoken." They have said two things:

(1.) They had desired a mediator, ver. 27. "Go thou near," said they to Moses, "and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it." They saw so much of the majesty of God, and of their own sinfulness, that they beg of God he would not deal with them immediately, but by a mediator; and this was the great end in giving the law on mount Sinai, and that with so much terror, Deut. xviii. 15.——18.

(2.) They promise obedience, that they would take the law out of Moses mouth, and perform it; that they would no less highly esteem it as coming by his hand, than if God should thunder it with the greatest terror into their ears. What could look liker faith and obedience, according to the Old-Testament dispensation? What could look liker accepting of the great Mediator in all his offices, according to that dispensation of the covenant, wherein types and figures of him who was to come did so much abound? How ready seem they to sit down at the feet of a prophet and learn. So that upon this the Lord promised Christ under that very notion, Deut. xviii. 18. How plainly do they take with guilt, and stand as criminals who have nothing to say on their own defence, acknowledge their need, and profess their desire of an intercessor, being unable to stand before the Lord without a shelter, or on their own legs. How readily do they subject themselves to the

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the laws of their King, and ſtoop to take on his yoke without any exception whatſoever? But all is not gold that glitters, the heart of man ſeldom holds foot with the tongue.

2. The other part of the verdict follows in the text: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" By which he diſcovers their hypocriſy, and precipitancy, their tongues running before their hearts in their engaging themſelves to the Lord. The Lord ſpeaks thus after the manner of men, ſo that they who would hence conclude, that man's will by nature is ſuch, as that it is of himſelf flexible, either to ſpiritual good or evil, while the Lord ſtands by as an idle ſpectator, and puts to no hand of power, may as well conclude, that God hath eyes and hands of fleſh, and that he who is not the ſon of man that he ſhould repent, and with whom there is no variableneſs, may even with propriety repent as to what he has done. Ineffi-cacious wiſhing, properly underſtood, argues imperfection. (Hebrew, who will give their heart to be ſuch in them?) Now, it is certain, God can give ſuch a heart: Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart alſo will I give you." And if he will do it, who can hinder him? Job, xi. 10.—This declaration therefore imports,

(1.) That ſuch an heart was not in them, for all their fair words and high pretences; that though they looked well outwardly, yet within they were naught. They had learned to ſpeak better than they were wont; but though they had got the new tongue, they had but the old heart ſtill: Deut. xxix. 4. "Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, unto this day." When they were in Egypt, they were ſunk into ſtupidity, the inſtructions of the patriarchs had worn out of their minds, they had almoſt forgotten their fall in Adam,

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Adam, and what ſin was; and though God had made the promiſe to Abraham, yet they were now grown proud and ſecure. And though ſin, and alſo death, were reigning over them, yet being without the law to evidence ſin and death to their conſciences, they would not charge themſelves with it, and ſo found no need of a Mediator, Rom. v. 13.——20. But now the law being proclaimed with ſo great terror, laid their peacock-feathers a little; but though they had more knowledge of their ſin and miſery than before, yet they had ſtill the old heart.—This declaration imports,

(2.) That ſuch an heart ſhould have been in them, it was their duty to have it, God required it of them: "Make to yourſelves a new heart." God requires the conformity of the heart, as well as of the converſation, to his will.—It imports,

(3.) That the want of ſuch an heart was a dead fly in all their engagements, which made all the ointment to ſtink: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" The chief thing is wanting ſtill, they have not yet brought up their heart to their work.—It imports,

(4.) The great excellency and worth of ſuch an heart. The Lord ſpeaks honourably of it, as that which would bear weight in the balance of the ſanctuary. It is pleaſing to the Lord, it is God's delight; they want only this to make them happy. —For illuſtrating this ſubject, we ſhall propoſe and conſider the following DOCTRINES.

DOCT. I. That men often make what ought to be the moſt ſolemn tranſactions with the Lord about their ſouls concerns, but ſolemn trifling with him.

DOCT. II. That a heart ſincerely and ſuitably cor-

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reſponding with the profeſſion of a covenanting people, is a moſt valauble and excellent thing.

DOCT. III. That the work of covenanting with the Lord is ſlight work, when it is not heart-work. Or, in other words, Solemn covenanting with the Lord is but ſolemn trifling with him, when the work of covenanting is not heart-work.

WE begin with

DOCTRINE I. That men often make what ought to be the moſt ſolemn tranſactions with the Lord about their ſouls concerns, but ſolemn trifling with him.

NEVER was there a more ſolemn tranſaction which men had with God than what was here. Their ears were filled with the noiſe of the thunder, the lightnings flaſhed in their eyes, they heard God himſelf ſpeak, they were moſt expreſs in covenanting with God; all this time their hearts were not right with him, nor found in his ſtatutes. —In diſcourſing from this doctrine, we propoſe,

I. To ſhew how far a man may go in tranſacting with, and engaging himſelf to the Lord, and yet after all he may be but trifling.

II. Shew wherein this trifling and ſlight work in ſuch a weighty buſineſs doth appear.

III. Point out how people come to turn ſuch ſolemn work into mere trifling.

IV. Apply the ſubject.

WE are, then,

I. To ſhew how far a man may go in tranſacting with, and engaging himſelf to the Lord, and yet after all he may be but trifling.—Upon this head we obſerve,

1. That

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1. That a perſon may formally and expreſsly covenant with God, to be the Lord's, and yet after all be but trifling with God. So did this people, ver. 27. (quoted above). A perſon may make a covenant with God, both by word and writ, when there is no ſuch heart in him, and the heart goes not along either with tongue or pen. It is an eaſy thing to ſay unto the Lord, that he ſhall be our God, but not eaſy to ſay it with the heart. The tongue is not always a faithful interpreter of the heart, eſpecially in theſe things.—We obſerve,

2. That a perſon may make a very full covenant with the Lord, and yet after all be but trifling. What exception was there in this, ver. 27. "All that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, we will hear it and do it." How large a promiſe was this, Matth. viii. 19. "Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt." No doubt, had their hearts kept pace with their words, they had engaged to purpoſe. Had there been as few ſecret as there were open reſerves, they had dealt honeſtly.—We obſerve,

3. That perſons may even be morally ſerious in all this, thinking and reſolving in the time to do as they ſay. It was not a ſeaſon for groſs diſſimulation, nor to make a jeſt of tranſacting with the Lord anent ſoul-concerns, when the Lord was ſpeaking out of the darkneſs and fire to them. Perſons in this caſe are like thoſe who triſle with merchants, in offering to bargain for their wares, out of mere ſimplicity and ignorance as to the worth of theſe wares, who, if they had matters ſet in their due light, would never once propoſe again ſo to bid for them. The fooliſh virgins ſaw not their lamps out till it was paſt time.—We obſerve,

4. That perſons may do all this from a ſenſe of

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their need of a Mediator. Thus did they in the text. What was it that brought this people to this? Why, they had formerly engaged with a whole heart to be the Lord's: Exod. xix. 8. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." But now they fall more solemnly and seriously to work. God sets the mountain on fire for a tribunal of justice; there is a trumpet whose voice waxes louder and louder; by all which God doth as it were summon them to compear before him. There are dreadful thunder-claps to carry the sentence of death to their hearts; there are lightnings, by the glancings of which they read the wrath of God against sinners. Yet they must not touch the mountain, lest they be consumed, to teach them how sin had laid the bar as to access to God. This fills them with terror and fear of death, and now they feel the necessity of a mediator: Exod. xx. 19. "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And yet, after all, "O that there were such an heart in them!"

We are now,

II. To shew wherein this trifling and slight work in such a weighty business does appear.

1. It appears in persons engaging themselves to the Lord, without being at pains to prepare themselves, and bring up their hearts to the duty. O what a light thing do most people make of covenanting with God! It is but the saying of a word in prayer; and this is soon said. It is but taking the sacrament; and this is soon done. In the mean time, the heart, like Abraham's ass, is left at the foot of the hill: Gen. xxii. 5. Mat. xv. 8. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth,

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mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." They are ſtrangers to God who are ſtrangers to heart-work. They who find no difficulty in bringing their hearts to duties, do not bring them to them at all. The true Chriſtian finds much difficulty in this. I find, ſays Paul, a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. It is but trifling to give the hand to the Lord, while the heart is far from any due concern about the buſineſs, and from that ſolemn ſerioufneſs requiſite to get it rightly managed.—This appears,

(2.) When people engage themſelves to the ſervice of the Lord, but do not give their hearts to him. Many engage with the Lord, as a married ſervant with a maſter; the maſter is to get his ſervice, but another has his heart: Jer. xii. 2. "Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins." The heart may remain glued to luſts, while the ſoul pretends to be engaging itſelf to the Lord; and if it were not ſo, there would not be ſuch a ſad account of many who covenant with God. This is but to triſle with God, who requires the heart, or nothing: Prov. xxiii. 26. "My ſon, give me thine heart." Jer. xxx. 21. "For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord." It is an ill-made ſecond marriage, when there is neither the death of, nor a divorce from the firſt huſband. There is no right engaging with the Lord, but where the ſoul forſakes all others for him, and the heart takes up its eternal reſt in Chriſt.—This trifling appears,

(3.) When people have any ſecret reſerves in their cloſing with Chriſt, as is the caſe when the heart is not well content to take Chriſt with whatſoever may follow this choice: Luke, xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father,

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and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple." There is none make right work here, but thoſe who, weighing all things, are content to put a blank in Chriſt's hand; ſaying, "Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do?" Acts, ix. 6. They do but trifle, who have their right-hand ſins which they wiſh not cut off, for they will in this caſe mar the bargain; and alſo thoſe who cannot digeſt that tribulation which is in the way to the kingdom. No croſs, no crown. That heart which is not reconciled to the croſs, is not ſuch an heart as is required.—This trifling appears,

(4.) When people overlook the Mediator in their covenant of peace with God, but tranſact with God for peace and pardon without reſpect to the atoning blood of Chriſt. It is natural to all men to come immediately to God without a Mediator: Exod. xix. 8. "And all the people anſwered together, and ſaid, All that the Lord hath ſpoken, we will do." They are thus for coming without a Mediator, till the terror of God correct their raſhneſs, and they ſee what a conſuming fire God is, and that, if they would be ſafe, they muſt come to him under the covert of Chriſt's wings. If a ſoul ſincerely deſires to come to God, the firſt perſon to which they muſt go, is to Chriſt, the ſecretary of heaven. For "by him we have acceſs into that grace wherein we ſtand," Rom. v. 2. And he is "the Mediator of the new covenant." Heb. xii. 24. God out of Chriſt is a conſuming fire. But there are beaſts that will touch the mountain, though they be thruſt through with a dart. Would you tranſact with God a covenant of reconciliation? then go to him on the mercy-ſeat; not the ſeat of mercy merely for mercy's ſake, ſuch

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ſuch a mercy-ſeat has no being in heaven, but only in the vain imaginations of men on earth; but to the mercy-ſeat for Chriſt's ſake, where mercy is abundantly diſtributed with the cordial conſent of juſtice: 2 Cor. v. 19. "To wit, that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them." It is to God as vailed with fleſh, that the guilty can only approach; otherwiſe it is but trifling. For Jeſus is "the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by him," John, xiv. 6.

5. This is turned into ſolemn trifling with God, by people's not taking Chriſt for all, but only for making up that which they may come ſhort; thus endeavouring to patch up a garment of their own righteouſneſs and of his together. Thus many think to pleaſe God, by doing what they can to fulfil the law, and looking to Chriſt to make up that of which they come ſhort. It was forbidden under the law, to wear a garment of divers ſorts of woolen and linen together. And they will find themſelves befooled, who will adventure their ſalvation on this party-coloured garment: Gal. iii. 12. "And the law is not of faith; but the man that doth them ſhall live in them." A garment pieced up of ſundry ſorts of righteouſneſs, is not meet for the court of heaven. That heart which would ſhare the glory betwixt Chriſt and the man himſelf, is not right with God, and will be left to its own weight.—This trifling appears,

6. By perſons making a covenant of works with Chriſt; the tenor whereof is, that if Chriſt will ſave their ſouls, they ſhall ſerve him as long as they live. If Chriſt will give them wages, they will give him work. If he will pay their debt, they ſhall be his ſervants, while they have breath in them. And upon this, men may take the ſacrament

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crament to bind them the faſter. And thus, I fear, many make ſad work at ſacraments and other ordinances. That this is but ſolemn trifling with God, appears, if ye conſider, that this is a covenant which hath no warrant in the word of God, and therefore Chriſt will never ſet his ſeal to it, though we ſhould ſeal it with our blood. It is quite oppoſite to the covenant of grace; the deſign of which is to draw the ſinner into the debt of free grace, and to ſet the crown only on Chriſt's head, Rom. iv. 14.—16 and xi. 6. The covenant of grace, is an everlaſting covenant; once in, never out: Iſa. lv. 3. "I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David." But this is a tottering covenant, broken every day. This is a ſervile covenant, to give Chriſt ſervice for ſalvation. The other is a filial covenant, where the ſoul takes Chriſt and ſalvation freely offered, and ſo is a ſon: "For to as many as believed on him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God," John, i. 11. Therefore, they do not ſerve, that they may get the inheritance; but becauſe the inheritance is theirs, therefore they ſerve, Gal. iv. 24. and downwards. To take hold of God's covenant, is for a poor empty-handed ſinner to come and live freely on Chriſt; this is to come and buy from him. In order to bring this charge home, I ſhall mention ſome evidences of the above practice.—Such as,

(1.) Perſons looking upon, and making uſe of the ſacrament only as ſeals of their vows, and not as ſeals of God's promiſes. I do not ſay but the ſacrament is a ſeal, to ſeal our engagement to be the Lord's; but this is but the one half, and even the leaſt half, as I take it, 1 Cor. x. 16. Why then do people ſo overlook this, but becauſe, not being ſhaken out of themſelves, they look more to the

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the confirming of their reſolutions, than their faith and communion with Chriſt in his fulneſs?

(2.) A ſecond evidence is, perſons coming to the Lord in this ordinance, rather to engage themſelves to duties, than to get ſtrength for the performance of them.

(3.) A third evidence is, perſons drawing their peace and comfort, rather from their duties, and the performance of that to which they have engaged, than what Chriſt makes over to ſinners in the covenant of grace. It was not ſo with David, for the covenant itſelf was all his ſalvation, and all his deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. But when the other works, he expects his wages; when he fails, he has no hope, as one who has broken covenant with Chriſt. But, when the true covenanter fails in his duty, yet all that his ſoul depended upon ſtill remains, a covenanted righteouſneſs; all that he truſted to for his duties alſo remains, to wit, covenanted ſtrength, Rom. vii. 24. 25. and viii. 1. And ſo there is new application for covenant-benefits; whereas, when many fail in their covenant, all is gone, and it muſt be made over again, ere he can have any new footing.—This trifling appears, when,

7. Perſons lay hold on Chriſt with a faith of which the mighty power of God was not at the forming, Eph. i. 19.; but is merely the product of a perſon's natural faculties. Moſt men's faith is like wild oats that grow up without the labour of the huſbandman. They come too eaſily to it, to make any ſure work by it. The evil heart of unbelief is not ſo eaſily ſhaken off as men imagine. Thoſe who find no difficulty, do but trifle and beat the air; if the work were heartily plied, it would not be ſo eaſy.—We now proceed,

III.

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III. To inquire how people come to turn such solemn work into trifling.—They do so,

1. Because they have no due consideration of the worth and preciousness of their souls, they do not suitably value the great salvation: Matth. xxii. 5. "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." Men will not trifle in matters which appear to them of great concern. But men who do not duly value their souls will venture them on they know not what. But who considers eternity, and the weight which lies on the soul's transacting with God? If men had eternity in their eye, and were transacting as for eternity, communicating for eternity, they would act in another manner, and not thus trifle in so important a business.—They do so,

2. Because they know not what a God they have to do with, they think that he is altogether such a one as themselves, Psal. l. 21. Men transact in their duties with, they know not whom, and therefore they act they know not what: Josh. xxiv. 19. "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins." When people have mean thoughts of God, they are ready to think any little thing may serve him.—They thus trifle,

3. Because they know not their own hearts, and their deceits: Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" There are many secret biases there, to which they do not advert. Men may be hypocrites, and not know themselves to be such. The heart has a depth of deceit, which is not easy to fathom, which will make men say, with Saul, I have performed the commandment of the Lord, while

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while, after all, the bleating of the ſheep will diſcover the deceit.—They thus trifle,

4. Becauſe ſin has never been made bitter enough to them. It is hard to wean us from the love of luſts, if the breaſts of them be not laid over with gall and wormwood. We muſt dig deep, and build upon the rock. Where the fallow ground is not plowed up, there will be a ſowing among thorns, Jer. iv. 3. The conſent of many to take Chriſt, ſuch as it is, is too lightly win to be ſolid.—They thus trifle,

5. Becauſe they are haſty and indeliberate in their engaging. They fall a-building ere they count the coſt, Matth. xiv. 25.—31.; what is raſhly done, is but ſlightly done in this matter. He that would make ſure work, muſt lay his account beforehand with what he may meet with in the Lord's way. Then, meet with what they will, they will not be offended.—They thus trifle,

6. Becauſe they have never got a ſufficient diſcovery of their own utter weakneſs and inſufficiency. They think they have a ſtock, and therefore may trade with it, and are very ready to undertake, though their heart will certainly miſgive in the performance. This is building on the old foundation of nature; whereas, there will never be ſure work, till this foundation be razed. If any man will come after Jeſus, he muſt deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow him.—It only remains that,

IV. We make ſome application. This doctrine may help us to ſee the reaſon why ſo many return with the dog to his vomit. There is an error in the firſt concoction. That you may beware of this, we would exhort you, to make ſure work in your tranſacting with the Lord. O do not trifle in ſo important

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important a concern!—To guard you effectually againſt this, conſider the following things.

1. Conſider, this is to put, ſo far as you can, a ſolemn cheat on the great God: Gal. vi. 7. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap." It is a dangerous thing to mock God. His all-ſeeing eye knows how you deal with him, and can penetrate through all your pretences.—Conſider,

2. It is to put a ſolemn cheat on your own ſouls; you thus deceive your own ſouls. If you trifle with God, you will find at length a ſad diſappointment: Iſa. l. 11. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ſhall ye have of mine hand; ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow." As ye ſow, ye will reap. Sow the wind of hypocriſy, and you will reap the whirlwind of wrath.

3. Conſider the weight of the matter; the ſalvation or damnation of the ſoul is no ſmall buſineſs; if you manage it right, you may get your ſalvation ſealed; if not, ſee Luke, xiv. 24. "For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper."

4. Conſider, if you thus trifle with God in this matter, you will be diſcovered. The man without the wedding-garment was ſoon found out. You will not hold right to the end; you will return to the vomit; your latter end will be worſe than your beginning.—Conſider,

5. That you have a deceitful heart; it is neceſſary to be ſure with it; it will ſoon give you the ſlip, and break the bonds, if they be ſlightly put on.—Conſider,

Laſtly, If you make ſure work, you will find the eternal advantage of it. All the bleſſings of the

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the covenant will be your portion. You may get a feaſt: "To this man will I look, ſaith the Lord, who is of an humble and contrite ſpirit, and who trembleth at my word."

I ſhall cloſe with the following ſhort DIRECTIONS.

Set about the work of ſelf-examination. Inquire particularly at your hearts, whether they be willing to take Chriſt, and renounce all other lovers, and to take him wholly, only, and everlaſtingly.—Pray that God may examine you, and diſcover yourſelves to yourſelves; lay yourſelves open to ſelf-ſearching.—*Laſtly*, Put your hearts into the Lord's hand, as ſenſible that in yours they will miſcarry. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs."

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SERMON LXI.

DEUT. v. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.*

YOU have been this day avouching the Lord to be your God. You have all had an offer of Christ, and there was none heard tell of protesting against him; nay, did not your hearts say within you, Even so I take him? Many of you have, before angels and men, sealed a covenant with him this day, and we may report to the Lord, that you have said you are content to be his. O that there were such an heart in you, all would be well!

Having, in the preceding discourse, offered all that we intend from the first doctrine, we now proceed to

DOCTRINE II. That a heart sincerely and suitably corresponding with the profession of a covenanting

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nanting people, is a moſt valuable and excellent thing.

HERE I ſhall,

I. Shew what a heart ſuch a heart is.

II. Make it appear, that ſuch a heart is a moſt valuable thing.

I. WE are to ſhew what a heart ſuch a heart is; and on this head, the particulars ſhall be moſtly taken out of the context.—We obſerve,

1. That ſuch an heart is a heart that has got a view of the majeſty and glorious perfections of that God with whom we have to do: Deut. v. 24. "And he ſaid, Behold the Lord our God hath ſhewed us his glory and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire; we have ſeen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth." The eye ſaw this; all would have been right, if the glory of the Lord had thus ſhined in their hearts. An unenlightened heart in the knowledge of the Lord looks ſo like hell, and unlike heaven, that it cannot be ſuch a heart. A dark heart will make a dark confuſed converſation. There is no right worſhipping of an unknown God. This view of the Lord's glory is neceſſary. Moſes deſired it, Exod. xxxiii.; and all get it in a greater or leſs degree: 2 Cor. iii 18. "But we all 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." If ye have ſeen the King in his glory, and his train filling the temple, it is a token of good. But, alas! many ſee the chair of ſtate, who behold not the King ſitting in it.

2. It is a heart filled with the fear of God. "O that there were ſuch a heart in them, that they

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would fear me." Indeed they profeſſed it, and they had a tolerably ſufficient meaſure of it, had it been but of the right ſtamp, and had it got leave to have ſoaked kindly into their hearts. But, alas! it was only like a ſcud of rain violent in the time, but wetting only the ſurface of the ground, and ſoon dried up. But O for ſuch a heart as would fear always! not with a ſlaviſh diſtruſtful fear, but a filial reverential fear, a fear of circumſpection. Such a heart as would keep the eye upon the majeſty of the Lord, would promiſe to keep right: Heb. xii. 28. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." A heart wanting this, will be like an unruly horſe without a bridle: Prov. xxv. 28. "He that hath no rule over his own ſpirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

3. It is a humble heart. O how humble did they ſeem to be now under the ſenſe of their own ſinfulneſs, and the holineſs of that God with whom they had to do! A heart humbled indeed is a valuable bleſſing. When Chriſt lances the ſwelling of the heart, and lets out the filthy ſtuff of pride and ſelf-conceit, makes the man low in his own eyes, he is even preparing a houſe for himſelf on earth; for the Lord "dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the heart of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," Iſa. lvii. 15. They durſt not go near the mountain to touch it, they looked as they would rather have rolled themſelves among the duſt of the Lord's feet. "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" The honeſt heart is ſhaken out of ſelf-confidence, for a right ſight of the Lord in his glory, and of our own vileneſs, go always together:

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Isa. vi. 5. "Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

4. It is a heart filled with wonder at the goodness of God, his condescension and patience towards sinners, ver. 24. and 26. That soul will wonder that God should ever have come in speaking-terms with vile man; that ever any thing should have proceeded out of his mouth, but arrows dipped in the vinegar of the curse, to have slain the traitors outright. And will God thus indeed deal with man? It will be the wonder of that soul, that God hath not comsumed it, mingled its blood with its sacrifices, struck it dead at the communion-table. O how wonderful that they should have spoke with the Lord, and are yet alive!

5. It is a heart convinced of the need of a Mediator, and resolved to employ him in all causes betwixt God and them, ver. 27. It is not every one that sees their need of Christ, and their need of an Advocate to go betwixt God and them. But he who has such a heart will look on himself, in himself, as dry stubble, as he looks on God as a consuming fire; and all his own duties and attainments, as a wall of dry boards which will not keep the fire from him, but increase it, and desire to have Christ betwixt them and a holy God, as a chrystal wall, which may let through the light, but not the flame of that fire. His very name will be precious to that heart, for it is "as ointment poured forth," Song, i. 3. How sweet is the name of a Redeemer to a captive, and to a humbled sinner, one who may lay his hands on both!

6. It is a heart taking the Lord only for their

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God. They profeſſed they would have no more to do with idols, though it was not long ere their hearts turned to their old bias: Exod. xxxii. 8. "They have turned aſide quickly out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten calf, and have worſhiped it, and have ſacrificed thereunto, and ſaid, Theſe be thy gods, O Iſrael, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." But ſuch a heart renounces all other lovers, gives Chriſt's rivals their leave, and halts no more betwixt two opinions. If thou wouldſt be perfect, ſell all, that is, part with all but Chriſt. When a man gets ſuch a heart, there is an extraordinary uproar made in the ſoul; when it enters the man's breaſt, Satan cries as theſe, "They that turn the world up-ſide down, are come hither alſo." There is a ſtrange overturning of thrones there. As when Chriſt and the goſpel came into the world, the world, which before was wholly given to idolatry, then made great reformation; oracles were ſtruck dumb, idols were caſt to the moles and to the bats; ſo when the man gets ſuch a heart, down goes the clay-god, the world, and Chriſt mounts the throne; neither back nor belly muſt be gods longer to the man, king ſelf loſes his crown, which is put upon the head of Chriſt, and free grace. The heart, which was divided among many luſts before, enters now on Jeſus, the beauty of the upper houſe.

7. It is a heart for the Lord's work, ver. 27. It is a heart which inclines the man who has taken Chriſt's enliſting money to fight his battles; which willingly ſtoops to the yoke of Chriſt's commandments, and is ſet to walk in the way of obedience. It is a heart reconciled to the law of God; the ſoul being married to Chriſt, may not be barren, but muſt bring forth fruit unto God. When the Lord

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Lord charges the heart, the bullock is tamed, and accuſtomed to the yoke.—To be more particular here, we obſerve,

(1.) That it is a heart for univerſal obedience, ver. 27. It wiſhes to neglect none of God's commands, but to have reſpect to them all, Pſal. cxix. 6. When the heart is ſtraight, it makes the converſation uniform. The Lord's ſtamp on every duty recommends it to the care of ſuch a heart. The heart naturally is like ſome ſervants who promiſe to do all at the bargain making, but fail in the accompliſhment, like the ſluggard who will not plough becauſe of the cold. But ſuch a heart puts a blank in the Lord's hand, and makes no exceptions. Some ſins lie nearer the heart than others, ſome a right eye, ſome but a left toe. The right eye muſt be plucked out; thou muſt put to thine own hand to this hard work, it muſt be with thine own conſent. Amen, ſays ſuch a heart; let boſom-luſts yield to Chriſt.

(2.) It is a heart for conſtant obedience. They limit no time. Compare the text with John, viii. 31. "Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed." We have a ſad account of Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii. 1. "When he was eſtabliſhed in the kingdom, and had ſtrengthened himſelf, he forſook the law of the Lord, and all Iſrael with him." He was like many men, who make uſe of religion like a net, who, when they have catched their prey, fold up and lay by their net. But ſee the fountain of his apoſtacy, ver. 14. "And he did evil, becauſe he prepared not his heart to ſeek the Lord;" prepared or fixed, or eſtabliſhed *not* his heart. But ſuch an heart is for following the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth, in foul and fair weather, and will abide with Chriſt

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Christ in a storm, when the summer vermin is not to be seen: Psal. xix. 9. "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." Trees planted in God's vineyard, watered by his grace, having such a heart, are not like common trees, green only one while of the year, but these are ever green, and are yielding their fruit in their season, Psal. vii. 3. Such an heart takes with the stock, and so lives by its sap.

(3.) It is a heart resolute in obedience. We will do it, say they, stand in the way what will. See the portraiture of such a heart, Micah. iv. 5. "For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Such a heart had Caleb and Joshua, they followed the Lord fully. It made them row against the stream. It gives the man courage for the arduous enterprise. Heaven is sweet in the eyes of all; why then do so many go to hell? why, they have not such a heart. There are difficulties in the way to heaven, they have no courage to grapple with these. They see heaven afar, but there is a great gulph betwixt them and it, and they have not such a resolute heart as to venture on it, and heaven will not drop down into their mouths.

(4.) It is a heart that is content to know what is duty and what is sin: "Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it." And indeed that is a very rare heart; for most people are very glad to lodge lusts; as some lodged intercommuned people, they are willing they should get house-room, but are desirous that they themselves should not see them, so as to know that they are there. But such a heart loves to know the whole counsel of God: John, iii. 20. "But he that doth truth cometh

cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God." It is a none-ſuch heart, which is content to have all anatomized and ſearched out; which in every caſe is ready to ſay, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth;" which is content to ſit down at Chriſt's feet and learn all; while others lodge their luſts under diſguiſe, and loath the diſcovery of them, rebel againſt the light, and ſhut their eyes, till God judicially blind them, ſo as that they at laſt come to believe lies.

(5.) It is a heart to which God's bare will is a ſufficient reaſon both for faith and practice. Such a heart receives the ſpeaker for the word's ſake, and not the word for his, but for God's ſake. Such a heart receives the kingdom as a little child, who has authority enough if father or mother ſay it. Such a heart had Abraham; he gets a ſtrange commandment, for which he could ſee no reaſon but the will of God, Gen. xxii. Father and ſon muſt part, not to ſee other more in this world, though the ſon of the promiſe. The father himſelf muſt do the deed. Here were many deaths both to the father and to the ſon; but God's will was revealed, and they were about fully to obey; then ſays the Lord, ver. 12. "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him, for now I know that thou feareſt God;" that thou haſt ſuch a heart.—We go on to obſerve,

8. It is a heart that has high and honourable thoughts of God, ver. 24. "Behold, the Lord our God hath ſhewed us his glory, and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire: we have ſeen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth." His greatneſs: "O that there were ſuch a heart in them!" They profeſſed this. High and honourable thoughts of the

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husband is necessary to the comfort of the married state, and to the performance of duties. The queen stands upon the right hand, Psal. xlv. 9. Mean thoughts of God are the neck-break of right obedience to him. They think him such an one as themselves, Psal. l. 21. Hence mean pitiful services are thought sufficient. They forget that he "will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, and before all the people he will be glorified," Levit. x. 3. Such a heart is let into the view of his greatness in some measure, so that its conclusions will be, Psal. xcv. 3. "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." So that the soul's familiarity with God will yet be managed with a due regard to the awful greatness and infinite distance betwixt God and the creature. And this may serve as a help to distinguish true communion with God from delusions, Heb. xii. 28. 29. John, xx. 28.

9. It is a heart which the voice of God has reached, ver. 24. (quoted above). O that this voice had had as much access to their hearts as to their ears! Paul spoke, and God spoke, and Lydia's heart was opened. "My sheep," said Jesus, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," John, x. 27. To honest covenanters there is something more in preaching than a bare sound, something more in sacraments than bread and wine: These are but the vehicles of the Lord's voice to the soul, and the ordinances are empty things when there is no divine fire infolded in them. There is a voice of the Lord in our mother's house; in the public ordinances there is a good report of Christ. Sinners are invited, obtested, commanded to hear and believe. But Christ comes into the inner chamber of the elect's hearts, and there he gives his voice, which is a majestic

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jestic voice, a heart-melting sound: Jer. xxiii. 29. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" It thaws the frozen affections. A quickening voice that puts activity in the soul; it puts the spirit in motion, so as that it rests not till it has taken up its rest in God: John, vi. 63. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

10. It is a heart which takes up with the Lord for its God, even when he appears in the glorious robes of his perfect holiness. This they professed; but "O that there were such a heart in them!" The truth is, the carnal mind is enmity against God; and none but saints indeed can give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, Psal. xxx. 4. God is glorious in his holiness indeed; but none will love him for that glory, but such as are partakers of the divine nature. Those who love him for this, love him for himself. And indeed such a heart, being a holy heart, will cleave to the fountain of holiness, to the end that they may be transformed into the same image. To take God in the robes of mercy, is not strange; but God's holiness chaseth unholy hearts away from him.

11. It is a heart sensible of that vast distance which sin has made betwixt God and the soul, which has got such a sight of its own sinfulness, and God's holiness, that it sees there is no transacting with God but by a Mediator, ver. 27. Such a heart will say as Luther, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." Such will not offer to come into the presence of God but as introduced by the King's Son, nor will desire to look on God but as vailed with flesh, knowing that a sight of unvailed majesty is enough to confound a sinner.

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ſinner. And truly, till the Lord touch the heart, it will not be ſuch a heart, but, like a fearleſs beaſt, will touch the fiery mountain. Such a heart will highly prize Chriſt, and come to the Lord under the vail of Chriſt's fleſh, and will have no boldneſs of acceſs but what flows from the blood of Chriſt, Heb. x. 19. 20.

12. It is a heart reconciled to the whole law of God, ver. 27. It is not every heart which is ſuch. They only have it, "who walketh not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit." Rom. viii. 1. Hypocrites hearts are never reconciled to the whole law of God. They cannot ſay they are not aſhamed in having reſpect to all God's commandments, Pſal. cxix. 6. There are always ſome parts of the Bible, which hypocrites would ſpend their blood on to blot them out, if that would do. Here, there is a raging luſt ſays yea; there, there is a holy law ſays nay; the heart cannot be reconciled to both at once. Both may be in the experience both of the ſincere Chriſtian and the hypocrite. What is the difference? why, the hypocrite would fain have the law to his luſts, the ſincere ſoul would have his luſts bow to the law. For he "delights in the law of the Lord after the inward man," Rom. vii. 22. And his heart will approve the law, when it forbids, accuſes, and condemns his corruptions, ver. 16. "If then I do that which I would not, I conſent to the law, that it is good."

13. It is a heart which is for taking the law only out of Chriſt's hand as Mediator, ver. 27. The Mediator firſt makes the peace between God and the ſinner, then bids the man work. But the law of itſelf firſt bids ſinners work, and tells them they ſhall have their peace according to their work; which would be dreadful news to ſuch a heart. Under the law to Chriſt, 1 Cor. ix. 21.

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The law, cast into a gospel-mould, is the only law such a heart desires to meddle with, that, "being married to Christ, they may bring forth fruit to God," Rom. vii. 4.; that, being by Christ made partakers of the adoption, they may serve as sons, not as hired servants or slaves.

Lastly, It is a heart ready for obedience, ver. 27. The soul then stands at mount Zion, and says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." They have had Christ's banner in the banqueting-house, as being ready to rise up and fight his battles, under the conduct and influence of their glorious leader. Such a heart has eaten the passover with its loins girt, and with a staff in its hand, ready for the journey. The heart that is for obedience, but not yet, is not such a heart; it is but a shifting heart, which will end in a refusal. It is but a civil way of putting off for altogether: Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!"

We now proceed,

II. To shew that such a heart is a most valuable thing.—It must be so: For,

1. Such a heart is God's delight: "O that there were such an heart in them!" This would give content to the heart of Christ. This is his rest. The very prayer of the upright is his delight: Psal. xi. 7. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright." Such a heart is pleasing to God; and it cannot be otherwise, for it is shapen out according to his mind. The person who has such a heart is another David, a man according to God's own heart. It is a heart which, as believing, pleaseth God; a heart well pleased with him, in which God is well pleased.

2. It is that heart without which the largest

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profeſſion, and the moſt expreſs covenanting with God, is little worth. Without this heart men do but as the Lord's enemies, they lie unto him. And it is a dangerous thing to lie unto the Lord, like Ananias and Sapphira, who died with a lie in their mouth. They take God's name in vain. The voice indeed is Jacob's, but the hands are Eſau's. It is but mocking God, and juggling with the holy One. It is but doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, and offering the blind and the lame for ſacrifice, which will bring down a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing. Let a man be at never ſo much pains in duties, yet ſtill the one thing is lacking while they have not ſuch a heart.

3. The want of this heart is very grievous to the Spirit of Chriſt. The Lord doth thus, in the text, lament their want of it. If any thing pierce the heart of God, it is when, with a covenanting people, there is wanting ſuch a heart. What can be more grievous in a married lot than when the huſband has not the wife's heart? Ezek. vi. 9. "I am broken, ſays God, with their whoriſh heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols." There can be no contentment in that condition, as Haman ſaid, "Yet all this availeth me nothing," Eſth. v. 13. And a ſoul's grieving the Lord's Spirit, is a forerunner of the Lord's grieving them: Pſal. xvi. 4. "Their ſorrow ſhall be multiplied that haſtens after another god."

4. God accepts of the duty, and is well pleaſed with the bargain, where there is ſuch a heart: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" There wants no more to complete the bargain betwixt them and me. Then, as they call me their God, ſo would I call them my people by a ſaving relation. But where ſuch is not, the contract betwixt Chriſt and the

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the ſoul is written indeed, but it is not ſigned. Would you know, then, if Chriſt be yours, with all the benefits of the everlaſting covenant? why, if you have ſuch a heart, you have Chriſt's heart, you are married to the Lord, and ſhall never be put away. A voice of the word without, and an echo to it of the heart within, cloſes the bargain: Pſal. xxvii. 8. "When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek." See alſo, Jer. iii. 22.

5. Where there is ſuch a heart, God will be well pleaſed with the perſon, and accept the duty, though it have many defects; albeit he be not pleaſed with theſe defects, yet in mercy he will overlook them: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" As if he had ſaid, O if they were but honeſt in the main, I would not be ſevere on them for every eſcape. The Lord will uſe the indulgence of a father for ſuch infirmities: Song, v. 1. "I have drunk my wine with my milk." *Milk*, that is, he accepts the meaneſt work where there is ſuch an heart. A groan, a tear, a breathing after the Lord, is accepted; as the father loves more the liſping child's expreſſion of its affection to him, than all the towering compliments of a flattering tongue, 2 Chron. xv. 17.; the eye of their faith, though, like Leah's, a bleared eye, Song, iv. 9.; the fire of their love, though weak, ver. 10.; the hand of their confidence, though a trembling hand; the anchor of their hope, though feeble, Pſal. xlvii. 11.; their feet of obedience, tho' lame like Mephiboſheth, yet ſhall they be ſet at the king's table; though their very ſincerity be not without a mixture of hypocriſy, Gal. ii. 13. yet it holds weight in the balance; Chriſt takes their petitions, though not every way well drawn, blots out ſome, fills up other things in them, and gets

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them anſwered. Their will is accepted for the deed; their grief for want of will, for the will itſelf;—all this where there is ſuch a heart.

6. They will never prove ſtedfaſt in the Lord's covenant without ſuch a heart: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" They have ſpoke fair, but they will never keep a word they ſay, for they have not ſuch a heart: Pſal. lxxviii. 37. "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant." The heart is the principle of actions; ſuch a heart is the principle of perſeverance; and there can be no ſtedfaſtneſs without a principle: Matth. xiii. 6. "And when the ſun was up, they were ſcorched, and becauſe they had not root, they withered away." The tree which is ſet in the ground, but does not take root in it, will be eaſily blown over. The houſe without a foundation cannot withſtand the ſtorm, Matth. vi. 23. They who have covenanted with God without ſuch a heart, will make foul work, it will appear that the devil has gone down with the ſop, their former luſts will be ſwallowed over again, 2 Pet. ii. 20.—22. Their laſt ſtate will be worſe than the firſt. Their vows will be no ſtronger than Samſon's withs; their reſolutions, like the walls of Jericho, will fall down at the ſound of the horn of temptation.

7. Such an heart will fence the man againſt apoſtacy: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" They would not then turn away from me; they would keep by their covenant: Luke, vii. 15. "But that on the good ground, are they which in an honeſt and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Cleaving to Chriſt with conſtancy, without apoſtacy, is the very eſſence of ſuch an heart. Gold is not gold, but droſs, if it do not continue in the fire.

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fire. Men's hearts may get ſome light ſtrokes of the Spirit, ſome fleeting motions of the ſame, and the heart ſtill unfound as the ſtony ground. But if the Spirit of God and of glory reſt not on the heart, it is not ſuch an heart: 2 John, ii. 27. "But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you;" the fire of true love will be preſerved, though it flame not, whatever cools there may be taking place. Such an heart has learned ſo much of the grace of God, as to deny worldly luſts, and all forſaken lovers, when they come to court the ſoul. Where ſuch a heart is, there is the root of the matter in the man, Job, xix. 28.; and there is ſap enough to keep in the life of it, Prov. xii. 3. "The root of the righteous ſhall not be moved. Yea, the Root of Jeſſe has engaged that this root ſhall not fail," John, iv. 14. They are kept through the power of God. God is careful of the leaves of Chriſtianity, Pſal. i. 3. much more of real Chriſtians themſelves; therefore ſays Job, chap. xvii. 9. "The righteous ſhall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger." Be their light never ſo weak, it will laſt, yea, it will grow, and ſhine more and more unto the perfect day. It is the abiding ſeed of God.

Laſtly, Such a heart enriches the man who has it: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!" they want no more to make them happy here and hereafter. Grace and glory, and all good, is the portion of thoſe who have ſuch an heart. Such an heart has taken Chriſt, is married and knit to him, and then Chriſt is your's, all is your's; pardon, peace, and every bleſſing; as he who gets a hold of the main link of a chain, draws all after him: "There the Lord commands the bleſſing, even life which never ends."

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We ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with beſeeching you to be in earneſt that you have ſuch a heart. This is that which you all need, that without which you muſt be miſerable for ever.—It is a moſt invaluable bleſſing, what you ſhould highly prize; what is precious in God's eſteem, and what he is urgent with you that you may poſſeſs: "O that there were ſuch an heart in them!"

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SERMON LXII.

DEUT. v. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.*

HAVING considered, in the two preceding discourses, the first and second doctrines proposed from this subject, we now go on to

DOCT. III. and last, That the work of covenanting with the Lord is slight work, when it is not heart-work; or, That solemn covenanting with the Lord is but solemn trifling with him, when the work of covenanting is not heart-work.

IN treating this point, we shall,

I. Produce some evidences, that solemn covenanting is often nothing but solemn trifling, and not heart-work.

II. Shew when solemn covenanting is not heart-work.

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III. Shew how people come to make ſolemn covenanting but a trifling buſineſs.

IV. Shew the danger of trifling, and not making heart-work of this weighty buſineſs.—And then,

V. Apply the whole.

We are,

I. To produce ſome evidences, that ſolemn covenanting is often nothing but ſolemn trifling, and not heart-work. It is of importance that you may be ſtirred up to take heed to the deceits which we may diſcover in this weighty buſineſs.—With this view, we obſerve,

1. That apoſtacy and defection from the good ways of the Lord, perſons returning again openly to the ſame courſes which they purſued before. This is an evidence, 2 Peter, ii. 19.—22. Matth. xii. 45. "Then the evil ſpirit goeth, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there; and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation." They who have no root ſoon wither away, Matth. xiii. 6. There are many who, ſince the Revolution, have ſolemnly covenanted with the Lord at ſacraments, and many who have done it, when they durſt not ſo well avow it as now, who have given a ſad account of themſelves ſince that time, having returned to their former courſes of wickedneſs and profanity. Fallen ſtars were ſtars never but in appearance. To loſe both life and leaf, is a dreadful ſymptom: John, xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned."—Another evidence is,

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2. When ſome luſts are maintained in Chriſt's room, as when an adulterous woman takes another man inſtead of her huſband. There are ſome luſts from which the heart is never looſed, right eyes they cannot part with; this is ſecret apoſtacy from the Lord: Heb. iii. 12. "Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." When the Lord offers himſelf to ſinners, he ſays, If you will take me, let theſe go their way. Some enter into a marriage-covenant with the Lord, but they give their hearts to other lovers, Pſal. xiv. 4. (quoted before). This is hypocritical dealing with God, which is a diſeaſe in the vitals of religion, Pſal. lxxviii. 37. (quoted above).—Another evidence is,

3. Perſons making their covenant with the Lord, a cover to their ſloth, and a pander to their luſts. It is ſad work which perſons make of covenanting, when it ſerves only to conjure their conſciences, who hence can ſleep more ſecurely in their ſins. Many are never more light, vain, and frothy, than after ſuch a work; a moſt ſhrewd ſign of a whoriſh diſpoſition: Prov. vii. 14. "I have peace-offerings with me. This day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to ſeek thy face." The covenant of God is a covenant of peace and war, which inclines the ſinner to be at peace with the Lord's friends, and at war with his enemies. It makes the ſoul to ſay to former luſts, I have learned from the goſpel, to "deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world," Titus, ii. 12. Hence, Chriſt no ſooner enters the heart, but he comes as Captain of the Lord's hoſt; and the perſon's heart thus becomes the ſeat of war: Gal. v. 17. "For the fleſh luſteth againſt

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againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; and theſe two are contrary the one to the other." And theſe luſts which were formerly gold chains, are now turned into heavy iron fetters: Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?"—Another evidence is,

4. The barrenneſs of the lives of profeſſors, nothing of the fruits of holineſs appearing in their lives. We are, Rachel like, barren, having no more but the leaves of a profeſſion, the performance of external duties, to give us the name of Chriſtians. Alas! fire from heaven ſeems to have blaſted many of us, and the curſe of the Lord is as a worm at our root. Married to the Lord, and yet barren, is a contradiction, Rom. vii. 4. For the very end of this marriage is, that we may bring forth fruit unto God. Where the ſoul is joined to the Lord, it is made the habitation of the Spirit; and this is that which produces the fruits of holineſs: Eph. v. 9. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth."

Here ſome may ſay, Alas! this ſpeaks death to me, for do what I will, the weeds in the curſed ſoil of my heart ſuffers no fruit to appear there. To ſuch I anſwer.—There is no fruit which grows in the heart of a believer in the world, but it has a weed of corruption by the ſide of it; their faith is marked with unbelief, their hope with diffidence, their very ſincerity with hypocriſy. But are you at pains to pluck up theſe? If you ſhould look into a garden, and ſaw nothing but weeds in it, yet if you ſaw the gardener weeding it, you would conclude there muſt be ſomething elſe there; ſo in this caſe. Will you ſee if there be any thriving of undergrowth in your hearts, if you be growing downwards in humility, ſelf-loathing, ſelf-denial, depending and cleaving

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cleaving more from a ſenſe of need to the Lord? Eph. iv. 15. 16. Barren trees uſe not to have their branches hanging down to ſalute the ground, unleſs they be broken off by a violent wind.—Another evidence is,

5. The having no communication of the life of grace from Chriſt to the ſoul: John, xiv. 19. "Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo." Food and raiment are what every ſoul married to the Lord get from him. If the ſoul be truly united to Chriſt, it will partake of the root and ſap of the vine: John, vi. 57. "He that eateth me, ſaith Jeſus, even he ſhall live by me." True faith opens a way for a ſtream of blood to run through the heart, by which the ſoul is purged and quickened. The blood of Jeſus "purges the conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God," Heb. ix. 14. But, alas! the faith of many is like a pipe laid ſhort of the fountain, and ſo brings none of the water of life into the ſoul. Many covenant with the Lord as the ſeven women, Iſa. iv. 1. who take hold of one man, as it is there ſaid, they will be called by his name; for ſo is Chriſt's ſpouſe, in token of her marriage-relation, ſhe loſeth her name, and takes her huſband's, Iſa. xliv. 5. "One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's: and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob." This will take away their reproach before the world, and it will do much to ſilence the bluſtering tongue of an ill-natured conſcience. Yea, but after all this, they will eat their own bread, Iſa. iv. 1. They will live upon their own ſtock of natural and acquired abilities, for they are not, as in Matth. iii. 5. "poor in ſpirit." They come not, as true believers, with a weak ſoul to a ſtrong God, an empty veſſel to a full fountain. Thus does the true believer, who ſays, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs

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nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." But the other will live on their own luſts; Chriſt gives reſt to their conſciences, and their luſts give reſt to their hearts; he ſhall bear up their hopes, and their luſts ſhall ſatisfy their deſires.——They will wear their own apparel: Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God." Their duties make a great figure in their own eyes, and therefore are cyphers in God's account. Hence, the more they do and the better they do, the more are they in conceit with themſelves, and the further from Chriſt. It is quite contrary with true covenanters: Phil. iii. 3. "They rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh:" Rev. vii. 14. "They waſh their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."—We ſhall only add as an evidence,

Laſtly, The having no contentment in Chriſt alone. Where the ſoul heartily cloſes with Chriſt, he is to the ſoul a covering to the eyes: Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee." Hence the triumph of faith, even when all external things fail: Hab. iii. 17. "I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my ſalvation." But, alas! how many of us have no comfort, but when the ciſterns of creature-comforts are running full! how few arrive at the height of rejoicing in the Lord, when theſe ciſterns are dried up! Mat. xiii. 45. 46. Every perſon's houſe ſtands upon two props, Chriſt and the creature, but the weight lies only upon one of them. Take away the world from the believer,

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liever, he ſtands firm on the rock Chriſt; take away the world from the hypocrite, and all falls down together. A perſon may bear to have ſome branch of his comforts cut off; but when God ſtrikes at the root of creature-comforts, then may the hypocrite ſay, Thou haſt taken away my gods, and what have I more? Some can endure any thing but poverty, for covetouſneſs reigns in them; others any thing but diſreſpect, for pride is their idol.

Here again ſome may ſay, If this be an evidence, we know not who will make ſure work, for many time gracious perſons are as much, if not more, caſt down with the loſs of creature-comforts, than others! To this I anſwer, No doubt gracious ſouls will ſometimes be more joyful on the receipt of a temporal mercy, and more caſt down on the loſs of them, than others; for the chief thing which affects him is the face of God appearing in it, either as favourable or frowning; ſo that they will be ready to ſay on ſuch an occaſion, as in Gen. xxxiii. 10. "For therefore I have ſeen thy face, as though I had ſeen the face of God, and thou waſt pleaſed with me." And this will make a mole-hill mercy or croſs appear like a mountain. The godly in this caſe fetch their comfort from the Lord, others fetch theirs from ſomething elſe in the world; when one ſtream runs dry, they go to another, like the prodigal before he came home. The drying up of the ſtreams ſends the gracious ſoul to the fountain.

We now proceed,

II. To ſhew when covenanting is not heart-work, but a trifling buſineſs.—It is ſo,

1. When the ſoul is not divorced from ſin. The heart is naturally glewed to ſin, and it is im-

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poſſible that the heart can at once be both for the Lord and luſts, Matth. vi. 24. The firſt marriage muſt be made void before a ſecond can be made ſure. They muſt have their covenant with their luſts broken, who will have their covenant with the Lord ſure: Hoſea, xiv. 8. "Ephraim ſhall ſay, What have I to do any more with idols?" Living luſts and the living Lord will not both get the throne of the heart. In the day of eſpouſals, when Chriſt gets the crown, luſts get the croſs. Many will be in ſuit of the heart, and the heart for a time may be halting betwixt two; but in a covenanting day with the Lord, all others muſt be diſcharged: Pſal. xlv. 10. "Hearken, O daughter! and conſider, and incline thine ear; forget alſo thine own people, and thy father's houſe."—Here ſome may inquire, How may a perſon know if their heart be divorced from ſin? Anſwer, That which makes the man and his luſts one, is the greedy grip which the heart takes of ſin, it is the heart cleaving to its luſts: Jer. viii. 5. "Why then is the people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back by a perpetual backſliding? They hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to return." The heart and affections in ſin are like the hot iron, where the iron and the fire are very cloſe together. The man's luſts are to him like a leg or an arm which is knit to the body with joints and bands. Now, where the heart is divorced, it loaths that ſin which before it loved. Though ſin cleaves to the man, yet he cleaves not to it, Rom. vii. 17.—22. Never was the captive more deſirous to be looſed of his bands, than that ſoul to be free from ſin. Like a weak honeſt virgin, though it cannot ſhake itſelf looſe of its grips, yet it would be content if one would ſet it free.—Solemn covenanting is trifling,

2. When the ſoul is not divorced from the law, Rom.

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Rom. vii. 4. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt; that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit to God." Legal profeſſors do but trifle with the Lord, and never make heart-work of covenanting with him. They may bind themſelves faſter and faſter to duties, but there is no engaging their hearts to the Lord of duties; they are as they who would draw up with the hand-maid inſtead of the miſtreſs; and do but bind themſelves to the work of ſpinning out their own ruin out of their own bowels. There is a generation who get ſome convictions of their miſery by ſin, the law comes and takes them by the throat, and then they cry, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Hence they beſtir themſelves, and fall a trading to gain ſomething for heaven and eternal life; they ſet about ſecret duties, attending public ordinances, and take the ſacrament, and the effect of all is but to wreath their necks faſter in the yoke of law-bondage, and to remove themſelves farther from Chriſt. This is but trifling.—If it be inquired, How may one know if they be divorced from the law? you have the word, Gal. ii. 19. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." The law comes home to the ſoul with ſuch force and power, that it cuts off all hopes of the ſoul's ever mending itſelf by its works; makes the ſoul ſee its utter emptineſs and weakneſs; and hence it dies off, and lies at the foot of free grace, with that prayer in its mouth, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Then Chriſt's blood is the ſoul's only refuge for

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guilt, Chriſt's Spirit for holineſs; and the ſoul will have no peace but what comes from this blood; while many, inſtead of this, lick themſelves whole of their wounds by confeſſion, mourning, prayer for pardon, and engaging not to do ſo any more. But it is quite different from this, when, as above, the Spirit of Chriſt leads his divorced bride out of the houſe of her former huſband to Jeſus himſelf.—It is ſo,

3. When the ſoul comes not heartily and freely to the Lord in his covenant, Pſal. lxxviii. 34.—37. The Lord will not meet that ſoul. He cares not for perſons giving the hand, when they do not give him their hearts. Indeed this is a covenant which ſpeaks out the extreme naughtineſs of men's hearts, by their coming into it grudgingly and per force. The ſacrifice that is dragged to the altar, will not be accepted, it will run away from it again. It will be like the ſtrong bough which is forcibly bowed, which will ſoon fly back. When the Lord comes to a ſoul, he deals with the heart. He touches the heart, as he touched the hearts of Saul's companions, 1 Sam. x. 26. Jer. xxxi. 3. "The Lord hath appeared to me of old, ſaying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love: therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee." There is grace in the Lord's lips, heavenly rhetoric to catch a ſinner's affections, Pſal. xlv. 2. When the Spirit of the Lord pours in overcoming grace, then the man pours out his heart before him, Pſal. lxii. 8. Thus the people becomes willing in the day of his power, Pſal. cx. 3.—Here we may ſhortly ſtate and conſider two caſes.

Caſe 1. What ſhall become of thoſe, then, who are driven to the Lord by terror? I anſwer, Thoſe who are only driven by terror, they will even leave him

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him again when the terror is over, for terrors will break a heart of ſtone, but will not melt it. At the ſame time, terror may begin the work, which love will crown: Hoſea, ii. 14. "Therefore, behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her." When the Lord is to match with ſinners, they are bold and perverſe, they will not ſpeak to him, till he has ſhot an arrow into their fleſh, till he has made them priſoners of war; and then, when he has them in chains, he makes love to them. He firſt drives the ſinner, and then he draws him like Noah's dove into the ark, Gen. viii. 9. The Lord ſets the avenger of blood in purſuit of the poor criminal, he with a heavy heart leaves his own city, and his old acquaintances, and flees for his bare life to the city of refuge, to which he has no inclination, but *muſt do* is a great thing. When he comes to the gates, and ſees the beauty of the place, the excellencies and lovelineſs of the city charm him; then he ſays, This is my reſt, here will I dwell.

Caſe 2. I often find, when I am to go to the Lord's table, a great backwardneſs to the duty. What ſhould be done in this caſe? I anſwer, There is a great difference betwixt a man's turning his back and running away from his friend, and a ſickly man's coming ſlowly to him. And if I might be allowed ſo to ſpeak, I ſhould diſtinguiſh between a backward heart, and a backwardneſs upon the heart: Matth. xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak." A backward heart is a fooliſh heart, and will make ſad work of a communion: Prov. xvii. 16. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wiſdom, ſeeing he hath no heart to it?" I wiſh the Lord may turn

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this people from the Lord's table, till he has turned their hearts back to himself; or else, when they have put their hands to the plough, they will after all leave it, and injure religion more than if they had never meddled with it. But for others, our Master allows you to come as you are able, with your burden upon your back, and lay it down at his feet: Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Psal. lxv. 3. "Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." The great Physician knows very well his patient comes with heart and good will, though his sickness and indisposition makes him come with a slow pace.—It is trifling,

4. When the soul comes to the Lord in his covenant for peace to their consciences, but not for victory over their lusts. Many come to the Lord, as a sick man to the physician, to cure him of his wounds, but not to live upon his charges: Psal. lxxviii. 34. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God." They have use for the blood, not for the water, which came from the side of Jesus. This is but half-work, not heart-work. Enemies to the spirit of holiness are enemies to Christ. I never think it the best frame for a communion-table when people sit down at the Lord's table chiefly for peace and comfort. A view of the King, a transforming sight which might strengthen the soul, to have this before our eyes sitting down at the feast, would certainly be most safe. To get a touch of the hem of Christ's garment, for stopping the issue of sin, will be salutary indeed.—It is so,

5. When the soul accepts of conditional promises, but does not accept of and receive the Lord himself in absolute promises. This is to

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agree upon the leſs points of the covenant, and to neglect the main point, Heb. viii 10. The great thing God offers in the goſpel is Chriſt. He is a fooliſh man that would claim the benefit of the contract, while he neglects to marry the woman. It is a dreadful thing to turn the covenant of grace into a mere ſervile or mere ſocial covenant, as paſſes betwixt neighbouring independent ſtates. It is moſt properly a marriage-covenant, where the ſoul firſt takes the Lord himſelf, and then looks for the benefits accruing to it by the happy match. Natural men fancy a very eaſy covenant in,—"He that confeſſeth his ſins, ſhall find mercy.—Call on me, and I will anſwer thee.—What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—He will accept the will for the deed; not conſidering that all the promiſes are yea and amen in Chriſt; and ſuppoſe they could perform the condition of theſe promiſes, yet they could not have benefit by them while they have not the Lord Chriſt, dwelling, living, and reigning in them.—It is ſolemn trifling,

Laſtly, When there is not an abſolute reſignation of the will to the will of the Lord. This is to have reſerves in our covenanting with the Lord. Man's will is the great rebel againſt the Lord, and muſt, if we make ſure work, be bound hand and foot in a covenanting day. There muſt be a double reſignation, (1.) To the preceptive will: Rom. vi. 17. "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." The ſoul muſt no more ſnarl with duty, but be content to take on the yoke of Chriſt's commands. And they who are not content to ſtand and receive the ſame commands from mount Zion, which were thundered into their hearts from mount

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mount Sinai before, their hearts are not for this work. (2.) There must be resignation to the providential will of God. It has been long a question betwixt the Lord and you, who shall be master of your process, who shall carve out your lot? Are you come to a point now? even to that point? Psal. xlvii. 4. "He shall chuse our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved." It is well, you are wise; for our own will, and nothing else, is our wreck.

We should now,

III. Shew how people come to make solemn covenanting but a trifling business. But for this, see the third head of doctrine first.

We proceed, then,

IV. To shew the danger of trifling, and not making heart-work of this weighty business.—This will appear if we consider,

1. That the Lord rejects the work: Mal. i. 13. "Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts, and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord." Whatever pains persons may be at about covenanting, the Lord has no regard to it while it is not heart-work, Isa. i. 11. It is true, you may even sign the contract, but the Lord will not subscribe it, seeing it has not the upright consent of your hearts, Psal. l. 16. 17. You may expect the entertainment recorded Matth. xxii. 12. "Friend, how camest thou in thither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless."—Consider,

2. That it puts men more securely in Satan's grips than before. In this sense that holds true which you

you have in Isa. xxviii. 22. "Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong." Publicans and sinners will enter before these. Such are twice dead, where the devil goes out and returns with seven other spirits worse than himself. The last end of such a person is worse than his beginning. —Consider,

3. That it exposes men to spiritual strokes: Jer. xlviii. 10. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully."—Deadening strokes. These are silent arrows which fly from the hand of God into the soul without noise: Isa. vi. 10. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Sometimes men are like Saul among the prophets, but afterwards they are knocked in the head by the secret judgement of God, because of their hypocritical dealing with him, it may be at a communion-table, in so much that they have never a day to do well after; and from that time God answers them not, but they live and rot above the ground; their hearts are deadened, their affections dozened, their gifts withered, and their souls blasted: John, xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."—Quickening strokes, whereby the man is dreadfully alarmed, the conscience is awakened, and made like mount Sinai, where nothing but fire and smoak appear. God takes the filthy rags of their mock-covenanting, wraps them in brimstone, and sets them in fire about the sinner's ears. Their wounds which were scurfed over bleed more dreadfully, while the plaster they made will not stick.—Besides these, there are

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ſtrokes upon their bodies. As Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 1. 2. A wrong look into the ark coſt the men of Bethſhemeſh dear, 1 Sam. vi. 19. God ſmote Uzzah, and he died by the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 7. And the apoſtle tells us, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep."—Conſider,

Laſtly, That however quietly people may get it carried in life, it will bring them a ſad diſapointment at death. The houſe built on the ſand fell by the ſtorm, and great was its fall. A great fall from high hopes into deep deſpair; like the fooliſh virgins, who were unexpectedly ſhut out.

We are now,

V. To apply the ſubject.—Which we ſhall do only in an uſe of exhortation.

I would then exhort one and all of you to make heart-work and ſure work in your covenanting with the Lord, and not to trifle in ſo ſolemn a buſineſs. You have heard the danger you incur by trifling with it. But perhaps ſome will ſay with a whole heart, that as they are reſolved to keep themſelves out of harm's way, they will not come to the Lord's table. To this I would anſwer, Well, will you not enter into covenant with the Lord? if not, then you will never ſee heaven: Eph. ii. 12. "Strangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world." Where will you appear at the great day? Pſal. l. 1.—5. You muſt take hold of the Lord's covenant, or be damned. Sirs, if ye enter at all into this work, my exhortation reaches you. You may trifle with God upon your knees, as well as at his table. And if you be not minded to refuſe this covenant, why ſtand you back from the ſeals of it?

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it? why do you not prepare yourſelves for it? why ſlight you this love-token of our dying Lord? I would think, if you were in earneſt for the covenant, you not would ſlight the ſeal of it. Make ſure work then. To induce you to be ſerious in this weighty work, I would mention and urge the following MOTIVES.

Mot. 1. You have need to make ſure work, for you have deceitful hearts to deal with, Jer. xvii. 19. Let not the bands be put on ſlightly, or it will ſoon ſlip them all. Therefore dig deep, by ſerious ſolemn examination of your conſciences before the Lord, that you may build as on a rock.

Mot. 2. Conſider the weight of the buſineſs; the buſineſs of ſalvation, or damnation, is not a matter to triſle with. Sirs, life and death are before you. Your eternal ſtate lies at the ſtake. I beſeech you then, by all that weight of glory that awaits the ſaints, as you would not ruin your ſouls, which a thouſand worlds cannot repair, for the loſs of the ſoul cannot be made up, that you ſeriouſly conſider the buſineſs.

Mot. 3. Conſider the Lord is not triſling, but is in good earneſt with you: "O that there were ſuch a heart in them!" There is a match propoſed betwixt the King of glory and the daughter of Zion, the Bridegroom is willing: Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I ſtand at the door and knock." There is nothing wanting on his part: Matth. xxii. 4. "All things are ready, come unto the marriage." How paſſionately does he call for her conſent in the text! And now, when the Lord is thus offering himſelf to you, why will you refuſe or triſle with him?—Here ſome may propoſe this,

OBJECTION. This is a flouriſh which may paſs well enough in a pulpit. But, O! if the Lord were really

really offering himself to me, I would never refuse. To this I answer, The offer is real, though ministerial. We have our commission from our Lord to bear us out in it, and he would do the same if he were here bodily present: 2 Cor. v. 10. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." Hence, in the days of his flesh, he offered himself both to those that did, and those that did not receive him. Consider, he said to his disciples, "He that heareth you, heareth me." We are the friends of the Bridegroom; as Abraham's servants, we are come to bring you to our Master's son. What would you have to make the offer real, if you may not take it as such from the mouth of his messengers? Would you have him leave his glory a second time, and come in person to make the offer? Or would you have him come down in his glory? If so, you know not what you ask. It would set you better to do as Abigail, bow yourself to the earth, and humbly accept of the offer, 1 Sam. xxv. 40. 41.—So real is the offer, that if you refuse, ye will be damned for the refusal: Mark, xvi. 15. 16. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." John, xvii. 20. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." See then what ye do. It is a serious business on the Lord's part, and there is a prize in your hands which you would do well diligently to improve.—Does he indeed offer himself to me? do you say? notwithstanding my unworthiness. Yea, to you, we make no scruple to offer him particularly to every one

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one of you, the vileſt of you all: Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will ſup with him, and he with me." It is not unworthineſs, but unwillingneſs, that will mar the bargain: "The Spirit and the bride ſay, Come, and let him that heareth ſay, Come, and let him that is athirſt ſay, Come, and whoſoever will let him take the water of life freely.

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A RICH FEAST PREPARED FOR HUNGRY SOULS*.

SERMON LXIII.

ISA. XXV. 6. *And in this mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.*

THE prophets of old propheſied of the grace of Chriſt which ſhould come unto us, 1 Pet. i. 10.; and of theſe none more than our evangelical prophet, who, in the verſe before us, foretells a rich ſpiritual entertainment which ſhould be made by the Saviour Jeſus Chriſt unto a ſtarving world of prodigal ſinners, reduced by their extravagance into extreme want.—Here there is to be obſerved,

1. The Maker and Maſter of the feaſt, the Lord himſelf; it is a royal feaſt, with which the King of Zion entertains his own ſubjects. Particularly, it is the Lord Chriſt, the Son of God, who, pitying the famiſhed condition of poor ſinners, was at the expence of this coſtly feaſt for them; for the maker

* An action-ſermon, delivered June 7. 1719.

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maker of it is the same who swallows up death in victory, ver. 8. A warlike title is ascribed to him, the *Lord of Hosts*, for there is a banner in Christ's banqueting-house; and this feast looks both backward and forward to a war.—You will observe,

2. The guests for whom this feast is provided: It is made for *all people*. Not that every person does actually partake of it, nor that every person without exception is invited to it; the event shews the contrary, there being many to whom the sound of the gospel never comes; but intimating, that the invitation is given to all who come in its way, without distinction, or exception of any sort of persons: Matth. xxii. 9. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." The invitation is to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, to these in the highways and hedges, as well as those in the city. All who will come are welcome.—You may observe,

3. The guest-chamber where this feast is held: *In this mountain*, namely, mount Zion, that is, the church. To that society all must join who would partake of this feast. And as mount Zion represents both the church militant and the church triumphant, so these are one church, one body; and it is one feast, as to its substance, Heb. xii. 22.—24.——You will observe,

4. The matter of the feast: A feast imports abundance and variety of good entertainment; and here nothing is wanting which is suitable for hungry souls. This is held forth under the notion of the best meat and drink, because what these are to the body, the same is the gospel-feast to the soul. In this valley of the world lying in wickedness, there is nothing for the soul to feed on but carrion, nothing but what would be loathed, ex-

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cept by thoſe who were never uſed to better; but in this monntain, there is a *feaſt of fat things*, things moſt reliſhing to thoſe who taſte them, moſt nouriſhing to thoſe who feed on them; and theſe are *full of marrow*, moſt ſatisfying to the ſoul.—In this valley of the world, there is nothing but muddy waters, which can never quench the thirſt of the ſoul, but muſt ruin it with the dregs ever cleaving to them; but here, on this mountain, are *wines on the lees*, that is, the beſt of wines, which having been kept long upon the lees, are therefore ſtrong and nouriſhing. And theſe wines are well refined, being carefully drawn off, and quite ſeparated from the lees or dregs, and therefore clear and fine. They are undreggy comforts; they afford the moſt refined ſatisfaction and delight.—From this ſubject we take the following

DOCTRINE, That Jeſus Chriſt has prepared a moſt rich and delicious feaſt for the ſouls of all thoſe who will come to him, and partake of it as preſented to them.

IN ſpeaking upon this pleaſant and intereſting ſubject, it is intended,

I. To ſhew the abſolute need that there is of this proviſion.

II. To explain what the proviſion is which Chriſt has prepared for the ſouls of a famiſhed world.

III. To conſider what ſort of a feaſt it is.

IV. To confirm, that all people who will come, may come, and partake of this feaſt.—And then,

V. Conclude with a practical improvement of the ſubject.

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WE are then,

I. To shew the absolute need that there is of this provision.

The distinguishing need for this provision was the extreme necessity of a lost world, which, by Adam's fall, the great prodigal, was reduced to a starving and famishing condition. The King of heaven set down Adam, and his posterity in him, to a well-covered table in paradise, in this lower world, making a covenant of friendship with him, and with them in him. Man consists of an earthly part and a heavenly part, a body and a soul; and as every thing must have nourishment suitable to its nature, so, although the body might, yet the soul could never be nourished by the best produce of the earth. Therefore, by virtue of that covenant, it was concluded, that, upon condition of perfect obedience to it, they should have provision for their souls from the King's country. But man being drawn into rebellion against God, this prospect was lost, and their table was drawn; Adam and all his posterity in his loins were driven out of the guest-chamber, the family was ruined, broken, and scattered, having nothing left them.—To impress this the more upon us, let us view how our first father left us.

1. In point of need, he left us with hungry hearts, like the prodigal: Luke, xv. 16. "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." Every man and woman naturally has a gnawing appetite after happiness and satisfaction. This is so interwoven with man's nature, that it never leaves him in any state whatever, and so will make a part of the torment of the damned: Isa. viii. 21. "And they shall pass through it, hardly bested and hungry; and it shall come to

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paſs, that when they ſhall be hungry, they ſha fret themſelves, and curſe their King and their God, and look upward." Every one finds himſelf not ſelf-ſufficient, and therefore his ſoul cleaves to ſomething without itſelf to ſatisfy it. Liſten, O Chriſtleſs ſinner! who art deſtitute of holy deſires, and thou ſhalt hear a voice within thine own breaſt, ſaying, Give, give, a continual noiſe. Look into thine own heart, and thou wilt ſee it, in reſpect of deſires, like a neſt of young birds, all gaping for a fill, but never ſatisfied, ſtill gaping, after all that is put in their mouths.—He left us alſo with thirſty conſciences, ſcorched and burnt up with heat, ſo that moſt of them are in the dead-thraw, and many of them quite ſeared. Hence the goſpel-invitation is, Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters." In a natural ſtate there can be no conſcience but an evil conſcience, the thorn of guilt is not pulled out of it; it is a defiled conſcience which needs to be ſprinkled, Heb. x. 22. And though a ſleeping conſcience in many, yet ſuch is the thirſt of it in all the ſons of Adam, that, when awakened, they cry out, We die, we periſh, we all periſh, Luke, xv. 17.

2. In point of ſupply, he left us without any proſpect, for all communication with heaven was ſtopped. War was declared againſt the rebels, ſo that there could be no tranſportation of proviſions from thence, Gen. iii. 24. Truth had ſaid, Gen. ii. 17. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." And therefore, though mercy might incline to ſupply a ſtarving world, juſtice interpoſes, and pleads that there could be no communication betwixt God and the ſinners, without a ſatisfaction, which they

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they nor angels could not make; and therefore, without satisfaction, they must be famished for ever. Thus heaven's doors were closed on a starving world.—Now, there was a mighty famine upon the earth, such as was with the prodigal, Luke, xv. 14. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." Adam's sons, abandoned of Heaven, fall a-begging at the world's door, if so be they might find rest and satisfaction in the creature. They go after a law-righteousness, if so be they might find a rest to their consciences. But it fares with them in this search, as with the unclean spirit gone out of a man. He goes through dry places seeking rest, and finding none returns disappointed. When they have traversed all the mountains of vanity for something to satisfy their hungry hearts, they find nothing but husks to feed on with the swine; which are the empty and unsatisfying things of the world, that can never feed their souls, Luke, xv. 16. The poor sinner, out of Christ, is like the hungry infant, which sucks at every thing to which its mouth comes near, and shifting about, and getting nothing, falls a-weeping; but the appetite continuing, the infant falls a-sucking again, where formerly it was disappointed. Such is the life of every natural man, a continued tract of lustings after, and disappointments from the creature. So that he is born weeping, lives seeking, and will die disappointed, if not brought to the feast of fat things. Again, they find but dust to feed on with the serpent: Isa. lxv. 25. "And dust shall be the serpent's meat;" that is, they suck at the defiled breasts of their lusts, which can never satisfy, but poison the soul. They cannot find their satisfaction in lawful worldly comforts; and therefore, like hungry beasts, they break over into forbidden ground,

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ground, and all to satisfy a gnawing appetite after happiness. But there they are as far from their mark as ever. For, though the enjoyment of a lust may please them for a while; yet it is but like a man, eating or drinking in a dream, he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul has appetite, Isa. xxiv. 8. There is a bitter dreg remaining behind. Striking at this rock for water, they cause fire to flash out on their faces; and sucking at these breasts, draw out blood instead of milk. Travelling through the barren region of the law for something to satisfy their scorched consciences, they can find nothing but muddy and salt waters, which can give no ease truly satisfying, but raises the thirst again. For the purging of the conscience is what the law cannot do, Rom. vi. 3.; compared with Heb. ix. 14. What can duties do to the purging of the conscience? Isa. lxiv. 6. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Will mud wash out mud? What can tears do for this end? Without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. Even our tears must be washed in the Mediator's blood, or they will defile the conscience, and leave a new stain in it. What can trusting to uncovenanted mercy do? and such is the mercy of God in respect of all who are not in Christ, Acts, iv. 12. 2 Cor. v. 19. They may make a plaster for their wounded consciences of these, they may lay it on, but all their art can never make it stick, it will fall off before the wound heal.

We come now,

II. To explain what the provision is which Christ has prepared for the souls of such a famish-

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ed world.—This, in a word, is his precious self; the Maker of the feaſt is the matter of it, even Chriſt crucified; his body broken for us, is that feaſt to which hungry ſouls are called, and which they are to feed upon: "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you." Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." We have heard of mothers who have eaten their own children, but who ever gave themſelves to be meat unto them? But Jeſus died that we might live, gave himſelf to enliven and nouriſh our ſouls. —Let us conſider,

1. The *meat* which is ſerved up in this feaſt for the hungry heart. This is Chriſt's body: John, vi. 55. "For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Never was there ſuch a coſtly feaſt in the world as this, Chriſt's body broken and bruiſed by juſtice, that it might be food to us. This is the proviſion offered to you all in the word, exhibited to you, O believers! in the ſacrament. And ye may eat, and muſt eat of it, or you will periſh: John, vi. 53. "Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Take him by faith, receive him with a faith of application, and unite with him in the covenant; reliſh the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, improve every part of Chriſt, his low birth, his ſorrowful life, his bitter death, his burial, reſurrection, and aſcenſion to heaven. —Chriſt's body is the fat things of this feaſt, which will completely ſatisfy the hungry heart; ſo that thy ſoul feeding upon it by faith, ſhall be ſtilled and ſatisfied, like the hungry infant, when it

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it is set to its mother's full breasts: Psal. lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." How can these things be? will an unbelieving world say. We answer, in two things.

(1.) There is a fulness of the spirit of sanctification in him, which is communicated unto all who receive him: John i. 16. "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." And the more eagerly that the soul feeds on him, the more of that spirit they receive. The first entering of his spirit into the soul gives life; the further measure of the spirit, gives life more abundantly. And there is a double effect of the spirit of sanctification received from Christ.—[1.] The spirit of Christ in the soul dries up the devouring deeps of unmortified desires after the world of lusts, stops their mouths by stabbing them to the heart, that the soul may live spiritually: John, iv. 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Never thirst, that is, at the rate he did in his natural state. Gasp they may, as a thief upon the cross, but they shall never gape so wide and so incessantly as before, the soul being determined to starve them.—[2.] The spirit of Christ in the soul stirs up holy desires in the heart, which are the predominant motions and affections there: Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." The man's choice is altered, his desires run in another channel. Sometimes it was, Who will shew us any good? but now it is, Lord, lift upon us the light of thy countenance, Psal. iv. 6. Now his longings are after

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after the Lord, Pſal. xlii. 1. and lxiii. 1. His ſorrowings are for the want of his preſence; his comfort is in enjoying the light of his countenance. If he has a God in Chriſt to be his God, you may take from him what ye will: Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſides thee." Let theſe deſires be ſatisfied, and he is filled as with marrow and fatneſs.

(2.) The fulneſs of the Godhead is in Chriſt: Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." The tabernacle of meeting betwixt God and the ſinner is the fleſh of Chriſt; in him they have the enjoyment of God as their God. Taking Chriſt by faith, God is their's, for he and the Father are one: thus in Chriſt they are complete, Col. ii. 10. They are at the utmoſt ſtretch of their deſires as to the ſubſtance of them; for having God to be their God, they have all. And thus the ſoul may feed on all the perfections of God: on his power, as their's to protect them; his wiſdom, as their's to guide, &c.; on his word and all the promiſes of it, which are their's. Here there is both plenty and variety.—Let us conſider,

2. The *drink* which is afforded at this feaſt for the thirſty conſcience. This is the precious blood of Chriſt: John, vi. 55. "My blood is drink indeed." This is that ſpiritual drink which is offered in the word, and exhibited in the ſacrament: "This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood." If ever you would have life, you muſt all drink of this blood, by a believing application of it to your own ſouls: Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God."—This

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This is "wines on the lees, well-refined," effectual for purging the conſcience of the moſt guilty creature, when it is believingly applied to the ſoul: Heb. ix. 14. "How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?" This blood is atoning blood, it anſwers all the demands of juſtice, affords a covert under which a guilty creature may ſtand before God, and not be condemned: Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus."—It is ſin-expiating blood, "ſhed for remiſſion of ſins unto many." Lay all your guilt over on this blood. It will blot out all the items out of the debt-book of juſtice; it will draw the ſting out of your conſcience, for which all other perſons and things have been phyſicians of no value.—It is peace-making blood. Lay the weight of your peace with God on it: "Chriſt is our peace," Eph. ii. 14.—It is juſtifying blood; by it is brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs.—It is heaven-opening blood, for time, in acceſs to God and communion with him on earth; and for eternity, that believers in it may be ever with the Lord, Heb. x. 19. 20. How can theſe things be? Why, in one word, this wine is the juice of the choice vine of heaven, it is the blood of the Son of God, and therefore of infinite value, 1 John, i. 16. When the blood of bulls and of goats could avail nothing to cool the heat of ſcorched conſciences, when rivers of oil, and the fruit of one's body, could avail nothing for the ſin of the ſoul; the Son of God took on him man's nature, and in that nature died, ſhed his precious blood, to be a ranſom for elect ſinners, to deliver them from the pit, Job, xxxiii. 22.—30.

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WE are now,

III. To consider what sort of a feast it is.—Upon this we observe,

1. That it is a feast upon a sacrifice: 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore, let us keep the feast." Justice was provoked by the conduct of self-destroying sinners. God's anger was incensed against us, and the fire of his wrath has burnt up many. And when wrath was gone out against the world, the great High Priest stept in, and offered up himself a sacrifice to atone for sin, and turn away divine wrath. Here we are called to a feast on that sacrifice, to partake of its virtue and efficacy.

2. It is a covenant-feast, Heb. xiii. 20. 21. When Jacob made the covenant with Laban, they feasted together on the mount, Gen. xxxi. 44.—54. There is no partaking of this feast, but by the way of the covenant. All the guests must be covenanters, and they who are not pleased with the covenant of friendship and peace with God, as held forth in the gospel, cannot taste of this supper. But those who are well pleased with it, and sincerely consent to it, Christ says to them, "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

3. It is a marriage-feast, a marriage-supper, Mat. xxii. 1.—4. The Lord Christ is the Bridegroom, and the captive daughter of Zion the bride. He offers himself to each of you, to whom the gospel comes, to be yours in a marriage-relation. Consent then to the match, and ye shall eat of this bread, and drink of this wine which he hath mingled. He is yours, and you have all, which he hath purchased, to feed on for time and for eternity.

4. It is a feast which has a respect to war. The

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Lord of hosts made it. It looks backward to that terrible encounter which Christ had with the law, with death, with hell, and the grave, upon the account of his ransomed ones, and that glorious victory which he obtained over them, by which he wrought the deliverance of his people. The guiltless feast is a feast upon the back of that victory, and the Lord's supper is particularly a feast in commemoration of that battle and victory. It looks forward to a war: Song, ii. 4. "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love." It is provided for and presented to his people to animate and strengthen them for the spiritual warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh; and none can truly partake of it, but those who are resolved on that battle, and are determined to pursue it, till they obtain the complete victory at death.

Lastly, It is a weaning feast, Gen. xxiii. 8. There is a time prefixed in the decree of God, at which all who are his shall, by converting grace, be weaned from their natural food. And with this their fitting down to this feast agrees. Where is the soul which is now weaned from their sucking to long at the dry breasts of the world? that soul shall have the sweet enjoyment of this feast; and the more that they feed, the more they will be weaned.

We now proceed,

IV. To confirm, that all people who will come, may come, and partake of this feast. Not that all may immediately partake of the sacrament, but that all may and should receive Christ, with his benefits, offered to them in the gospel; they are made most heartily welcome.—To make this appear, consider,

1. Christ

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1. Christ invites all without distinction, even the worst of sinners, to this spiritual feast: Isa. lv. 1. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." John, vii. 37. "If any man thirst," said Jesus, "let him come to me and drink," Rev. xxii. 17. "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." These are gospel-invitations, clogged with no conditions, comprehending all who are willing to receive Christ, whatever their case is or has been.—Consider,

2. For what end does Jesus send out his messengers with a commission to invite all to come, if they were not welcome? Matth. xxii. 9. "Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." Nay, the Lord is very express in the welcome given to the worst of sinners, Jer. iii. 1. Isa. i. 18.; and directs his messengers to invite the most unworthy and unsightly persons to this feast: Luke, xiv. 21.—33. "Go out quickly," says he, "into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—Consider,

Lastly, That he takes it heinously amiss when any refuse to come: Luke, xiv. 21. "He was angry;" angry, because those who were invited would not come. He not only invites you, but you are commanded on your peril to comply with the invitation: 1 John, iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And do what ye will, if ye slight the offer, ye cannot please him; for without faith it is impossible to please God.—It only remains, that

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V. We make some practical improvement; and this shall be confined for the present to an use of exhortation.

1. We would exhort all hungry hearts who are suing for satisfaction in the world and their lusts, and whose consciences have no solid resting-place, O! come to Jesus Christ in his covenant, and sit down to this feast prepared for you and the like of you.—To prevail with you, I would mention the following Motives.

Mot. 1. While ye come not to Christ, you have nothing commensurable nor suitable to the cravings of an immortal soul. All other things are but as stones or ashes, they are not bread: Isa. lv. 2. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" The man was a fool, who bid his soul take ease from what he had in his barns. Nothing less than a God in Christ can ever satisfy the cravings of an immortal soul, a soul which was created capable of enjoying an infinite good. And nothing but the blood of the Redeemer will ever give solid peace to your consciences.

Mot. 2. Should not the continued tract of disappointments ye have met with at other doors, engage you to come to Christ's banqueting-house? Jer. iii. 23. "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Have you not always found creature-comforts greater in expectation than in fruition? How often have ye looked for much comfort, where you got little? And has not your greatest crosses arisen sometimes from those quarters whence ye expected your greatest comfort?

Mot. 3. In what ye are now pursuing, consider that

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that there is not only vanity and emptineſs, which will diſappoint you, but there is death in the pot, which will deſtroy your ſouls. There needs no more to ruin you, but that you be left to your own heart's luſts, and take your ſwing. Fearful will the reckoning be, when ſo much time, pains, and labour, are laid out on the purſuit of the world, and the immortal ſoul is quite neglected as to its eternal welfare, Eccleſ. xi. 9.

Mot. 4. If you will come to Chriſt, ye ſhall get true reſt; reſt to your hearts, reſt to your conſciences, Matth. xi. 28. Whatever your wants be, there is a ſuitable fulneſs in him; a fulneſs of merit, to carry off your guilt; a fountain, even the depth of the ſea, to waſh it away; a fulneſs of the Spirit to kill your corruptions; of righteouſneſs to cover your unrighteouſneſs; of light for your darkneſs; of ſtrength for your weakneſs.

Laſtly, Conſider, if you will come, you ſhall be happy for time and eternity. When the lower table is drawn, you ſhall ſit down at the upper. If not, you ſhall never know ſatisfaction, nor find reſt to your ſouls.—I would exhort,

2. Communicants to feed on Chriſt at his table. Let not the feaſt be in vain to you. Dead ſinners, thoſe deſtitute of ſpiritual life, are not fit gueſts for the Lord's table, for they cannot feed. Such will eat and drink judgement to themſelves, not diſcerning the Lord's body.—Here it may be inquired, How may one know if he has any ſpiritual life? To this we anſwer, Whoſoever has ſpiritual life will be ſincerely longing to be rid of the grave-cloaths of ſin: Matth. v. 6. "Bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled." They will be content to part with all ſin, and reſolved henceforth to oppoſe every luſt, as a limb of the body of

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death; not only sin in general, but the iniquity which is in their hearts, and with which they are most easily beset. They are willing also to lay aside the grave-cloaths of self: Matth. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." They will look on the rags of their own righteousness but as grave-cloaths also, and set themselves against all motions of this tendency. In a word, they are for doing all as if they were to win heaven this way; at the same time, overlooking all as if they were doing nothing.

Now, to you living and believing communicants, we acquaint you with Christ's welcome: Song, v. 1. "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" Take it, and use freedom in his house. Eat, drink abundantly. Let your souls feast indeed at this gospel-feast, and miss not the opportunity.—I will only say to you, as the angel to Elijah, 1 Kings, xix. 7. "And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." You have a great journey to go, and it is a question if you get such another meal set before you, ere you be at the end of it. You have a twofold journey, each of which requires you to eat.—You have,

1. Your journey through the world, towards the Canaan above. It is difficult at all times; so as that many never dare venture on it, others never make it out, for it lies through many difficulties. The devil, the world, and the flesh, will struggle with you, to give over this journey, of living well through the world. It is like to be more than ordinarily difficult in our times. A spirit of delusion threatens a dark and misty day. Labour to taste the power of truth, if you would be

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be eſtabliſhed in it. A Popiſh and malignant ſpirit threatens with darkneſs, blood, and confuſion. This is evident, if we conſider the apoſtacy in theſe nations from the once covenanted work of reformation, the blood of the ſaints yet lying at their doors, with the profanity and irreligion which is abounding among all ranks. As we have reaſon to think the Popiſh and malignant party in theſe nations, ſetting up for a Popiſh pretender, are infatuated of God to their own ruin, that they may get blood to drink; ſo we have ground to fear God may make them a ſcourge to the nations, and perhaps by them he may drive them to reformation. Whatever, then, the clouds may turn to, eat for a wilderneſs-journey.—You have,

2. Your journey out of the world, that is, to die well. It is a weighty journey from time to eternity. Eat for it this day, and do as you will wiſh to have done when you come to a dying-hour. It may be ſome will not have as much time to think on it when it comes, as they will have this day at a communion-table. And that at a communion-table you may eat,—labour to have your appetite after Chriſt ſharpened. Open your mouths wide, and he will fill them. Conſider well your own needs, and his fulneſs.—Adore the wonderful condeſcenſion of the great God. Reverence his greatneſs; but beware of ſlaviſh fear and amazement. Look to God through the vail of Chriſt's fleſh.—In a word, beware of unbelief. Reſt not in a general faith, but exerciſe a faith of application: Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himſelf for *me*. Amen.

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THE DISTINGUISHING PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS *.

SERMON LXIV.

EXOD. xxiv. 11. *And upon the nobles of the children of Iſrael he laid not his hand: alſo they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.*

THE Lord is calling us to come up to him into the mount of ſolemn ordinances; and though there may be ſome who will abide at the foot of the hill, unconcerned and ſtupid, like Abraham's ſervant and the aſs, I hope there are others who will deſire to go forward, though it is likely there may be a ſtruggle betwixt hope and fear about their entertainment there. How are your hearts affected upon this awful approach? are they ſaying within you, as theſe Greeks, "We would ſee Jeſus?" Or, as the prodigal Jew, Luke, xv. 17. "We periſh with hunger." And at the ſame time with the men of Bethſhemeſh, 1 Sam. vi. 19. "Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord.

* This and the following diſcourſe were delivered at Maxton, Auguſt 11. and 12. 1716.

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Lord God ?" Our text gives you encouragement from this instance of the nobles of Israel. Upon God's call they came up to the mount; and (which divides the text into two parts), *first*, They were safe: *And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; Secondly*, They were kindly entertained: *Also they saw God, and did eat and drink.*— We shall attend to these separately.

The *first* part is, they were safe in their approach. Moses remarks this, to the praise of the divine clemency in a Mediator, through whom sinners may see God, and not die. Sin has set man at such a distance from God, and put his body into such a weak and mouldering condition, that consciousness of guilt and a sight of the divine glory meeting together, is more than enough to exanimate and make him faint away, to break the corrupt earthern pitcher the soul dwells in to pieces. Hence it was a common opinion, that such a sight was deadly.—Consider here,

1. The parties whose safety is particularly remarked, *the nobles of the children of Israel.* Some reckon Nadab and Abihu among these; but if so, why not Moses and Aaron? It is plain they were all there, ver. 9. and 10. I think, however, it is only the seventy elders who are meant; and therefore it is expressed emphatically in the Hebrew, intimating, that not only was Moses, the typical Mediator, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, who were designed to be priests, preserved; but even the elders, the representatives of the people, these also were safe.—You will accordingly observe, that the people are as welcome to the divine favour, and to gracious manifestations of God, as ministers. Tho' ministers be employed to open the doors of the temple, the people stand as fair for a sight of the glory within as they do. Though Moses, &c.

went

went up foremoſt to the mount; yet no man ſhould either value himſelf before the Lord, or be diſcouraged upon the character which he bears. Ordinarily, people will pray that miniſters may be helped in their public miniſtrations, to preach, &c.; but they ſhould even alſo be concerned, that they may be helped to believe, taſte, feel, and feed, with the reſt of the children.

They were *nobles*, great men, rulers of the people; yet they went up to the mount with Aaron, and ſat down to the ſacred feaſt there, after they had taken the national covenant of Iſrael with the reſt of the people, ver. 8. 9.—You will thence obſerve, that it is the honour of the nobles of a land to ſee God, and to be ſeen upon the mount with God, at the ſacred feaſt, as covenanters with him. This was ſome time the honour of Scotland's nobility and gentry; they were forward in the national covenant with God; and we have heard the days have been, when ſcarlet-cloaks and velvet-hoods bare great bulk in ſuch meetings as this. But, ah! how is our gold become droſs! they leave theſe things now moſtly to the common people, with contempt of both. What wonder is it that they have been left to make themſelves the tail, and not the head! to row us into deep waters, where the ſtate is ſunk, and the church is broken; to turn Babel-builders, ſo that for once the ſcaffolding is broken, and the builders, with many others, heavily cruſhed. For, "theſe that honour God, he will honour; but they that deſpiſe him, ſhall be lightly eſteemed."

There were *ſeventy* of theſe nobles, the number of the children of Iſrael when they went down to Egypt, and ſo a fit number to repreſent the body of the people, who were now ſolemnly taken into covenant with God. God ſaw it not meet to give this

this ſight of the divine glory to the multitude, and to ſet all down to the ſacred feaſt on the mount; but, ſince it was covenant-entertainment, the ſeventy were brought to it, as the repreſentatives of the people. Thus alſo the New-Teſtament church is repreſented by twenty-four elders about the throne, Rev. iv. 4.—From this you may learn, that ſafe communion and fellowſhip with God is the privilege of the church of believers, the Iſraelites indeed.—That all the people of God have not alike nearneſs of acceſs to God; ſome come farther forward than others. Peter, James, and John, were taken up to the mount of transfiguration, and not the reſt of the apoſtles.—That it is a mercy to have an intereſt in, and relation to, theſe who are brought near to God, eſpecially ſuch as will act for us in the mount with God. There may be ſome young ones here, whoſe fathers or mothers are to approach the table of the Lord. I would adviſe them to tell them to mind them there. Say, 'I cannot go, but, O! give up my name to Chriſt, conſent you in my name to the covenant, and tell your covenanted God, I am alſo content to be his.' Or, if you have not father or mother, tell any other godly perſon ye know. And ſo may one diſtreſſed Chriſtian do with another: Song, v. 8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jeruſalem! if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am ſick of love."——We may obſerve,

2. How their ſafety is expreſſed: *He laid not his hand upon them*, that is, did not hurt or deſtroy them, Gen. xxxvii. 22. Though they ſaw God, (ver. 10.), yet they died not, their lives were preſerved. This imports, that he might in point of juſtice have laid his hand on them. They were ſinful creatures; and though they were on the mount

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mount of God; yet they had a sinful nature with them, which did leave the marks of it even upon what they did there. But he overlooked their weakness, and in mercy spared them.—This instructs us, that when we are at our best, if God should mark our iniquity, we could not stand before him. We are ever in mercy's debt, and cannot be one moment safe without being under the covert of blood. Even in heaven, it is under that canopy the saints will feast for ever, Heb. vii. 25.—It also imports, that the weight of his hand would have crushed them. If he had but laid it on them, it would have done their business. If he had but put forth his hand and touched them in wrath, they would have gone like a moth with a touch of the hand.—From this we may learn the utter weakness and nothingness of the creature before the Lord. He can touch it to destruction, and can frown it back, when he will, into the womb of nothing. Why, then, should we strive with our Maker?—More particularly, that the greatest of men are nothing before the great God: *Upon the nobles he laid not his hand.* Though they caused terror to their inferior fellow-creatures, they were as unable to bear the terror of God as the meanest in the camp of Israel. All flesh is alike before God.——You will observe,

3. How they came to be safe. The word *nobles* signifies select, separate ones, who had been set apart. They were selected out of the covenanted body of the people, to come up into the mount to the Lord, at his call. Moses gets an order for so many to come up with him, ver. 1. Having that order, he first proposes a covenant to the people, and they declare their acceptance, ver. 3.; then he writes the words of the covenant, and the covenant is most solemnly entered into, ratified, and sealed;

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ſealed; there is an altar built to repreſent God in Chriſt, ver. 4. and twelve pillars to repreſent the twelve tribes. Thus theſe were the parties. Sacrifices were offered, ver. 5. ſhewing the covenant to be founded on the blood of a Mediator. The half of the blood was ſprinkled on the altar, ver. 6. ſhewing it was not an abſolute God with whom they were to covenant, but a God atoned by the blood of a crucified Saviour. Then he read the book of the covenant; thus propoſing it to the people; and their ſecond thoughts are as their firſt, they ſolemnly conſent to it, ver. 7.; and he ſprinkles the reſt of the blood on them, and ſo it was ſealed and ratified. Then, after all this, he and theſe ſelected elders go up to the mount, in obedience to the call formerly given; and there they ſaw God, and were ſafe notwithſtanding. Thus, their ſeparation was their ſecurity.—From which you may obſerve, That there is ſafety in following God's call, be the calling never ſo high. Had any of the people attempted to have gone whither they went, they had ſmarted for it; but being called, they were ſafe. Some, who meaſure reverence of God more by their own carnal wiſdom than by God's word, cry out on us for not kneeling, but ſitting, at the Lord's table. But though ſitting be a geſture of more familiarity than kneeling, yet, ſeeing it is inſtituted, we may expect more ſafety in it, than in their kneeling, which, at the Lord's table, wants both precept and example.—We now come to the

Second part of the verſe. They were kindly entertained in their approach: *Alſo* (or but) *they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.*—Here obſerve,

1. A glorious ſight which they got.—Where conſider,

(1.) The object, *God*, more largely expreſſed,

ver. 10. "The God of Iſrael." Not any viſible reſemblance of the divine nature, but ſome glorious appearance and token of God's ſpecial preſence. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was known to the Old-Teſtament church by this name, the God of Iſrael. And that this was the Son of God, ſeems very plain from that word, ver. 1. "He ſaid, Come up unto the Lord." Compare ch. xxiii. 20.—23. with Exod. iii. 2.—8. Now, he who ſends is the Father, and it is the ſame who ſpeaks here; and he ſpeaks of another perſon, who alſo is the Lord. And, ſeeing we read of his feet, ver. 10. he ſeems to have appeared in a glorious human ſhape, as a pledge of his future incarnation. This, then, was a moſt glorious ſight of Jeſus Chriſt. Nothing is here deſcribed but what was under his feet; though the text ſeems to intimate they ſaw more, an inconceivable glory which mortals cannot make words of.——Conſider,

(2.) The act, *they ſaw*. This ſeeing imports ſomething more than that in ver. 10. for it is evident the firſt part of the verſe relates to that ſeeing, ver. 10. And ſo the ſenſe requires ſomething more to be in this. Accordingly, they are different words in the original; this here ſignifies to contemplate and fixedly behold; from it our word *gaze* ſeems to be derived. It might be read, *They beheld God*; importing, not a tranſient glance, but a fixed view: John, i. 14. "And the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" which is ſtill more admirable condeſcenſion, and accordingly it is emphatically expreſſed.

Now, conſider this as following upon the ſolemn tranſaction of the covenant made by ſacrifice.—It holds out to us, (1.) That the great end of the covenant,

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covenant, next to the divine glory, is the happineſs of the covenanters in ſeeing and enjoying of God. There it is completed. And beyond this the creature cannot go.—(2.) That not the ſight of an abſolute God, but of a God in Chriſt, is the covenanters happineſs. None can ſee God in mercy but they, for there is no other way but that of the covenant; and their happy ſight is nothing other than a ſight of God in Chriſt. In Chriſt, all the lines of our hope meet for time and eternity.—Obſerve,

2. A bleſſed feaſt of which they were partakers: *They did eat and drink.*—Here conſider,

(1.) What they did, *they did eat and drink* upon the mount. They feaſted upon the remains of the ſacrifices of the peace-offerings, ver. 5. And this in token of their hearty ſatisfaction with the covenant now made, their ready acceptance of the benefits of it, and their communion with God in purſuance of it. Thus believers their feeding on Chriſt and goſpel-dainties is expreſſed in ſcripture: Pſal. xxii. 25. 26. "My praiſe ſhall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him: The meek ſhall eat, and be ſatisfied." Thus they were admitted to a holy familiarity with God, to eat and drink in his preſence: *They ſaw him, and they did eat and drink.*—Conſider,

(2.) How they did it, with holy joy and comfort. This is implied in the connection, or oppoſition betwixt the parts of the text. They were ſo far from being ſlain with the ſight, that they were not faithleſsly frightened at it; but, with a holy compoſure of ſpirit, they did eat and drink. What they ſaw was not like a cloudy ſky to damp them, but as a clear one to refreſh them. Holy reverence is neceſſary, but faithleſs fears in ſolemn

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approaches to God, are displeasing to him, and hurtful to our own souls, for they hinder us from eating. Happy they who can believe and fear.—From this subject, we may take the following DOCTRINES, viz.

DOCT. I. That a sight of God in Christ, and a holy familiarity with him, with all safety, is the privilege of God's covenant-people, especially in these solemn approaches to which he calls them.

II. That it is a wonder of grace that sinful creatures, in their solemn approaches to God, see God, and are familiar with him, and yet come off safe.

WE begin with

DOCT. I. That a sight of God in Christ, and a holy familiarity with him, with all safety, is the privilege of God's covenant-people, especially in these solemn approaches to which he calls them.

IN handling this doctrine, we shall,

I. Shew what is that sight of God in Christ, which is the privilege of his people in their solemn approaches to him.

II. What is that holy familiarity which is their privilege in their solemn approaches to him. And then,

III. Improve the subject.

WE are then,

I. To shew what is that sight of God in Christ, which is the privilege of his people in their solemn approaches to him.—There is a twofold solemn approach of God's people to him.—There is a right approach,

1. When God calls them up to the mount of myrrh, where our Lord abides till the day break,

Song,

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Song, iv. 6.; when he calls them to come up to the hill of God in Immanuel's land, where ſtands the King's palace, namely, heaven. This call comes to the believing ſoul at death. Then, as Rev. iv. 1. there is a door opened in heaven to the heaven-born ſoul, which is now, as it were, wreſtling in a mire of corrupt fleſh and blood in the body, and the voice is heard, Come up hither. This will be a ſolemn approach when the ſoul of the meaneſt believer ſhall go up thither, attended with a company of holy angels, and, like Lazarus, be carried by them into Abraham's boſom, Luke, xvi. 22.—It will come to both ſouls and bodies of believers at the laſt day: Pſal. l. 5. "Gather my ſaints together unto me; thoſe that have made a covenant with me by ſacrifice." And then God's covenant-people, who dwell in the duſt, ſhall awake from their ſleep, come out of the lowly darkſome houſe of the grave, and enter into the King's palace, Pſal. lxv. —Then they ſhall ſee God in Chriſt to the completing their happineſs for ever. Then they ſhall be like him, for they ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 John, iii. 2. We know little now of this ſight in glory, 1 Cor. ii. 9.; but it vaſtly tranſcends all ſights got of him here.—There it will be immediate, they ſhall ſee him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.—Perfectly transforming, 1 John, i. 2.—Everlaſting, without interruption, without intermiſſion. They ſhall be ever with the Lord. But on this we inſiſt not—There is a right approach,

2. When God calls them to come up to the mount of ordinances, to meet him at the ſacred feaſt, as the nobles of Iſrael in the text, and as we at this time are called, to feaſt on the great ſacrifice in the ſacrament. This is a ſolemn approach. Now, what is the ſight of God

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in Chriſt which is the privilege here?—As to this we obſerve,

(1.) That it is a believing ſight of God in their nature, John, i. 14. (above). The nobles ſaw the Son of God in human ſhape, with their bodily eyes. But the great deſign of it was to ſhew the privilege of the ſaints by faith. O glorious ſight! to ſee God in our nature, the divine nature, in the perſon of the Son, united to our nature! O high privilege! to ſit at his table, and under the teaching of his Spirit, to ſpell the glorious name Immanuel, God with us. O the ſweetneſs of every letter and ſyllable! God, the fountain of all holineſs and happineſs, we, the ſink of all ſin and miſery: yet God with us. The perſonal union, the foundation of the myſtical union; and ſo an holy God and ſinful creatures are united through Chriſt.—We obſerve,

(2.) That it is a ſight of this God in the place of his ſpecial reſidence; on the mount to which they were invited to, where he ſtood, as it were, on a pavement of ſapphire. It is their privilege to ſee him on the mount of ordinances, at his table, the glorious place of his feet, Iſa. xxv. 6. 7. O the high privilege of the ſaints! We were all born under a ſentence of death, to ſee the Lord no more in the land of the living, and (as in Haman's caſe, Eſth. vii. 8.) as the word goes out of the king's mouth, our face is covered. Some live all their days in this caſe, come to communion-tables, and go away in it. But the believer laying hold on the covenant, Chriſt draws off the face-covering, and then, with open face beholding, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. They ſee the bread, the Lord.

(3.) It is a ſight of the glory of the place of

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of his feet, ver. 10. It is a promiſe relating to goſpel-days: Iſa. lx. 13. "The glory of Lebanon ſhall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the face of my ſanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." The ark in the temple, and goſpel-ordinances in the goſpel-church. It is their privilege to ſee a glory there, where the world ſee none; to ſee a majeſty in the ſacrament, a ſpiritual glory and heavenly luſtre in the bread and wine at the Lord's table, as ſacred ſymbols of the body and blood of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xi. 29. This glory and majeſty in the ordinances, muſt be diſcerned by faith; and becauſe it is beyond the ſtretch of the natural eye, therefore carnal wiſdom in Rome, and the church of England, has gone about to ſupply its place with a great deal of external pomp, that may work upon the ſenſes, defacing the ſimplicity of the inſtitution. But after all, to a ſpiritual diſcerner, the external glory is as far below the ſpiritual glory, as artificial painting would in the eyes of the nobles have been below the natural clearneſs of the body of heaven.

(4.) It is a ſight of God as reconciled in Chriſt. They ſaw God, and did eat and drink as in the houſe of their friend. This is the ſight to be ſeen in the goſpel-glaſs, 2 Cor. v. 18.—20. A refreſhful ſight to a ſoul pained with the ſting of guilt. Chriſt has died, and his blood has quenched the fire of God's wrath againſt the ſinner; ſo that when on the mount he looks to the Lord, he ſees as it were a clear ſky under his feet: A ſure token, that the ſtorm is blown over, that there is peace from heaven, and an offended God is reconciled to us through his own Son.

(5.) It is a ſight of God as their God. They ſaw the God of Iſrael. Here lay the ſurpaſſing ſweetneſs

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neſs of their ſight. Such a ſight got Thomas, when his faith got up above his unbelief: John, xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God." And for this ſight is the ſacrament eſpecially appointed, that the child of God may ſay, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me," Gal. ii. 20. The nature of the ordinance leads to it, which brings the word preached in the general to every believing communicant in particular: "This is my body, broken for you."

Laſtly, It is a ſight of tranſcendent glory in him. Nothing is deſcribed but what was under his feet. For ſearch the univerſe, there is no perſon, no thing like him. Even what was under his feet, is deſcribed to have been as a ſapphire ſtone. But the beſt things on earth are not ſufficient to ſet forth the glory even of this, and therefore it is added, "as if it were the body of heaven in his clearneſs." They who ſee him, ſee that of which they can never ſee the like.

WE are now,

II. To ſhew what is that holy familiarity which is the privilege of God's people in their ſolemn approaches to him.—It is a believing, holy, humble freedom before their Lord! Epheſ. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence, by the faith of him." In the ſight before us, the ſenſe of their own unworthineſs, and a ſight of his glory, did not mar their faith, nor put them in an unbelieving frame. They did eat and drink; neither did the familiarity of faith mar their holy fear, or make them forget their diſtance; compare v. 1. where they were commanded to worſhip afar off, which no doubt they did. I will mention ſome inſtances of familiarity allowed them.

1. They

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1. They were allowed to come forward to God, when others muſt ſtand back, Iſa. lvi. 6. 7.; when others muſt abide at the foot of the hill, (and it is at their peril if they venture forward), believers may come up to the mount, and are welcome. They have a token from the Maſter himſelf: Song, v. 1. "Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!"

2. They were allowed to feaſt on the ſacrifice ſet before them. Chriſt the ſacrifice typically ſlain, and believers are allowed to feaſt on this ſacrifice, to eat his fleſh and drink his blood; to make a believing application of a whole Chriſt to their own ſouls for their ſpiritual nouriſhment: "Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you." You know what it is to feed your eyes on ſome pleaſant object that is your own. The covetous man can feed his eyes on his bags of money. So believers are allowed to feed their eyes on Chriſt; beholding, and delighting in Chriſt; ſolacing themſelves with his ſweetneſs, and the ſweetneſs of every part of the myſtery of Chriſt.

3. They were allowed to converſe with God freely, as one at the table of his friend. The peace being made by accepting of the covenant, the nobles were, and all believers are, ſet down to the feaſt in token of their communion with him: 1 John, i. 3. "And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt." The believer has liberty to tell the Lord all his mind, Epheſ. iii. 12. (quoted above); to unboſom himſelf to a gracious God, and point particularly at what he would have, what he would be quit of. "What is thy petition?" ſays the King at the feaſt.

4. They were allowed to be in his ſecrets, to

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see what others have no access to. They *saw God.* Believers are allowed to see the glory of his person, John, i. 14. (above). The glory of his covenant: Psal. xxv. 14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant."—The glory of his redeeming, his everlasting love to them: Jer. xxxi. 3. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."—The hidden glory of his word: Luke, xxiv. 32. "And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"—Hence,

Lastly, They were allowed to lay all their wants on him. When believers come to the mount, in his light they see light clearly, and at his table they are fed. Christ says to his guests, as Judges, xix. 20. "Peace be on thee; howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me." Psal. lv. 22. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." The Lord allows his people to lay all their burdens upon him;—the burden of their debt, the guilt of sin, he will answer for it;—the burden of the strength of sin: Micah, vii. 19. "He will subdue our iniquities."—The burden of their duties, and throughbearing in the way of God: 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."—The burden of afflictions, crosses, trials: Isa. xliii. 2. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c.—The burden of their families: Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive: and let thy widows trust in me."—The burden of their souls for time and for eternity: Isa. xlvi. 4. "And even to your old age, I am he: and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear: even I will carry, and will deliver you."

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WE now come,

III. And laſt place, to make ſome practical improvement.—And as a ſuitable improvement, we may obſerve, that this doctrine, like the cloudy pillar, has a dark and a bright ſide.—Dark to thoſe that are not in the covenant.—Bright to all God's covenanted people.

1. It has a dark ſide to all natural men, ſtrangers to the covenant, who are none of God's covenant people.—Such are theſe,

(1.) Who are groſsly ignorant of the doctrine of the covenant. It is a promiſe of the covenant: John, vi. 45. "It is written in the prophets, and they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and has learned of the Father, cometh to me." And therefore, ſuch as are not thus taught, are not in it. No perſon ſtumbles in the dark into this covenant.

(2.) Thoſe who never found the intolerable weight of the firſt covenant, the law. Ye cannot be in both covenants at once, Rom. vii. 4. And if ye be brought into the ſecond, ye have found the yoke of the firſt intolerable: Gal. ii. 19. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." Ye have been awakened to ſee your natural miſery, and your utter inability to help yourſelves by your doing or ſuffering; to deſpair of ſalvation in any other way, but through the obedience and death of a Redeemer.

(3.) Thoſe who were never yet pleaſed with the frame of the covenant as God made it, who in all their pretended cloſing with Chriſt, have ſtill had ſome ſecret reſerves as to ſome beloved luſt, or as to the croſs.

(4.) Thoſe who are ſtill in league with their luſts, their hearts never divorced from them: "If ye take me," ſays Chriſt, "let theſe go away."

If

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If Chriſt get the throne, the moſt beloved luſts will be crucified.—It has a dark ſide to you as long as you continue in this ſtate. It accordingly ſays to you,

If you ſee God at all, it will be a dreadful ſight you will get of him. It will be the ſight of an abſolute God out of Chriſt, breathing out fury and vengeance againſt you. And he that is a refreſhing ſun to others, will be a conſuming fire to you. And how will you be able to abide this ſight? Iſa. xxxiii. 14.—It ſays again, Though you come to his table, you cannot come in ſafety. You run a dreadful riſk while you go thither, breaking up into the mount, without a warrant from the Lord. And it is a dangerous buſineſs for an unholy ſoul to be found on holy ground, 1 Cor. xi. 29.—It ſays alſo, Though ye ſit down at the feaſt, ye cannot taſte the ſweetneſs of it, the ſap and juice of it, namely, a ſight of God in Chriſt as your own God; and a holy familiarity with him as ſuch will be denied you. For what have ye to do with the covenant-feaſt, who are ſtrangers to the covenant itſelf?—It ſays, laſtly, If ye ſnatch at the ſaints familiarity with God, you put forth your hand to that to which you have no right, and go beyond God's allowance. Remember, Matth. xv. 26. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt it to dogs." And therefore you can expect no other than this entertainment: Matth. xxii. 12. "Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was ſpeechleſs."—But as this text and doctrine has a dark ſide to thoſe who are not in the covenant,

2. It has a bright ſide to all God's covenant-people. Here is your privilege, O covenanters! you who are ſavingly in covenant. Ye are come

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into the covenant, ye are divorced from the law: Rom. vii. 4. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God." If divorced from the law, ye have given it fair count and reckoning at parting, and fallen on a way of payment to it; for the covenant to which you now belong was not made but by ſacrifice. Some are like an obſtinate woman, who will not ſtir out of her huſband's houſe, though he ſhould ſlay her; theſe are deſperate ones. Some like a fooliſh woman, who runs away from her huſband, without ſuing out a divorce, or reckoning with him for the wrongs done to him; theſe are the preſumptuous, whom the law will bring back from the horns of the altar. But Chriſt's ſpouſe, at parting with the law, acknowledged all its demands juſt; but being ſenſible of utter inability to pay, goes to Chriſt as the great cautioner, and turns it over upon him for all.—If divorced from the law, the law alſo will be dead to you. Where one is divorced from the firſt huſband, he is as dead to her. The ſtream of your comfort by the law will be dried up, and it will flow from Chriſt alone. You will rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh. You will not draw your comfort from your repentance, reſolutions, vows, or reformation; but from the application of the blood of the covenant.

2. If ye be come into the covenant, your league with your luſts are broken. Though ſin cleaves cloſe to you, your hearts are looſed from it, and turned againſt it, Rom. vii. 17. You will hate it for itſelf, for its contrariety to the holy nature and law of your covenanted God, and not for

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the grievous conſequences of it on yourſelf only. It will be to you as the fetters on the captive, he cannot get looſe of them; but well he knows they are not his choice, though they were of gold.—Your hearts will be looſed from all ſin, your hearts will hate it univerſally: Pſal. cxix. 128. "I hate every falſe way." You will have a ſpecial eye for evil on your iniquity, ſo that you will gladly yield the offending right eye to be plucked out, and give your conſent to the cutting off of the right-hand idol.—In a word, you have taken Chriſt, not for a ſhelter to your ſins, but for a deſtroyer of them, 1 Cor. i. 30. Your buſineſs with the Mediator of the covenant will be as much for ſanctification as juſtification, to partake of his holineſs as well as his righteouſneſs, his Spirit as well his blood, Matth. i. 21.

Laſtly, Ye have come into the covenant, if ye have the covenanter's mark. The beaſt has his mark, and many are fond of it this day. Chriſt has alſo his mark, which he ſets on his covenant-people.—There is the ear-mark: John, x. 27. "My ſheep," ſays he, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." See alſo Exod. xxiv. 7. Chriſt bores the ears of all that are his. They are taught of God, and have taken Chriſt for their teacher; they have a certain ſenſe ſuited to diſcern Chriſt's voice from that of others, agreeable to their new nature: "A ſtranger they will not follow." They know the voice of their Beloved, Song, ii. 8. They look to him to be taught the way in which they ſhould go; their ears are open, and their hearts willing to know his will, that they may do it. They wiſh to have ſhown them his truths, his ways, and ordinances, that they may cleave to them, Acts, ix. 6.—Again, There is the fire-mark: Luke, xiv. 26. 27. "If any

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any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. And whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſciple." He reconciles all his to the croſs; and they are content to follow him at all hazards, and are fully reſolved to follow the Lamb, whitherſoever he goeth, Rev. xiv. 4.; to ſide with him, whoever ſide againſt him, being determined neither to be bribed nor boaſted from him. Now, this doctrine has a bright ſide to all ſuch, and beſpeaks them as from the holy mount in this manner:

1. Come up hither to the Lord. Riſe, the maſter calleth you to the feaſt at his table. Come in, ye bleſſed of the Lord, to Chriſt's banqueting-houſe, why ſtand ye without? Trample on all your doubts, whether they ariſe from the heaven above you, or from hell within you, and come forward to that God whoſe covenant you have laid hold on.

2. If you open your eyes, ye ſhall get a glorious ſight of God in Chriſt. A ſight which will be ſatisfying, and will darken all created glory. Though but bread and wine appear at his table, a greater than Solomon is there. Only believe; faith is the eye of the ſoul. Let us not have occaſion to challenge your hearts after this communion with that which Chriſt ſaid, John, xi. 39. "Take ye away the ſtone."

3. Uſe a holy freedom in Chriſt's houſe, for he allows you. And do not reckon yourſelf a ſtranger at his table, ſeeing the feaſt is to confirm the covenant, Song, v. 1. Make a believing application of all the benefits of his puachaſe. Say firſt of all, Song, v. 16. "This is my beloved,

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and this is my friend;" and then conclude, that with him all is yours.

Laſtly, Fear not, O trembling ſoul! Entertain indeed a profound reverence of God, but away with your faithleſs fears, which confuſe and diſcompoſe the ſoul on the mount with God. Remember, upon the nobles he laid not his hand. Being in the covenant, you are under a covert of blood, and, by virtue of it, may aſſuredly expect ſafety.—Here ſome may propoſe this queſtion, How ſhall we manage that we get this ſight? To which I anſwer,

Be exerciſed to take up the covenant in a ſuitable manner, ver. 4.—1. Take ſome time this night by yourſelves, and conſider the covenant,—your undone ſtate without it,—the ſuitableneſs of it to your caſe,—the abſolute neceſſity of being in it. Labour to underſtand it, and examine yourſelves, as to your willingneſs to come into it.—Solemnly enter this night into the covenant, ver. 3. Though ye have done it before, do it *again*, and do it with more heartineſs, ver. 7. Let this ſolemn tranſaction with God go before your ſolemn approach, and do not venture to ſet God's ſeal to a blank, to ſit down at his table, while ye have not honeſtly accepted of his covenant.—Again, ſprinkle the blood of the ſacrifice on your ſouls, before ye venture to go forward, ver. 8. Apply Chriſt's blood by faith to your own ſouls, laying the weight of all your guilt over upon it; believing firmly, that it is ſufficient to purge you from all ſin; and in this way come forward to the Lord with holy boldneſs, under the covert of this blood.—Once more, ſhake off all worldly thoughts and affections; labour to be in a heavenly frame: the nobles left the croud at the foot of the hill, and went up into the mount.

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Put off your ſhoes, when you come on this holy ground.—Still farther, come forward under a due ſenſe of the command of God; they went up becauſe they were called, and ſo muſt you from conſcience of Chriſt's command: "Do this in remembrance of me." Labour to have the ſenſe of this command increaſed upon your ſpirits, as neceſſary to produce ſuitable obedience.—Laſtly, open the eyes of faith, and look; the mouth of faith, and eat what is ſet before your ſoul there, a ſlain Saviour, with all his benefits. Amen.

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SERMON LXV.

EXOD. XXIV. 11. *And upon the nobles of the children of Iſrael he laid not his hand: alſo they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.*

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſe, conſidered the firſt doctrine taken from theſe words, we go on to a ſhort illuſtration of

DOCT. II. That it is a wonder of grace, that ſinful creatures, in their ſolemn approaches to God, are favoured with ſpecial ſights of, and an holy familiarity with him, and yet come off ſafe.

IN ſpeaking to this point, we ſhall,

I. Shew that it is a wonder of grace, that ſinful creatures are admitted to ſee God, and to be familiar with him.

II. Shew that it is a wonder that in their ſolemn approaches, and when they are thus favoured, they yet come off ſafe.

III.

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III. Explain how it comes to paſs, that their ſafety, when thus favoured, is ſecured.—And then,

IV. Make ſome ſhort improvement.

We are,

I. To ſhew that it is a wonder of grace that ſinful creatures are admitted to ſee God, and be familiar with him. We think we need ſay little for proof of this. Only conſider,

1. The infinite diſtance that there is between God and the creature in reſpect of perfection. The diſtance betwixt an angel and a moth is but finite; but betwixt God and us the diſtance is infinite. And therefore, no wonder that when beholding the glorious perfections of God, we dwindle into nothing in our own eyes, and ſay with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27. "Behold now, we have taken upon us to ſpeak unto the Lord, which are but duſt and aſhes;" and cry out with Solomon, 1 Kings, viii. 27. "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much leſs this houſe that I have builded?" Remember, ye ſaints, that though God has laid by his enmity, he retains his ſovereignty over us; and therefore it is admirable condeſcenſion, that he is pleaſed to allow us to ſee him, and to enjoy holy familiarity with him.—Conſider,

2. That it is the ſame God who is ſuch a ſevere and dreadful avenger of ſin: Pſal. v. 5. "The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight: thou hateſt all workers of iniquity." Habak. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity." This ſame God who allows his covenant-people a ſight of his glory, and a holy familiarity with him on the mount of ordinances,

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ces, is he who thruſt Adam out of paradiſe,—drowned the old world,—rained fire and brimſtone upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He who gives ſome the cup of ſalvation at his table, is the ſame who makes others of their fellow-creatures drink the wine-cup of his fury. He who makes ſome feaſt in his preſence, is the ſame from whoſe preſence others ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction.

We are,

II. To ſhow that it is a wonder of grace that ſinful creatures, in their ſolemn approaches to God, and when they are thus favoured, come off ſafe.—This will appear if we conſider,

1. The infinite holineſs and ſpotleſs purity of that God before whom the ſinful creature appears. He is glorious in holineſs, and fearful in praiſes, Exod xv. 11. Even angelical purity is dim in his light, and is a ſort of impurity, when compared with the infinite holineſs of God, Job, xv. 15. Even they are chargeable with folly in his ſight; potential folly, (though not actual), a kind of imperfection inſeparable from the nature of the creature, in any ſtate whatſoever: Job, iv. 18. "Behold, he put no truſt into his ſervants; and his angels he charged with folly." (Hebrew, He puts chargeth). And therefore, even the confirmed angels cover their feet with their wings, Iſa. vi. 2. as if they would tell us that perfect created holineſs is but a dark and ſmoaky light before uncreated holineſs. Shining holineſs in ſome of the ſaints on earth, has a damping power with it. The very ſight of one that convincingly walks cloſe with God, is enough to ſtrike a damp on the heart of a looſe profeſſor or apoſtate. How much

much more may the ſight of infinite holineſs ſtrike the moſt ſpiritual ſaints to the ground!—Conſider,

2. That the beſt carry a ſinful nature even up into the mount with them. Paul, rapt up to the third heavens, brought a ſinful nature down with him again, an evidence he had carried it up, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Look on thyſelf, O ſaint! in thy neareſt approaches, and thou wilt ſee the humbling ſight, a ſinful heart, life, and lips, Iſa. lxiv. 6.; ſin woven into thy very nature, mixed with thy fleſh and blood, making a vile body, Phil. iii. 21.; ſunk into the marrow of thy ſpirit, and diffuſed through thy whole ſoul. And then canſt thou ceaſe to ſay, as in Lam. iii. 22. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not." Is it not a wonder of grace, that hell, ſo near heaven, has not ſunk with its own weight?—Conſider,

3. That ſinful creatures never miſs to leave the marks of their foul feet, even when they are on holy ground: Rom. vii. 21. "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me." Peter falls a roving even on the mount, Luke, ix. 33. Even in the greateſt light which ever ſhone about the ſaints, they never wrote a line ſo fair, but there was a blot in it. The ſacrifices were carried up to the mount with the nobles, for God knew they would need them even there. And if ye will look back to your carriage, when at a communion-table, you will ſee ſuch miſmanagements, as may make you wonder that he laid not his hand upon you.—Conſider,

4. The particular jealouſy which God has manifeſted about his worſhip. Therefore Joſhua told the people, chap. xxiv. 19. "Ye cannot ſerve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God: he will not forgive your tranſgreſſions, nor your

your sins." And he himself declared, "he would be sanctified in them that come nigh him, and before all the people he will be glorified," Lev. x. 3. And upon this he wrote a commentary, with a flaming evidence, in the blood of Nadab and Abihu, even two of these on whom he laid not his hand at this time. A slip in the holy ground is most dangerous and provoking in its own nature. To affront a king in his palace, his presence-chamber, or on his throne, stirs up his anger with a peculiar keenness. How dear did the men of Bethshemesh pay for a look, 1 Sam. vi. 19.; Uzzah, for a touch, 2 Sam. vi. 6. 7.; Annanias and Sapphira, for a word, Acts, v. Now, who is able to stand before the piercing eye of his jealousy? Is it not a wonder of his grace, that the fire of his indignation burns not up sinful creatures in their solemn approaches to him?—Consider,

5. That there is a solemn awfulness about the very ordinances of grace, which the sinner could not bear if he were not supported, Dan. x. 8. 9. —19. Psal. lxviii. 35. "O God! thou art terrible out of thy holy places." Jacob understood this when he had one of the most comfortable sights which ever mortal had: Gen. xxviii. 17. "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." The very throne of grace stands on justice and judgement, which are its habitation, Psal. lxxxix. 14. (Hebrew, its base; the covenant founded on blood, the blood of his own Son. All our mercies from the throne are dyed red in the blood of a Mediator. Thou canst not have a gracious look from the throne, but through the Redeemer's wounds; nor a pardon, but what is written with his

his blood. So that such sights are sufficient to make one faint away, if they are not supported by grace.—Consider,

Lastly, That the emanations of the divine glory would overwhelm sinners, burst the earthen vessels, if a gracious God did not graciously support them. Some have felt this, when they have been made to cry to the Lord to hold his hand, for that the earthen pitchers were able to hold no more. We know not what spirit we are off. It is our mercy we see but through a glass darkly, and not face to face now; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. The flesh and blood of a giant would not be able to bear that glory now. And therefore, it is observed as an instance of his goodness, Job, xxvi. 9. "He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it."

We now go on,

III. To explain how it comes to pass that the safety of God's people, when thus favoured, is secured.—It is so,

1. Because they are God's covenant-people by marriage with his Son. They are married to Christ, and the Son of the Father's bosom is their husband. He has all freedom in his Father's house, and so it cannot be a strange house to them. Where he sits, his spouse may stand safely at his hand: Psal. xlv. 9. "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." They have freedom in the house of God, in the right of their Husband. He has brought them up into his chariot of the covenant; and this has access to drive up into the mount, while it procures all safety to those who are in it, "being paved with love," Song, iii. 9. 10.

2. Because they come up under the covert of the

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the Redeemer's blood, Heb. xii. 22.—24. By faith, they have the propitiation, whereby God is atoned, and becomes their friend, Rom. iii. 25. The flesh of a slain Saviour is a sufficient screen from divine wrath, and his red garments form the canopy under which they may safely feast while on the mount.—Their safety is secured,

3. Because God looks on them as in his own Son, and not as in themselves; and so after a sort he overlooks their infirmities: Numb. xxiii. 21. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." He looked on them in Adam, their first representative, and so drove them out of his presence; but now he looks upon them in Christ as their head, and so brings them in again. And, O! but they look fair in him, each one resembles the son of a king. In Jesus they are complete, Colos. ii. 10. Song, iv. 7. "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."—They are safe,

4. Because, though they be unclean creatures, they come up into the mount, to bathe in the fountain opened there, for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1. They come to the blood of sprinkling. A physician will not drive away his patient, because his running sores drop in his chamber. I will bear with this, says he, for the poor man is come to get himself healed.—Their safety is secured,

Lastly, Because it is the end of the covenant, to bring them to God. Jacob might well promise himself to see Joseph, when the waggons were come from him for that very end, to bring him to him, Gen. xlv. 27. 28. The covenant looks very very low, as low as the earth, to secure the believer's daily bread, Isa. xxxiii. 16. Nay, into the bowels of the earth, to bring forth his dead body, mouldered

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mouldered into aſhes: "I am the God of Abraham." Nay, as low as hell: "And thou haſt delivered my ſoul from the loweſt hell," Pſal. lxxxvi. 13. And it looks very high, to bring the believer up into the midſt of the mount of enjoyment with God in ordinances, nay, to the top of the mount, to bring them to where the Lord of glory dwells, where they ſhall ſee him as he is: Iſa. xxxiii. 17. "Thine eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty: they ſhall behold the land that is very far off."

IT only remains, that,

IV. We make ſome improvement of this ſubject.

1. Let us, then, never more think lightly of ſolemn approaches to God, whether in private or in public ordinances. O! it is ſad to think of our raſhneſs in venturing on holy duties, not conſidering that in theſe we ſiſt ourſelves in the awful preſence of God: Eccl. v. 1. "Keep thy foot when thou goeſt into the houſe of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the ſacrifice of fools." Whenever we are to go to God, we ſhould conſider where we are going, put off our ſhoes, for the place is holy. Were we thus frequently exerciſed, we would have more acceſs to God in our ordinary approaches.

2. Let this commend Chriſt and the covenant to us, eſpecially to thoſe who ſtand off from him and his covenant. It is in the Mediator the ſinner may meet with God in peace; for Jeſus is our peace, Epheſ. ii. 14. It is within the bond of the covenant, he is ſafe from avenging wrath. There is no ſafety without it, God will be a conſuming fire to all who live and die out of Chriſt and the covenant.

Hearken, ye careleſs ſpectators, and be wiſe at

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length. Are you resolved to have no part in Christ and the covenant, that ye keep so far from the place of his feet, and the seal of his covenant.—Consider, you also must come before God. You must die and come before the tribunal. Could you secure yourselves a place to be mere onlookers, when the rest of the world are dying about you; and when the world shall stand before the judgement-seat, then perhaps you might be allowed to be mere spectators on such an occasion as this. But it will not be so. You must take your part with the rest. And what will it be to get the first sight of your Judge then, with whom you might have been accepted, but would not?—Consider, if it it be a matter of such awful solemnity to approach the throne of grace, what will it be to stand before the throne of avenging justice? If it be so solemn to come up into mount Zion, where communion is to be had with God in Christ, what will it be to come to mount Sinai, where there is such blackness, darkness, and tempest, as will confound the adversaries of the Lord? Bless not yourselves that you have not gone up into the mount, for monuments of justice you shall be, if you be not thus monuments of grace.—Consider, what madness is it to lift up the heel against God, the weight of whose hand can crush you as a moth. Would it not be your wisdom to lie down among the dust of his feet, to approach him through his Son, and in the way of his covenant, trembling, if so be that he may be pleased to stretch out the golden sceptre, and save your life? Nay, come forward yet, strive to take hold of an offered Christ and covenant. Let not his terrors deter you from him. As the lepers at the gate of Samaria did, so reason ye.

3. Let us praise him for this, that upon us he has

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has not laid his hand; that we have not left a name to the place, Perez, from the Lord's making a breach upon us; but that we may set up a pillar here, and call it Ebenezer. There has been strange fire offered to the Lord here this day; wrong touches given to the ark; unworthy communicating, faithless, fearless, stupid, confused, and hypocritical managements; who dare say they have made no stumble on the mount? The bread and wine in the sacrament have as deep relative holiness as the ark had; but had spectators and communicants been taken up as hot for their profane looking to the one, as the men of Bethshemesh were for their looking to the other, there had been a sad sight among us ere now. Glory be to our gracious God, that on us he hath not laid his hand.

4. Let us long for that day which will put an end to our sinfulness, weakness, and imperfection, when we shall see him as he is, without any danger of sinning or suffering, which is far better, Phil. i. 23. It would be a token for good that we had seen the Lord, if we were now longing for that blessed day.

Lastly, Let us apply ourselves to the duties which a gracious God calls for at our hands.—And,

1. Is there any among us who have been admitted to an holy familiarity with God? Song, i. 4. Then,—Wonder at the freedom of grace, and be thankful that ever the like of you should have come so far forward: 2 Sam. vii. 18. "Who am I, O Lord God! and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"—Double your watch, and walk very softly, being careful to keep your nearness, Song, iii. 5. Isa. xxxviii. 15.—If there be any

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ſpecial errand to the throne for your yourſelves or for the church of God, as not doubt there is, ſtrike in with this golden opportunity, and lay it before the Lord, Exod. xxxiv. 8. 9.—Beware of being proud of your attainments. There is a hazard here; but when you ſee your peacock-feathers, remember they are borrowed, and look to your black feet, 2 Cor. xii. 7.—Lay your account with a ſtorm, and be on your guard. If you have got a larger meal than others, it is not unlike you have more to do than they. But accept that kindly, and bleſs God who is beforehand with you, laying in the proviſion before he lays on the burden.

2. Is there any among us who have ſeen the God of Iſrael? Then walk as becomes thoſe who have beheld his glory. Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee. But here ſome may ſay, Alas! this ſight has been with-held from my eyes.—In anſwer to ſuch, I obſerve, that ſome ſaying this, no doubt ſpeak true; others belie the working of God's grace towards them. Therefore we muſt put it to the trial; for one may get a ſight of Chriſt, and not know that it is him, John, xx. 14. Luke, xxiv. 16. I aſk you, then, what effect on you has the ſight which ye have got this day?—Has this day's ſight humbled you more, made you more vile and loathſome in your own eyes, filled you with ſhame and bluſhing, and ſelf-loathing? It is a ſign you have ſeen the Lord, Job, xlii. 5. 6.—Has it weaned you more from the world, ſunk the value of all created excellency with you, made you ſee through the bulky vanity of the world, that you are reſolved you ſhall feed no more on theſe huſks? Math. xiii. 45. 46. Rev. xii. 1.—Has it made the body of ſin and death heavier than it uſed to be?——May be ſome of you think, ye have been undone at this communion with an ill heart,

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heart, that drew a vail between Christ and you; and now you are crying, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" O to be quit of this burden at any rate! O to be beyond a sinning condition! welcome grim death, so that it would take off the burden. Truly, if it be so, it has been so thin a vail, that you have got a sight of Christ through it, Isa. vi. 5. Luke, ii. 29. 30.--Has it kindled a superlative love in your heart to this unseen Lord? Do ye love him more than all persons and things else? Psal. lxxiii. 25. If it be so, ye have seen him, Luke, xxiv. 32. Sick of love, argues a blink of the face of the lovely one received. Therefore, bless God, and be thankful. It is bastard humility to belie the grace of God. Walk so as the world may take notice that you have seen what they never saw, and have been where their ungracious feet never carried them. And show this in personal and relative holiness, Acts, iv. 13. Commend the way of God to others. Tell them it is good to be on the mount. Speak good of God's house, and give it your testimony, before despisers of Christ and ordinances; especially before poor discouraged sinners, those who desert ordinances, alledging God is not to be found in them.--Finally, quench not the Spirit, cherish his motions, and follow on to know the Lord.

3. Ye who have made this solemn approach, but really have not seen the Lord, set ye about your proper duty.--Search out, mourn over the cause of this, and quickly flee to the blood of Christ for its removal. You have not seen the Lord; and is there not a cause? yes, sure he has a quarrel with you, and therefore has withdrawn himself.--Seek it out. The fault has been either in your state, that you are yet in the gall of bitter-

neſs and bond of iniquity. This is a fundamental miſtake.—Or it has been in your frame. Either you have not been at pains to prepare, or have ſit down on your preparation; or ſome idol of jealouſy has been nouriſhed:—or it has been in your faithleſs management. Wonder ye in a ſpecial manner, that ye have come off ſafe, and that upon you the Lord has not laid his hand. Do not fret that you are come off with nothing; but, O bleſs him that you are come off at all!

Laſtly, Go back to the throne with all ſpeed. Though the communion-table be drawn here, it is not yet drawn to you in heaven: Joel, iii. 21. "For I will cleanſe their blood that I have not cleanſed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." Follow on to know the Lord. Be not like the mixed multitude, who, diſappointed of the milk and honey of Canaan, would needs go back to the onions and the garlic in Egypt. If you do ſo, his ſoul will abhor you: Heb. x. 38. "If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him."—Say not, I will never ſee the Lord now: For, wherefore has he ſpared you, but that you might have occaſion to have your marred work amended? And if ye wait long on, wonder not, it is a mercy ye have acceſs to wait on. Lay down that reſolution in Lam. iii. 49. 50. "Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without intermiſſion, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven;" and in Iſa. viii. 17. "I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the houſe of Jacob, and I will look for him." Amen.

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GOD NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED HIS PEOPLE'S GOD *.

SERMON LXVI.

HEB. xi. 16. *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

GOD has a peculiar people in the world, though these are few in number. Satan is called the god of this world; and indeed is so, in regard the greater part of the world, even the whole natives of the weary land, are his. But there is a select company, who are in, but not of the world; a people of a peculiar character, who are strangers and pilgrims in the earth; whose heads and hearts are towards the better country.—In the text we have their peculiar privilege, *God is not ashamed to be called their God.* More is implied than is here said. God, who is the God of the whole earth, is their God in a peculiar manner, by a special covenant-relation; and he will own it before all the world, however they be despised by them. They are savingly interested in him, and he is peculiarly interested in them. As they are not

* Delivered October 1722.

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not ashamed to be called his people, unless it be for this, that they do not look more like him; so he is not ashamed to be called their God. (Greek, to be surnamed).

There are two things which make men ashamed to own a relation; one upon the part of their relatives, another upon their own part. But neither are in this case.

1. He is not ashamed on their part, to be called their God. He is not ashamed of them, (as the Greek text bears expressly), as men sometimes are of their relations because of their scandalous character, and as our Lord says he will be ashamed of some, so as that he will not own them, Mark, viii. 38. The reason of this is intimated in the text, in the particle *wherefore*, which leads us back to the character of those who are indeed God's people, exemplified in Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, ver. 13.—16. The sum of it lies here: That upon the faith of God's promise of a better world, they forsook this world, and went through it even to the grave, as persons not come to the place where they expected and desired to settle. Wherefore, since they forsook this world for God, and trusted him for a better inheritance to themselves, and, upon the faith of his promise, were easy in all their wanderings and hardships, God is not ashamed of them to be called their God: Exod. iii. 6. "I am," said he, "the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." In these steps all the true children of Abraham walk.

2. He is not ashamed on his own part, to be called their God; as men are ashamed, when they have no suitable entertainment to give those who have left all others for them, and depend entirely upon them. For he has prepared for them a city.

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city. These patriarchs dwelt in tents, and went from land to land at God's call; but a city, even the New Jerusalem, heaven itself, was prepared for them by their God; a city suitable to his dignity; a city, the like of which all the world could not have furnished them. He is not ashamed to be called his people's God, whatever hardships they suffer for his sake; for he has enough to make up their losses, ready for them. He would reckon it a stain on his honour, that any of them should be losers at his hand; if he should not fully answer the trust they put in him; if he did not give them as good, nay, better than the best thing which they ever were denied for his sake.—From this subject, we observe the following doctrines, viz.

DOCT. I. That however mean and low those be who have forsaken this world for God, looking for a better, God is not ashamed of them, or on their part, to be called their God.

DOCT. II. That whatever hardships they may suffer for his sake, he is not ashamed on his part to be called their God, having prepared for them a heavenly city, which will make up for all their losses.—These we shall shortly illustrate in their order.

WE begin with

DOCTRINE I. That however mean and low those be who have forsaken this world for God, looking for a better, God is not ashamed of them, or on their part, to be called their God.

WE shall here,

I. Explain the import of this their privilege.

II. Give the reasons of the point. And then,

III. Improve it.

WE

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WE are then,

I. To explain the import of this their privilege.—It imports,

1. That he is their God, how mean soever their lot be. Whatever they want, they have him for their God: Heb. viii. 10. "And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." The patriarchs had a wandering life of it in the world, were always pilgrims and strangers, they could never count themselves at home, while in the world. But whatever they wanted, they had a God in Christ for their own God. O! ye who are coming away from Lebanon, forsaking this world for God, breathing and panting for the better world, assure yourselves, he is your God, by this good token, that the heart of man will never in this case loose one foot till it has another fastened, never quit the present world till it be possessed of a God to fill up its room. It will never let go the grip the one hand has of this world, till it has a believing grip of a God in Christ with the other. Hence believing is compared to buying, where the man will not part with his money, till the commodity, which for the time is better to him than money, is made over to him. So, though ye were reduced to this, that ye could not tell carnal Israel's tale, Hosea, ii. 5. "I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink;" yet ye may tell David's tale, a far better one: Psal. xviii. 2. "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust: my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."—Here some may propose this

Question, But what can persons make of this

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in the want of earthly enjoyments? We answer, They may make all of it that is necessary to full satisfaction and contentment of heart, Habak. iii. 17. 18. Full protection, full provision, for time and eternity, there is nothing more can be needed: Psal. cxlii. 5. "I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living."—It imports,

2. That he takes such a pleasure in them, and puts such an honour on them, that though the world should cast out their name as evil, he surnames himself by them, and brings their name into his. Hundreds of times, the expressions, "The Lord thy God," "The Lord your God," occur in scripture, applied to God with respect to his people. Yea, he bears up their name in his, when they are dead and gone out of the world, since they still live unto him: Matth. xvii. 32. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." This is a memorial of them that will last, when the monuments and marble tombs will not keep the memory of the wicked from rotting.—It imports,

3. That he allows them to call him their own God: John, xx. 28. "And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord, and my God." They can say this, how little soever they have in the world which they can call theirs. Why should they not call him by his own name? The Lord their God is the name he has taken to himself; a plain indication of his being pleased to be called by this name.—It imports,

4. That he allows them to depend on him as their God, and to improve their relation to him for all which they need; whoever casts them off, or refuses to help them, God will never put off his people

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people with names, without the things signified by these names. If he is called their God, he will own his name in effect and reality; and indeed be a God to them, to all the intents and purposes of the covenant: Gen. xvii. 7. "And 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 unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." They may look for all which they need from him, and are welcome to a fill of the fulness of God: whatever their case requires, this God will be all in all to them. Hence the expectation of faith: Psal. xxvii. 10. "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."—It imports,

5. That he will own himself to be their God before the world, whoever disown them. He is content that strangers call him by this name, as Nebuchadnezzar did, Dan. iii. 29.; and Darius, chap. vi. 16. He puts marks of his respect and relation to them upon them before the world, so that the world shall be obliged to take notice of his owning them: Rev. iii. 9. "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie); behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." If their corruptions will not suffer them to acknowledge so much, yet their consciences shall not get it refused. Hence David prays, Psal. lxxxvi. 17. "Shew me a token for good, that they which hate me may see and be ashamed, because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me."—It imports,

Lastly, That he reckons it his honour to be their God, even though men should be ashamed to rub shoulders with them. Accordingly we find

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find him call them his glory: Isa. xlvi. 13. "And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." And in 2 Cor. viii. 23. they are called the glory of Christ. He glories in his special interest in them, and takes a pleasure to come over it: Song, viii. 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

We are now,

II. To give the reasons of the point. Among other reasons, there are the following.

1. Because they have embraced him in the covenant, for their all, in opposition to the world, and all that is therein; which shows a nobleness of spirit in them, the certain product of his own Spirit: Psal. iv. 6. "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in earth that I desire besides thee." There are two offers made to every one of us: God says, "I will be thy God," the world says, 'I will be thy God.' Most men fall in with the world's offer, and all men naturally incline this way. But these noble souls, as partakers of the divine nature, pour contempt on the clay idol, God's rival, refusing it; and honour him by believing and embracing his offer; so that when the Lord says in the gospel to the man, "I will be thy God," his soul echoes back again, 'Then thou art mine, my God, my portion: I take possession upon the credit of thine own offer:' Psal. cxlii. 5. "I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land

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of the living." Thus he is not ashamed to be called their God.

2. Because they quit the world's certainty for divine hope, and trust him for an unseen portion to themselves, as preferable to all that the world can afford, believing he will glorify his all-sufficiency and his faithfulness in the promise, laying all their weight upon them: Rom. iv. 20. 21. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform." Such a trust they have in God, else they would never forsake the world; for plain it is, according to the measure of the belief of a better world to one's self, so is their forsaking the present world. And since they thus honourably trust him for their all, he is not ashamed to be called their God.

3. Because they can take up with nothing less than a God for their portion, by which they discover a peculiar elevation of spirit, the effect of divine grace: Phil. iii. 8. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." They can no longer feed with the prodigal upon the husks of the empty creation. Their soul's cry is, 'Give me a God in Christ, or else I die.' All the world, nay, a thousand worlds, cannot fill up his room: Song, viii. 6. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." And so they press forward through temptations, and the greatest danger which the world

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world can lay before them, to hold him as their portion, and to come to the full enjoyment of him. Song, viii. 7. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." So he is not ashamed to be called their God, because they thus love and desire him.

4. Because, in their way and walk, they are of a distinguished character from the men of the world, Phil. iii. 18.—21. They dare not take the way of the world, their souls hate it, as being opposite to the manners of the country to which they are going. Therefore they are nonconformists to the world, in so far as it is disconformed to the way of the Lord.

We shall now,

III. Improve this point.—Hence see,

1. That carnal worldlings are none of those whose God the Lord is, Matth. vi. 24. Those whose hearts are not loosed from the present evil world, are not brought within the bond of the covenant, and have no right before the Lord to the sacrament, which is the seal of it. He would be ashamed to be called their God, who make that clay idol their God. I offer two evidences of this disposition.—(1.) When it is the world, and not God himself, which has the chief room in men's hearts and affections: Matth. vi. 21. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Consider what it is, whether God or the world, which your hearts do most desire, and are most set upon, Psal. iv. 6. (quoted above). What it is your chief joy lies in, in the enjoyment of God, or the enjoyment of the world. Whether your chief sorrow arises from crosses in the

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world, or from ſin that offends God, or from the hidings of his face?—(2.) When the heart can never reſt in God, but muſt ſtill have its reſt in the creature; or no reſt for it at all: and ſo the man's life of comfort juſt depends on the ſmiles or frowns of the preſent world, not upon the having or wanting the favour of God, his ſmiles or frowns. Perhaps the man might find a reſt betwixt God and the world, but no reſt of the heart in God alone, Luke, xiv. 26.—Hence ſee,

2. That ſuch as having weighed all things, have forſaken the world for God, and fixed their deſires on him and the better world, intent to be there whatever their lot in this world be; and to enjoy God in Chriſt as their God and portion, however ſmall their portion be of this world's good things: they may be ſure God is their God, and he will own it, though, by reaſon of the weakneſs of their faith, they have much ado to plead it. They may come to the communion-table, and fully aſſure their hearts of it, by the ſeal of the covenant, which he has provided for this purpoſe, to ſhow that he is not aſhamed to be called their God. It is the pilgrim's table.—Learn,

3. That God is worthy to be choſen for our God in covenant; and therefore I exhort you to make choice of him for your all, and give up with the world henceforth, that ye may be pilgrims and ſtrangers in it.—To prevail with you as to this, conſider,

(1.) He is content to take in outcaſts: Pſ. cxlvii. 2. "The Lord doth build up Jeruſalem: he gathereth the outcaſts of Iſrael." Never do any ſeek after a God in Chriſt for their God in earneſt, till ſuch time as they ſee there is no ſatisfaction for them to be had in the creature. Thus they find

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find they need a God. The gospel discovers God's offer to be their God, and grace determines them to chuse him for their God. And they are not rejected, because they came not till their need drove them; but are welcome, since they came on the discovery of their need.

(2.) Consider, he is a fast friend, and forsakes not on any emergency whatever. If you take him for your God, and forsake the world, he will stand by you at all times, and own you, though all the world should forsake and disown you. O! have you not need of such a friend?

(3.) Does not the world reward your love with hatred in many instances? How often is your rest in it disturbed! O take God for your God this day, and you thus make the best exchange, of a changeable world for the unchangeable God.

Lastly, If you continue to forsake God for this world, the time will come when the world will fail you, and you will not have a God to own you, and so will be absolutely helpless. He offers himself to you in the covenant. Believe and embrace him this day. Give up with the world, and all things in it. Take him for all in time and through eternity, as an upmaking portion. —We now go on to a short illustration of

DOCTRINE II. That whatever hardships his people may suffer for his sake, he is not ashamed on his part to be called their God, having prepared for them the heavenly city, which will make up all losses.—We are not here to launch out into the consideration of heaven under a notion of a city; but only shall,

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prepared for the pilgrims, who have forſaken this world for God, looking for a better.

II. Lay before you the reaſons of the point. And then,

III. Make ſome improvement.

WE are then,

I. To ſhew in what reſpects the heavenly city is prepared for the pilgrims who have forſaken this world for God, looking for a better.—It is prepared,

1. In reſpect of eternal deſtination in the decree of election before the world was made: Mat. xxv. 34. "Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Their forſaking of the world in time, is an evidence and fruit of their election from eternity. Their being called out of, and ſeparated from the world lying in wickedneſs, is owing to that eternal free-love, which in the decree ſeparated them from the reſt of the corrupt maſs of mankind. The ſeal of God upon them from everlaſting, though undiſcernible till the day of their converſion, is the cauſe of their departing from the tents of wickedneſs: 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Nevertheleſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity."—It is prepared,

2. In reſpect of purchaſe, by the ſufferings and death of Chriſt. It is therefore called the purchaſed poſſeſſion, Epheſ. i. 13. And the price of the purchaſe is his blood, Acts, xx. 28. "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood." Eternal happineſs is the proper reward of Chriſt's works, not of ours. It had

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had been in vain for any of the children of Adam to have looked for a better country than this world, had not the Lord Jesus, by his obedience and death, bought it for them. None of the pilgrims had ever got footing there, had it not become the land of our Immanuel by his own purchase.—It is prepared,

3. In respect of possession taken of it already in their name, by our Lord Jesus his entering into it, as a public person, at his ascension: Heb. vi. 20. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high-priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." As Christ died in their name, and so they died in him, the law having them all legally on the cross, when it had him there; therefore it is said, "They are crucified with Christ," Gal. ii. 20.; so he rose again, and ascended into heaven, and took possession of it in their name. Thus they are actually and really, though not in their persons, but in the person of Christ, possessed of the city already: Ephes. ii. 6. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This Christ himself told to be his errand in going away: John, xiv. 2. "I go," said he, "to prepare a place for you."—It is prepared,

4. In respect of readiness to receive them in their own persons. They are made habitually ready for it, in respect of their state of justification and sanctification: Col. i. 12. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." And it is ready for them, of which we have two evidences.

(1.) A new gate is erected, and opened for their entry into the city. It may be called the pilgrims gate, to distinguish it from that of the natives of the city. See it, Heb. x. 19. 20. "Having

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ving therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us through the veil, that is to ſay, his fleſh." All the pilgrims enter by it, and it was erected purpoſely for them. And it is always open, never ſhut: Rev. xxi. 25. "And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day: for there ſhall be no night there."

(2.) The notice is already there before them, that they are coming. The King's Son has carried it thither: John, xvii. 24. "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: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world." And this his efficacious interceſſion removes all lets or hindrances out of the way.

We are now,

II. To give the reaſons of the point.—I take them up in theſe four.

1. Becauſe the happineſs of the city, if they were once come there, will more than balance all the hardſhips in their pilgrimage that they had to undergo for his ſake. Why ſhould he be aſhamed to be called their God, be their lot in the world as bad as it can be? The glory of the city will more than balance all the contempt, reproach, and diſgrace caſt on them for his ſake. He will not be in their debt for lying among the pots on his account. The glory of the city will make them whiter than ever the world could make them black, Pſal. lxviii. 13. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold." The reſt of the city will more than balance all that toil, pain, weary work, in doing or ſuffering

ing which they had for God in the weary land. What though it coſt them many a weary ſtep ere they get thither? If they were there, it will all be forgotten. Then they will for ever reſt from all their labours, Rev. xiv. 13. Abraham's boſom will make the weary body and languid ſpirit freſh for evermore. The riches of the city will more than balance all their wants and loſſes in this world, even though they ſhould loſe their very lives in the cauſe. Whatever their wants are now, there is enough before them in the city above. And God has more, ten thouſand times more to give them, than they can loſe for him: Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon." The eternity of the city, and all that is in it, will more than balance the continuance of their hardſhips in this world, to whatever length holy Providence ſees meet to ſpin them out: 2 Cor. iv. 17. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." However dark and long their night be, that morning cometh which will never be ſucceeded by another night.

2. Becauſe they are not far from the city: They will ſoon be there: Pſal. xc. 10. "The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten; and if by reaſon of ſtrength, they be fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength labour and ſorrow: for it is ſoon cut off, and we fly away." They are within a hand-breadth of the city, Pſal. xxxix. 5. It is but through the wilderneſs, over Jordan, and they are at it. And they cannot complain then, they are ſo near home, however harſh their entertainment be in the way.

3. Becauſe in the mean time there is a communication betwixt them and this city, ſo that the

the whole of what they need may come from it. Pilgrims need never go to the world's door. They always may have provision from this city for their wilderness-journey. Though the Israelites could neither have provision and supply from Egypt, nor Canaan, while they were in the wilderness, they wanted not, they got it from heaven.

Lastly, Because the very faith and hope which they entertain as to this city, is sufficient to support them under all their hardships, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. Faith believing the word of promise, and hope waiting for its accomplishment, bring down heaven to them till they go up to it: Heb. ix. 1. "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Rom. viii. 24. "For we are saved by hope." Thus there is no reason he should be ashamed on his part to be called their God.

WE now come,

III. To improve this point.—It serves,

First, To pour shame on the wisdom and way of the world. And this,

1. In that they reckon it wisdom, not to quit a seen advantage for an unseen one, certainty (as they call it) for hope: Psal. iv. 6. "Who will shew us any good?" Therefore they embrace the present world, tack about, and sail with every wind; making the way of the world, and their own ease, the mark by which to steer their compass, rather than the word and glory of God, and the dictates of conscience, according to the word. When they have done this, they reckon they have done wisely: Hosea, xii. 7. 8. "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance."

But

But either this is brutish folly, or God may be ashamed to be called the God of pilgrims in this world, who take quite another way, and look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, 2 Cor. iv. 18. But God is not ashamed of pilgrims, therefore the men of the world are fools: and they will be seen to be so with a witness; for God's promise is better than the world's hand-payment.—It pours shame upon the wisdom of the world,

2. In that they are ready to be ashamed of God's people, because of the hardships they are laid under in their pilgrimage through the world. This their way is their folly; for whatever their lot be, God is not their God and portion. The world's esteem is little worth, but Heaven's esteem of the saints never alters, whatever alterations may be in their outward condition.—This point,

Secondly, Serves to instruct in several duties, those who profess to be pilgrims in the world, and to have taken God for their God, looking for a better world.—Such as,

1. Be not ashamed of him, to be called his people: Mark, viii. 38. "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Be not ashamed to own him and avouch him to be your God. Whatever bears his image and the stamp of his authority, cleave to it confidently. Be not ashamed of any of his truths, ways, ordinances, whatever may be thought of them by the world; for worldly men are not the proper judges of these things, and cannot discern their real worth.

2. Be not ye a shame and dishonour to him, by your

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your cleaving to the world, and the way of the world: Rom. ii. 24. "For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you." Remember, it is they who forſake the world, whom God is not aſhamed to be called their God. If you go back again to your former luſts, you blot out your name out of that number, and rank yourſelves among thoſe who have their portion in this life. If he be your God, caſt not diſhonour on him, by hanging on about the door of the world, and your luſts, like them who have no other God to depend on. If you make as little conſcience of your thoughts, your words, your actions, and dealings with God or man, as the men of the world do, for all your profeſſion, God will do with you as a man with burs which ſtick to his cloaths, he plucks them off, and caſts them into the fire.

3. Do not decline the hardeſt piece of the doing-work of religion for him. Engage in the whole without exception. Have reſpect to all his commandments, Pſal. cxix. 6. The internal duties of religion muſt by all means be done by you, at the ſame time leave not the external undone. Mortification of your luſts, and watchings againſt them, in the faith of the promiſe, ſhould be your daily work; and ſtick not at cutting off right-hands, and plucking out right-eye ſins. All this is but a very ſmall thing in compariſon of what he has prepared for you: Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live."

4. Shift not the croſs of Chriſt, but be ready to ſuffer for him as he may call you: 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him: if we deny him, he will alſo deny us." No Chriſtian

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ſtian ſufferers for him ſhall ever be loſers by him, loſe what they will in the world. Narrow not your notion of ſuffering for Chriſt, to ſuffering of violence by perſecutors. But remember, that though it may come to this, that you muſt either ſin or have to ſuffer ſome hardſhips to keep your conſcience clean, (and this you may meet with in the moſt peaceable times of the church); yet then the Lord calls you to ſuffer for him. And ſuffering hardſhips for your adherence to any duty of the ten commandments, out of love to God and his holy law, is as really ſuffering for Chriſt, as if you laid down your liberty or life in defence of the articles of your faith.

5. Walk like the expectants of heaven, citizens of the city above prepared for you by your God. This city will far more than compenſate for your ſufferings, for all the difficult and hard ſteps ye may have in your way thither.—Live by faith, and keep the promiſe in your eye;—the promiſe reſpecting the end of your journey, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits you, 2 Cor. iv. 17.;—the promiſe reſpecting your throughbearing by the way: 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs." Carry meekly and patiently under all the hardſhips of the weary land, like the followers of Chriſt. Men do not fret and vex themſelves, becauſe the midges flee about them, when they travel in a hot ſummer-day. Chriſtians need be as little ſurpriſed that they meet with one rub after another in the way through this wilderneſs; and becauſe they may be of long continuance, Chriſtians ſhould arm themſelves with patience in the faith of a better world: Col. iii. 15. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful." Be reſolute

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to get through, and never to make truce with the world, come what will come, but preſs forward in the way of duty over all impediments, where the Lord points out your way: Matth. xi. 12. "And from the days of John the baptiſt until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."—Carry chearfully and courageouſly, as knowing better times are coming: Heb. x. 34. "For ye had compaſſion on me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance."

Laſtly, Spend the time of your ſojourning in making ready and preparing for that city which the Lord has prepared for his people: Rev. xix. 7. "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. There was much coſt and pains at preparing it for them: no wonder that pains be neceſſary in them to make ready for it. All the Lord's people are habitually, in reſpect of their ſtate, prepared for heaven: but what they have to do is, to get themſelves prepared actually, in reſpect of their frame; therefore labour to be dying daily to this world, and to get you hearts more and more weaned from it; that ye may be like ripe corn forſaking the ground.—Cheriſh quick and vigórous longings to be rid of the body of ſin and death: maintain the battle againſt heart-corruptions conſtantly; and this will make you long for deliverance. Be watchful, as not knowing when your Lord cometh.—In a word, be much converſant in this city; ſolace yourſelves with believing proſpects of it; and ſee that your heart be there, for there unqueſtionably your heart muſt be where your treaſure is, Col. iii. 1.—5. Amen.

FINIS.

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