

of the world by office, and given him to us for our Saviour, and presents him accordingly for our acknowledgement.

USE. I exhort you then to believe, that Christ is on his birth presented to you as his relations. And if ye enquire what is your duty on that occasion? I answer,

1. Embrace him cordially; Psalm xxiv. 7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Old Simeon, when he was presented in the temple, took him in his arms with full satisfaction of soul; Luke ii. 28, 29. He is now in heaven as to his bodily presence; but he is presented to you in the gospel, embrace him by faith, with the heart believing on him for all his salvation, renouncing all other saviours for him, betaking yourselves to him for all, for a rest to your consciences and your hearts.

2. Kiss him, Psalm ii. 12, with a kiss of love; giving him your hearts, "My son, give me thine heart;" with a kiss of honour, honouring him in your hearts, lips, and lives; and with a kiss of subjection, receiving him as your Lord, King, Head, and Husband.

3. Bless him; his name; Psalm xcvi. 2, "Bless his name." He is God blessed for ever. But we are to bless him, as we bless God, declaratively, proclaiming him blessed; Psalm lxxii. 17; praying from the heart that his kingdom may come; Psalm lxxii. 15.

4. Worship him. So did the wise men of the east; Matth. ii. 11. He is the everlasting God, therefore to be adored; Psalm xlv. 11. "He is thy Lord, and "worship thou him;" thy Husband, thy King, thy God. Worship him with internal worship, consecrating your whole souls to him; and worship him with external worship.

5. *Lastly*, Present unto him gifts. So did the wise men, Matth. ii. 11. Make a gift of your hearts to him; Prov. xxiii. 26; of yourselves wholly, 2 Cor. viii. 5; to glorify him in your souls, and bodies, your substance, your all.

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CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, GIFTED TO SINNERS.

ISAIAH ix. 6,

*Unto us a Son is given.*

THIS is a second part of the glad tidings which did so much affect the prophet. And therein Christ is proposed, (1.) As a Son. This is not to denote the sex; that was done already in the former part.

But it denotes a Son by way of eminency, "fairer than the sons of men." Our Lord Jesus was the Son of God from eternity, he became the Son of Mary in time; Luke ii. 7. According to his human nature, he was the Son of Mary; but he is not in respect of that nature called the Son of God, though even in that respect he was a Son quite extraordinary. For as he was man, he was "without Father;" Heb. vii. 3; and as he is the Son of God, he was "begotten of the Father;" Psalm ii. 7, and "the only begotten of the Father;" John i. 18. But as he was man, he was not begotten at all; and he has "brethren;" Heb. ii. 11. Therefore he is not called "the Son of God" in respect of his human nature. Now, in the preceding clause, he is proposed as a Son in respect of his human nature, being called a lad-child born; therefore here he is called a Son, as the Son of God in respect of his divine nature. And thus he is held forth to us here as God-man, with two distinct natures. (2.) As a "Son given to us." The Father has made a free gift to us poor sinners, of his own Son, for the remedy of our misery. As our misery was great, so the gift is fully proportioned to it, being the greatest that Heaven had to afford, or the world could receive.

DOCTRINE, The Son of God in man's nature, is given to us poor sinners for remedy of our misery.

Here let us consider,

I. The gift itself.

II. The Giver.

III. The party to whom he is given.

IV. *Lastly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. *First*, Let us consider The gift itself. Many precious gifts have come from heaven to earth, yea, all we have is Heaven's gift; James i. 17, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." But this is the great gift. On this head, let us consider,

1st, What this gift is.

2dly, Wherein it appears and comes to us.

3dly, What a gift it is.

*First*, Let us consider What this gift is. It is,

1. A person. Persons are more excellent than things, in their several kinds. All a man hath he will give for his life; a soul is more precious than a world. So this gift is more precious than the whole world. Whatever thou wantest, if thou have Christ, thou art better than to be emperor of the world; if thou hast him not, thou hast nothing that can compensate that want.

2. A divine person. This gift of God is God; John i. 1, "In the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." O what a gift must God himself be! it is therefore an "unspeakable gift;" 2 Cor. ix. 15. The possessor of this gift must needs be blessed; Psalm cxliv. 15, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Here is a mystery, a divine person gifted to poor sinful persons. God has given angels to be ministering spirits to his people; Heb. i. 14; but we will cease to wonder at that, when this comes in view.

3. The second person, the Lord Jesus Christ; John iv. 10, "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The third person, the Holy Spirit, is also given to poor sinners; Luke xi. 13,—“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” But here it is the Son that is given, and the gift of the Spirit follows thereupon. Man, by creation the son of God, fell out of God's family; and the beloved Son of the Father is given to bring him in again. He was pitched upon; for he only could be both sent, and send the Spirit, according to the manner of working of the adorable Trinity.

*Secondly,* Let us consider, Wherein this gift appears and comes to us. Those who send gifts, precious gifts, to others, wrap them up in something that is less precious. And a treasure sent in earthen vessels, is the method of conveyance of the best gifts from heaven to earth. And the Son of God being the gift, was sent veiled and wrapped up in our nature; (Tim. iii. 16.) to us. The Son becomes a lad-child, born of a woman. This veil laid over the gift sent to poor sinners, was,

1. Less precious than the gift itself. The human nature of Christ was a created thing, his divine nature uncreated. What disproportion is between the clay and potter, the creature and the Creator; that was between the veil and the gift wrapped up in it. Hence it was like a most precious pearl, sent in an earthen pitcher; which uses not to contain such a precious thing. Therefore the world received him not, because they perceived him not, seeing only the veil, a few only excepted; Mark iv. 11, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." Nay, the gift was never clearly seen, till the pitcher it was in was broken in pieces, by his death; and the shells gathered up, by his resurrection, and new cast; and set up in the upper house, by his ascension.

2. Howbeit, it was a cleanly thing. Though men send their precious gifts in some coarse thing, yet it will always be cleanly; they

will not send their gifts in a foul thing. The human nature of Christ, though infinitely below the dignity of his divine nature, yet was a holy thing; Luke i. 35, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." His soul was holy, and his body too, perfectly holy; without the least stain or spot; Heb. vii. 26, "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners." This gift could not have remained in a vail, having the least spot of sin, more than flaming fire in a tainted cloth, which it would presently burn up. Now, this gift appeared and was sent to us in the vail of the human nature,

(1.) That it might be capable of the treatment it behoved to undergo for our relief. It behoved the Son of God to suffer; Luke xxiv. 26, "For without shedding of blood, there could be no remission;" therefore he behoved to be incarnate, and to appear in our flesh. He put on our nature, as his suffering attire, as prison garments; and so the gift was, as it were, sent us in a winding-sheet; and the Son, the Lord of life, came down, as it were, in a suit of dead-clothes of our flesh; because he was to die in it. Howbeit, this suit of our flesh is not now laid aside, but turned into a suit for the court, being no more mortal, but immortal, bright, and shining more gloriously than the sun; so that the gift now appears through it, and will for ever most illustriously. A pledge hereof was given in his transfiguration; Matth. xvii. 2.

(2.) That it might be suited to the weakness of the capacity of the receivers. As he who gifts a sword, sends it in a scabbard, and not naked, lest it should harm the receiver; so God giving his Son to sinners, gave him wrapped up in the vail of human flesh. The Son of God in his unvailed glory would have no more been an object for our eyes to have looked on, than the shining sun to the eyes of an owl. A few rays of his glory, breaking out from under the vail, made his enemies fall to the ground; what would have come of us then, if there had been no vail at all?

*Thirdly*, Let us consider, What a gift this is. The gift of the Son of God to poor sinners as a matchless gift, singular for,

1. The worth of it; Prov. viii. 11, "Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it." Many worthy gifts God has given; but this is "the gift of God" by way of eminency, as if he had never given another; John iv. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God," &c. Never did Heaven's bounty appear so much as in this gift; John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. If it were led in the balance with ten thousand worlds, they would be lighter than vanity in comparison of it; nay, balanced with the gift

of created graces, and the created heavens, it would downweigh them ; as the bridegroom's person is more worth than his jewels and palace.

2. The unsuitableness of it. Ransack the earth and seas, the whole vault of heaven ; go through the upper house amongst all the shining angels ; no person, no thing, shall be found so suitable for our case as this gift which is given us ; 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." Heb. vii. 25, " Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The earth, seas, and air, afford for the back, belly, and purse ; but there is nothing there to give life to a dead body, far less to a dead soul. But (1 John v. 12.) " He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." The angels in heaven might have condoled our loss, but could not repair it like him ; Ruth iv. 6, " And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance ; redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it." Nay, they could not have shown how to do it ; Rev. v. 3, 5. But there is in Christ what is suitable to all the cases of all sinners.

3. The seasonableness of it. Many a gift has been marred, by its coming out of season ; but this gift was given most seasonably. No sooner was mankind broken and ruined, but as soon the upmaking gift was proclaimed, Gen. iii. 15, in a promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. Seasonably was the ram afforded for Isaac, while he lay bound on the altar ; a type of the Son given to and for poor sinners, when justice had the knife at their throat.

4. The comprehensiveness of it. It is all in one ; Rom. viii. 32, " He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?" Whoever have Christ, have all in him, and are complete in him ; Col. ii. 9, 10, " For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." All grace is in him, relative and real. God giving Christ to sinners, gives them remission of sin, and sanctification. All glory and happiness is in him ; 1 John v. 11, " And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in his Son." All that is necessary for our bodies in this life is in him, for he is " heir of all things," and is Lord of the whole creation ; Psalm viii. 6, &c. Whatever we want is in him, formally or virtually. He is meat, drink, and clothing, lodging for the soul

directly. He is all this for the body indirectly, as money answereth all things.

5. *Lastly*, The unrestricted freeness of it. As it is absolutely free to some, so it is absolutely free to all; John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." What is freer than a gift? The joint-stock of the whole world could not have purchased this gift. It is quite below the honour of the Giver and gift, for any to pretend to come with money in their hand to grace's market; 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 all are alike free and welcome to it; Rev. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

USE 1. Beware of slighting this gift. It is a person, to take notice of the slight put upon it; a divine person, to make the slight highly criminal, and to avenge it; the second person, the Saviour, the Mediator, whose office is to make peace, and there is not another Mediator; Psalm ii. 12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." The slighting of this gift is the sin of this day.

2. Take heed ye miss not to perceive this gift. The Jews were ruined in their unbelief; for they could not see through the vail that the gift was wrapt up in. And so it is to this day. Most men see no farther into the mystery of Christ than the outward appearance it makes in the world, as administered in the word, sacraments, &c.; and they despise it. Look ye inward.

3. Admire the wisdom of God, and his infinite condescension, in the manner of the conveyance of this gift of the Son. Behold him in our nature, that he might suffer, and guilty ones may approach him.

4. *Lastly*, See here how you may be made up and enriched for time and eternity. And prize and receive this gift singular for its worth, suitableness, seasonableness, comprehensiveness, and freeness as ye have heard at large. Why should we continue in such a poor condition, when such a gift is made to us, and nothing remains but to receive it?

II. *Secondly*, Let us consider the Giver. And,

1st, Who is the Giver? The Giver is God; John iv. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God," &c.; and could be no other, since the gift is a divine person. And it is particularly God the

Father; John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c.; and could be no other person of the Godhead, since the gift is the Son. Here is the spring and original source of our salvation. The Father saw mankind was ruined, no help for them in the creation; and rather than they should perish without remedy, he makes a gift of his Son to them, for remedy of their misery. And to exalt the Giver's free love and grace herein, observe from the word three things there marked about it.

1. It was his own Son he gave; Rom. viii. 32, "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," &c. All the sons in the world were at his disposal; but as none of them could redeem his brother, so none of them were made the gift. The angels were his sons improperly; to have parted with one of them, would have been much: but they could not answer the end; so he gave his proper Son, the express image of his person.

2. It was "his beloved Son" that he gave; Luke xx. 13, "I will send my beloved Son," &c. He loved upright Adam as his son; he loved the holy angels as his sons; but he had one, the express image of his person, and brightness of his glory; who was "the beloved Son," whom he loved more than them all; and him he gave. Jacob had a beloved Son, Benjamin; and he could not think to part with him, to venture him to Egypt; but God gave his beloved Son into the world, though to die there without peradventure.

3. It was "his only begetten Son" he gave; John iii. 16. Jacob thought it a good reason for refusing to let Benjamin go down to Egypt with his brethren; Gen. xlii. 38. And every body knows it is hard to part with an only son; Zech. xii. 10. So that was Abraham's trial; Gen. xxii. 2, "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of;" a type of the Father's giving his only Son for sinners.

*2dly*, What has he given sinners, gifting his Son to them? The tongues of men and angels cannot fully express this. I shall give a general view of it in three things. Giving his Son,

1. He has given them himself. For the "Father is in him," John xiv. 11; and "they are one," John x. 30. He is "the true God," 1 John v. 20. "The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him," Col. ii. 9. So, if you will receive his Son, ye are possessed of the Father for your Father, &c. All the persons of the Godhead are yours, all the perfections of God, all his works, &c. O wonderful gift of the Father!

2. He has given them eternal life. The Son of God is the life;

John xiv. 6; "eternal life," 1 John v. 20. Sinners are naturally in a state of death, yea, they are liable to dying eternally; but behold, in the gift of the Son, the Father has given them eternal life 1 John v. 11. O enriching gift! Life to the dead is the greatest gift that can be bestowed on them. Here is life, legal life, moral life, a life of comfort; and all eternal.

3. He has given them all things; Rom. viii. 32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Therefore says the apostle of those who have received Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 21, "All things are yours." The Son of God is the "heir of all things;" Heb. i. 2. Receiving him, we become "joint-heirs with him," Rom. viii. 17; and so "inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7.

USE 1. Let us admire the love of the Father to poor sinners of Adam's race. The love of the Father is proposed as an object of admiration, in making sinners his sons; 1 John iii. 1, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" But here is a step higher, his giving to them his Son; John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. But, ah, how is it lost on a blind ungrateful world, that take no notice of it! They will be apt to conclude God's special love to them, from his laying to their hands plenty of common favours; but the love of the Father, in giving them his Son, comes not in mind.

2. Dreadful must the hazard of slighting this gift be, as the crime in it is atrocious. As ye would not run in to the deepest of guilt, and expose yourselves to God's fiercest wrath, slight not the gift of his Son made you. God has given us his own Son, his beloved Son, his only begotten Son, and in him, himself, &c. The greater the gift, the greater the love in making it, the greater is the sin, and the greater will be the wrath, for the slighting of it; 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 were evil."

III. The *third* thing is, The party to whom he is given. Here let us consider,

1st, To whom he is given.

2dly, In what respects he is given.

3dly, In what character he is given.

*First*, To whom is he given? He that believes the Son of God to be given to sinners, and lays the matter to heart, will be ready to say, O but whom is he given to? I fear he is not given to me; and what am I the better then? But



Christ is given to mankind-sinners indefinitely. It is not to the elect only, but to sinners indefinitely, elect or not elect; sinners of the race of Adam without exception, whatever they have been, whatever they are; whatever qualifications they have, whatever they want. The Father, in making of this gift to us, had no eye to any qualification in us, but our misery and extreme need; and, in the view of that, he made this gift for their remedy.

1. This gift and grant is conceived in the most ample terms, without any restriction to any particular set of men; John iii. 16, "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You see here it goes as wide as the *world*, the *world of men*, to exclude fallen angels, but none of the family of fallen Adam. Therefore, says the prophet, "To us a Son is given." They will get no approbation of Christ nor his Father, who curtail and hem in this grant, as they consult not his nor his Father's honour therein.

2. Christ is given to mankind-sinners, as the manna was given to the Israelites. Now the manna was given to the Israelites indefinitely; to them who loathed it as well as to them who loved it; John vi. 31—33, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And therefore Christ is given to sinners indefinitely, without exception of any; therefore says Christ to the unbelieving Jews, verse 32, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

3. There is made to mankind-sinners indefinitely a gift of the benefits of his purchase, which yet are never given but in and with himself; Rom. viii. 32, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" There is a gift of righteousness made to them, Rom. v. 17, which is revealed to faith, chap. i. 17, *i. e.*, to be believed on and trusted to. Eternal life is given them, 1 John v. 11; and a promise of entering into his rest is left them, Heb. vi. 1.

4. *Lastly*, If Christ were not given to mankind-sinners indefinitely, but there were some in the world who have no part in the gift of Christ, then the ministers of the gospel might not offer him to all, nor might all receive him. Not the first; for no man has power to offer to any the Father's gift, to whom it is not given of the Father; more than a servant has power to offer his master's gift to one to whom his master has not made the gift. Not the second, for none can lawfully take what God does not give him; John iii. 27, "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given

him from heaven." It would be presumption in thee to take a bit of bread, or a drink of water, if God gave it not thee; much more it would be presumption in thee to take his Son, if he gave him not to thee. But it is no presumption in any sinner of mankind to take Christ; 1 John iii. 23, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Mark xvi. 15, 16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," &c.

*Secondly*, In what respects is Christ given to them? "To us the Son is given."

1. In respect of allowance to take him. Ye all have the Father's allowance to take Christ, to possess yourselves of him, without fear of vicious intromitting with him. The Father's allowance was proclaimed by a voice from heaven; Matth. xvii. 5, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him;" and by his messengers; Matth. xxii. 9, "Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." If you were desiring something of a neighbour that you needed, and he should use no other solemnity in giving it you, but only say, Well, I allow you, take it; would ye question the gift of it, or fear to take it? Now, the Father gives you the same allowance, Well, I make an offer of my Son to you, and allow you to take him; take him then as I offer him.

2. In respect of legal destination. That is more than a simple allowance. There is an act passed in the court of heaven, designating and appointing a crucified Christ for the world of mankind-sinners, as a Saviour; 1 John iv. 14, "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son the Saviour of the world." As the brazen serpent was the ordinance of God for cure to the stung Israelites, the cities of refuge for manslaughterers among them; so is Christ the ordinance of God for mankind-sinners, John iii. 14—16. If ye had an act of parliament appointing a thing for you, ye would not question its being given you; here ye have more,

3. In respect of real offer. The word in the book of God offers him to all without exception, and the preachers of the gospel personally make, or may make the offer, wheresoever they come; Mark xvi. 15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Hear God's own offer; Rev. iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" the ministerial offer; Matth. xxii. 4, "And he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are

ready; come unto the marriage." It is so real, that they will be condemned for refusing it to whom it is intimated. So all are not only allowed and have the gift legally destinate for them; but it is offered to them; God says, Take, and welcome.

4. In respect of the freeness of the offer. There are some gifts so hampered and clogged with conditions in the offer of them, that they are not free gifts, and are in effect put out of the reach of the party-receiver. But this gift is absolutely free; no qualification, no condition, is required of us, that we may have it, but to receive it; Rev. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit and the bride, say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come; And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." No money, no price, is here demanded, Isa. lv. 1. More than all that,

5, *Lastly*, In respect of exhibition. God not only allows, has destinate, and offers freely, this gift to you; but it is exhibited to you, presented and held forth as with the hand, God saying, Ho, sinner, here is my Son, take him. This is done in the word of the gospel to all. The gospel not only offers salvation, which it might do, though the salvation were far off; but it brings salvation along with it to the lost sinner, Tit. ii. 21, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men." And God doth not stay the exhibiting of his Son to sinners, till they say they will take him, as we do sometimes the bringing out of meat to our friends; but as his voice reacheth their ears, his hand holds him forth, saying, Here he is for you, take him. Ye must take him, as we do sometimes with our meat, holding it out in our hand to our friend, and telling him and pressing him to eat.

*Thirdly*, In what character is Christ given to sinners? He is given of the Father to sinners of mankind in the character of a Saviour. He is given to the elect, and was from eternity, in the character of a surety, undertaking the payment of their debt for them. But he is given to the world indefinitely in the character of a Saviour; John iv. 42, "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." 1 John iv. i4, "The Father sent the Son the Saviour of the world." The world of mankind is a company sick unto death, the earth is the hospital where the sick and wounded lie, Christ is the physician given them by his Father's bounty. It is his office to be physician of the hospital, to cure the sick, and that without any fees from them. Every sick man and woman in the hospital may come to him, and employ him as their own physician. Such a gift in the case of men's bodies would be highly esteemed; but this is a thousand times greater, as the soul is of more worth than the body.

Under this, much is comprehended; but I shall comprehend the same in a threefold character. He is given to mankind-sinners,

1. In the character of a light set up; John viii. 12, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He is given to sinners in a suitability to their case. It is a dark world; by Adam's fall the sun set on mankind; but Christ is arisen the Sun of Righteousness, to whose light sinners are as free as to the light of the sun and moon, by the gift thereof made; Gen. i. 17, "And God set them in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth." And nothing is to hinder their access to it, but their love of 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 were evil."

2. In the character of an atoning sacrifice, slain and offered up. He died in the room and stead of the elect only; but being offered for them, and being of sufficiency for the needs of all, he is made the ordinance of God for taking away the sin of the world of mankind, and as such is gifted to them of the father; even as the brazen serpent to the stung Israelites, and the cities of refuge to the manslayers, to look to and be healed, to flee to and be safe; John iii. 14, 15. This is what John asserts in very express terms; 1 John ii. 2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus the Baptist pointed him out; John i. 29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He taketh away the sin of the world, not eventually, but officially. Compare chap. vi. 33, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And thus Christ himself holds out himself as a slain sacrifice, set down for all to eat of and feast on; Matth. xxii. 4, according to the prophecy; 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."

3. In the character of a crowned king, mighty to destroy the kingdom of Satan, to rescue mankind—sinners his captives and prisoners; 1 John iii. 8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 Cor. i. 30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—redemption." Therefore they are called to receive him into their hearts in this character; Psalm xxiv. 7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." The case of the conquered world, conquered by the king of the bottomless pit, was so hopeless, that none was able to head them for recovery among angels or men; God therefore anointed and gave them his own Son for a King-deliverer; Psalm ii. 6, "Yet have I

set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Isa. lv. 4, "Behold, I have given him—for a leader and commander to the people."

USE 1. Believe it, then, that to us poor sinners the Son of God in man's nature is given; that Christ is given to you in particular; that the Father has made a free gift and grant of his Son Jesus Christ to you, and every one of you.

If ye believe it not, ye make God a liar, disbelieving his gospel; 1 John v. 10, 11, "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, That God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." And unless ye believe it, ye will never see Christ; for who can receive from God his Son, when he does not believe he has given him? John iii. 27, "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." As there can be no taking from God without a prior giving, so there can be no receiving of Christ by faith without a prior belief that he is given. Why will ye not believe it?

1. Is the gift too much to be granted? Consider the giver, and it is not too much for an infinite God to give. Gifts are expected agreeable to the state of the giver; what is too much for an ordinary person, is not too much for a King. And can any thing be too much for an infinite God?

2. Is the party gifted too great to be made a gift of? Why, consider he is gifted by his own Father; and the gifting of him tends to his own and his Father's honour, Heb. xii. 2; and he is gifted as Mediator; in which respect he says, "My Father is greater than I;" John xiv. 28.

3. Is the party-receiver too mean and low to have such a great gift conferred on him? Why, truly, this is the language of unbelief. Ye could easily believe that Christ is given to the righteous and holy; and so could the Pharisees. But to believe that he is given to the ungodly and sinners, there lies the difficulty. But pray consider, this gift is not given according to our worth, but our need; and it is evident such need him most; Matth. ix. 11—13, "And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And Christ and his Father will have the greater glory in that case.

USE 2. Receive the gift of Christ then at his Father's hand; take him, and possess yourselves of him by faith.

**MOTIVE 1.** Consider ye have an absolute need of this gift, Matth. ix. 12, forecited. Ye perish without him; 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." What need a man starving for hunger has of bread, the naked of clothing; that and more ye have of Christ. That soul of thine that is lost, is crying to thee, O slight not a Saviour! that soul that is sick unto death, Slight not the Physician!

**MOTIVE 2.** There are some who have as much need as you, to whom yet he is not given, viz. the fallen angels; Heb. ii. 16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." They must perish for ever without remedy, for Christ was neither given for nor to them. Trample not on sovereign love, that has made the gift to you then, and not to them.

**MOTIVE 3.** Ye must either receive or refuse. The fallen angels, nay, the poor pagans, to whom the gift is not intimated, are neither receivers nor refusers. But in your case there is no midst, to whom he is both given and intimated. Therefore we say, as 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." It will be heavy to be marked refusers of Christ.

**MOTIVE 4.** Consider the worth of the gift. Men and angels cannot tell it; Prov. viii. 11, "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Look into its superlative worth, and resolve to have it, not to let it go. Never such a gift will or can come in your offer again. Therefore buy the truth, and sell it not; take it at any rate, part with it at no rate.

**MOTIVE 5.** Consider the hand it comes from. Respect to the giver often causeth embracing the gift that one would otherwise slight. The giver is the infinite God. If he should send you a piece of bread out of heaven, as he did the manna, or a cup of cold water; could you take it on you to refuse it? How then will ye adventure, when he sends and gives you his own, his beloved, his only begotten son?

**MOTIVE 6.** Consider that others before you have received it, and have been made up by it for ever. The saints in glory were once as poor as you; they received this gift; and now they are kings and priests, they inherit all things; and of their happiness there will be no end. So you see that ye may receive it, and that it will be up-making to you.

**MOTIVE 7.** Consider that this gift will not always be for the tak-

ing as it is now ; Heb. iii. 15, " While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." If men will go on to refuse it, God will call in his gift, and set a bar between them and it for ever ; Luke xiv. 24, " For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." So that the day will come when, if ye would give a thousand worlds for another offer of the gift, ye will not get it ; Heb. xii. 17, " For ye know how that afterward when Esau would have inherited the blessing he was rejected ; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

**MOTIVE 8.** Your not receiving will be very heinously taken, as the deepest slight put upon both the giver and the gift. When you make an offer of a gift to a friend, how do ye take that of having it slighted ? Think then, how will the father take your slighting the gift of his Son ; his Son to be slighted in quality of a gift ?

**MOTIVE 9.** *Lastly,* It will set you at greater distance from God than ever ; and will kindle a keener flame of wrath against you, to burn for ever, than if the gift had never been offered you. The Lamb's wrath is dreadful above measure, 2 Thes. i. 7—9, " The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Matth. xi. 22, " But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." Rev. vi. 15—17, " And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?"

See then, salvation is brought to your door, Christ is exhibited as the gift of God his Father to you. Think how you will entertain it, and that ye must answer before his tribunal for what entertainment you give this offer.