

2. Be much in prayer, so will you converse with the Lord of the unseen world, and about the unseen things of it.

3. Be much employed in reading the scriptures, for in them we have the account of the unseen things.

4. Be much given to meditation. Use stated meditations, and particularly I would recommend solemn secret fasting and humiliation. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart."

Lastly, Converse most as you have access, with those that are best acquainted with the unseen things and seem to have the savour of them most upon their spirits. And watch your hearts, that they slip not into a forgetfulness of things unseen, and return to a fondness for things that are seen. Amen.

Ettrick, June 24, 1716.

Sermons preparatory for the Lord's Supper.

CHRIST DEMANDING ADMISSION INTO SINNERS' HEARTS.

SERMON VIII.

PSALM xxiv. 9.

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.*

THIS psalm is judged to have been composed when David brought up the ark from the house of Obed Edom to mount Zion, 2 Sam. iv. chap. to be sung on that occasion, and others like it, particularly on the bringing of the ark into the temple, which was afterwards to be built, to which the Psalmist seems here, by the spirit of prophecy, to have a special reference.

The ark was a type of Christ, and so this psalm concerns him. The sum of it is, that though all the world be the Lord's, yet the church is his in a peculiar manner; for there, and in his people, he dwells and all ought to receive him. It was sung by the Jews ordinarily on the first day of the week, which is now the Christian Sabbath, and the matter of it is very agreeable to the Sabbath, being the day in which Christ solemnly demands admission into the hearts of the hearers of the gospel.

In the words there are two things.

1. Entrance solemnly demanded, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates.* Where consider, to whom the demand is directed. Some read the words, *Lift up your gates, O ye princes or heads.* (So the Vulgate.) Accordingly, some understand it of Christ's ascension into heaven, taking the gates for those of heaven, the princes for the angels. Others, namely, some Papists, understand it of Christ's descending into hell, taking the gates for those of hell, the princes for the devils. But as there is no ground for this reading, the interpretation as built upon it falls to the ground.

The demand is figuratively directed to the gates, a thing very natural in a joyful solemnity, especially in a song. But the Ark, Tabernacle, and Temple being all typical, this doubtless, has a compound sense, literal and mystical.

Literally, by the gates are meant, the gates of the temple, which though it was not built in David's time, yet it was designed to be built, on the place to which the ark was now brought, namely in the mount. Everlasting doors they are called, because the temple was a fixed dwelling for the ark, whereas the tabernacle was removed from place to place.

Mystically, the temple was a type of heaven, and if on this account these words be applied to Christ's ascension, (so several of the Fathers understand them) I will not contend. But it was also a type of the church, and the ark's dwelling in the temple was the symbol of the divine presence among the Jews. And so by the gates are meant the hearts of sinners to whom the gospel comes, according to that, 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.' These are the everlasting doors, both because of the immortality of the soul, and because when Christ once comes into them he never departs. This was aimed at in that call at the entrance of the ark, for there is not a word here of the ark, but of the *King of glory*. Namely, that, as they received the ark into the temple, so they should open their hearts to receive Christ into their souls.

The thing demanded is, "that the gates lift up their heads, also that the everlasting doors be lifted up." From top to bottom they must be thrown wide open that there may be a spacious entrance. This for the greater solemnity, in the bringing of the ark. It indicates a most hearty willingness in embracing of Christ and receiving him into the soul. It is expressed two ways. The first seems to belong to saints who are to be active in it. Lift up your heads, O ye gates! Do it of your own accord, willingly, for our Lord will not force his entrance. But in the day of his power he can make

the iron gates fly open. Accordingly the second seems to belong to sinners, who are passively to be lifted up. For sinners cannot open their own hearts, but a power goes along with the command.

The demand is made literally by the priests, who bare the ark into the temple; mystically, by the ministers of the gospel, who are sent to demand access for their Master into the hearts of sinners; or whatever instrument our Lord uses to prepare his way.

The demand is doubled. To shew Christ's willingness and earnestness to get admission. It also intimates the aversion of sinners to admit him, and the vast importance and consequence of the matter.

2. The person for whom admission is demanded. It is for the *King of glory*. He is a King, even King Jesus, typified by the ark. It is a solemn entry such as a king makes in state into a city. He comes in, not only a guest to abide with sinners, but as a King to rule all. He is not only a King, but "the King of glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." He is a glorious King in himself, and the purchaser of eternal glory for his people. The first is here chiefly meant.

Assurance is given that he will enter if admitted. The gates shall not be opened for nought. He will not stand without, unless he be kept out. He is represented as a victorious King making a triumphant entry.

Doctrine 1. Where the ark of gospel ordinances comes, Christ himself comes to the door of the hearts of sinners for admission. The ark's coming to the temple is the King of glory's coming to the hearts of sinners. Now there is no more an ark, but gospel ordinances have succeeded it and have the same use. And this is the call to go along with them to the end of the word.

In speaking from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Inquire what is the ark of gospel ordinances.

II. How Christ comes along with this ark to the doors of the hearts of sinners.

I. We are to inquire what is the ark of gospel ordinances. The ark was the most holy of all the Old Testament ordinances. It was the chief thing in the most holy place, where God was in a special manner present, *sitting between the cherubims*. From this place he gave answers, and on that account the most holy place was called the oracle. The place for the ark, was *the oracle of the house*, the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. From this we may gather that there are two things which may come under the name of the gospel ark.

1. The word read and preached. The holy scriptures are *the oracle of God*. From them we have a clearer discovery of the mind of God, than what was given from the Jewish ark. And the gospel, as purely preached, after the reformation from popery, is called the appearing of the ark of his testament. "For the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of the testament."

2. The holy sacrament, baptism and the Lord's supper. These are really sacred symbols of the divine presence as truly as ever the ark was. Some divines say, the ark was called Jehovah, Num. xvi. 35. But that is certainly too much. It is God himself *whose name alone is Jehovah*. The greatest honour put upon it in the scripture seems to be in these words of Joshua, "Behold, said he, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." But as to the sacrament of the supper, it is nothing short whatever it be more. This, said our Lord, "is my body broken for you. And this cup is the new testament in my blood."

Consider, that wherever the ark came, the places were made holy. *The places*, said Solomon, are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come. And what are the means of bringing holiness into any place of the unholy world, but the word and sacraments. These bring light into the dark places of the earth, and set up a kingdom for Christ, where the devil had ruled all before. The ark was the special dwelling place of God upon earth. *He dwelt between the cherubims*, which overshadowed the ark, and it was that by which he communicated himself to his people. And these ordinances are the places of his special presence, from which he conveys his counsels, comforts, and graces, to his people. His people's experience confirms this. "The king is held in the galleries." We are now,

II. To inquire how Christ comes along with this ark, to the doors of the hearts of sinners.

1. In the word, Christ comes in the offer of himself to sinners. Wherever the gospel is preached, Christ is offered to sinners with all his saving benefits. "Behold, says he, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." A market of free grace is opened and whosoever will, is invited to buy without money and without price. There are some places where the market is not yet opened. Christ is not yet in their offer. There are other places where the market is over, and the despisers of the gospel in these are now gone to their place. But yet with us the market is still open, and Christ comes to the door of our hearts for admission.

2. In the sacraments Christ is exhibited. There is not a simple

offer of him, as one may have of meat, which he sees not, as in the word. But in them he is held forth to us, as meat set down upon a table before a man, to eat, and welcome. "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you." And does he not come near us then? He was sacrificed on the cross, and in the supper the sacrifice is presented to the guests to feed upon spiritually.

3. Both in word and in sacraments he demands admission. He comes not to look at the door, but stands and knocks for admission, as one that would have access. He would be admitted even into the place where the strong man keeps house alone. He would be admitted farther where he has had some access before. Saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." For as we must always be coming to Christ, so always opening, and opening, wider and wider, till he possess not only the whole man, but possess him wholly without any rivals.

And thus you may see the truth of this point manifested. The ministers of the gospel coming with the Lord's message to sinners, drive not an empty chariot. For saith Jesus to them, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He speaks by them, and so the great business of salvation is transacted between Christ and sinners.

Use for information.

Is it so, that where the ark of the gospel ordinances comes, Christ comes to the door of sinners' hearts for admission? Then,

1. Seeing we have the ark of gospel ordinances amongst us, be it known unto you, that Christ himself is come to the doors of your hearts for admission. Many do not consider, nor believe that Christ is knocking at the door of their hearts for admission, and therefore they do not bestir themselves to receive him. But believe it, it is no fancy, but the most certain reality, and therefore I say to you and to each of you: "To you is the word of this salvation sent." Will you consider for the reality of it, that there is no salvation without receiving Christ into our hearts. "Which is Christ in you the hope of glory." He must dwell in all those now, who shall dwell with him for ever. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Where there is no union with Christ, there can be no communion with him. And where there is no communion with him, there can be no holiness, no grace, no peace, no pardon, no happiness.

As we cannot receive him unless he offer himself unto us, so for what end are ordinances, if Christ come not to us in them, offering himself to us. The way in which Christ dwells in the hearts of his

people, is by his spirit and by faith. Now the ordinances are the channels in which the conveyance of his Spirit is made. "This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" The ordinances also are the means of begetting and of increasing faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If then they be the means of uniting us to Christ, he really comes in them for entrance into our souls.

But farther, it is so real, that men will be really saved by embracing Christ coming in to them by the ordinances, and really damned for slighting him, coming to them in these. Jesus *said to his disciples*, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." He that cannot see Christ in gospel ordinances, to close with him, will never see him to his comfort in another world. Who are they that will be owned by him at the last day? "Those that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. For it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And who are they that will be disowned by him at the last day? those who are without hope for another world. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2. The word and sacraments coming to a place, will highly aggravate the condemnation of those that do not receive Christ into their hearts. For where they come, there he is, whether he be received or not. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Many a time the ordinances seem to be in vain, and preaching in vain, but they are not so. Be their success what it will, God's work is still going on for his honour at the long run. "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The ordinances will always be doing good to some. "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" And as many as are ordained to eternal life shall believe. Where Christ lights a candle we may suppose there are

some lost pieces to be found. Where Christ covers a table, there will readily always be some of his children to feed.

As for others, neither will they be in vain. Where the ark comes, the call is given, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates*, and those that keep their hearts still shut against Christ, are hereby rendered inexcusable, and their condemnation aggravated. Their sin will be the greater, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." The more frequent, and the more solemn offers that are made to sinners, the greater is their contempt which they pour upon the Son of God. And every sermon and every communion will add to their account; so that I doubt not but many of us, if they hold on as they are doing in slighting Christ and his ordinances, the day will come, in which they will wish from their hearts, that they had never lived where sermons and communions were to be heard and seen. And reflections on these will cut them to the heart for ever more.

Their condemnation and punishment will be greater. "But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." In solemn appearances of the ark of God among his people great things have been done in the experience of some. But that makes a heavy reckoning to those who have no part nor lot in that matter; that keep their hearts shut against Christ, while others are opening to him. Of all vengeance that which follows a despised gospel is the most dreadful. The fire that breaks out from the altar burns the most vehemently.

Use second, of Exhortation.

Seeing you have the word preached and expect the sacrament to be administered, remember that these are the gospel ark, by which Christ comes to the hearts of sinners demanding admission.

1. Do not idolize the ark, but look beyond it to Jesus Christ, to whom the ark directs you. This was the sin of the Israelites when they brought the ark into the camp, in order that it might defend them from their enemies. 1 Sam. iv. 3. They thought that though they did not reform, and repent, yet if they had the ark all would be well. But they were deceived. Their unrepented of sins made them fall, and the ark could not hold them up. So many please themselves in taking Christ's livery, though they still remain Satan's slaves; in sitting down at the Lord's table though strangers to communion with him; in getting a token from men and mixing themselves with the saints, though they have no token from the Master of the feast. And so they cry, the temple of the Lord, the temple

of the Lord are these ! But O what will this avail them ? The Lord "will say to them, I tell you, I know you not whence you are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Look you then beyond the ark. Come into the inner court. Be not satisfied with less than opening your hearts to receive the Lord of the ark. Look beyond the sign to the thing signified, and pursue that. Break through the shell, that you may come to the kernel. Otherwise you neither answer the voice of Christ, nor the voice of your own necessities.

2. Do not undervalue the ark, but highly prize it. That was Michal's sin. 2 Sam. vi. 14. And it is the sin of many amongst us this day, who will have nothing to do with the ark themselves, and if it be in their power will be heavy to others that meddle with it. They pour contempt upon the memorial of Christ's death, and one communion after another passeth, but they will not meddle with it, as if they were not concerned. But if they can discern a fault in the conduct of a communicant, they will do it. They will despise them on account of it, and the ordinance for them ? But O ! prize the ark of the gospel ordinances. It is the most precious thing in the lower world ; and I dare say a gracious soul would rather part with the sun out of the firmament, than the ark of gospel ordinances, word and sacraments. For the tables of the law were laid up in the ark. In these ordinances is to be seen by the Christian the most joyful sight out of heaven. The broad law fully answered in all its demands by Jesus Christ, "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The fiery law with all its curse and vengeance originally due to him, laid by and covered up, under the vail of the flesh of Christ crucified.

Again, from the mercy seat on the ark, God spoke to the people. And in these ordinances God breathes love, peace, and good-will to poor sinners through a crucified Saviour. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men." He who believingly sees the body and blood of Christ exhibited in the sacrament, must thereupon say with joy, "Having, 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 vail, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." There the believer hears the joyful invitation from a crucified Saviour, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ; for lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."

The pot of manna also was in the ark. And in gospel ordinances

the believer eats angels' food ; for Christ, the true manna, the bread from heaven, is there, saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man shall eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Christ the maker of the feast, is the matter of it too, and feasts his people on himself and all his benefits. And O how desirable must this entertainment be in the wilderness of this world, while the believer tastes of Christ's sweetness, and the sweetness of every thing in him ; the sweetness of his death that removes the curse, and his resurrection that fills with the hope of glory.

Great and glorious things were done by the ark. When the ark was placed beside Dagon, Dagon fell to the ground. When Christ is enjoyed in gospel ordinances, strong lusts and idols are made to fall. The death of Christ viewed by faith in the sacrament, is the best remedy for subduing strong corruptions. By compassing Jericho the walls fell. O how often have walls of separation between Christ and a believer fallen down at ordinances, and they that were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Jordan was divided by the ark and they went through to Canaan. And indeed the enjoyment of Christ in ordinances, will take the sting out of death and present to the man a safe passage to Immanuel's land.

3. Beware of profane looking into the ark, but approach with all holy reverence. Fifty thousand, threescore and ten men of Bethshemesh were slain by the Lord for this sin, 1 Sam. vi. 19. How many such on-lookers are there in the case of the gospel ark, who look to the sacred symbols as common things, and despise the holy mystery of Christ represented by them. External judgments were more common under the law, but spiritual judgments are more common now. Silent blows on the soul and conscience that make no noise now abound. But labour you to see a majesty in the ordinances, and serve God therein with reverence and godly fear.

4. Beware of rash meddling with the ark. Remember that for this sin Uzzah was struck dead by God, 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. O the hazard of rash approaching to the table of the Lord. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Therefore make it a business of solemn seriousness to examine yourselves, as to your right to it, your state and your frame. For it is a feast for friends, not for enemies ; for the living, not the dead, for those that are awake, not such as are asleep.

5. Prepare for the entertaining of the ark, and the Lord of the ark. Do as David did. "I will not, said he, give sleep to mine

eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Labour to prepare for the solemn ordinance before you. Let it be much in your mind, that you may be in a proper frame for it. Lay salvation to heart. Renew your covenant and put away strange gods. Search and purge out the old leaven. Satan uses to be very busy at such a time, and therefore you should watch and be sober.

Lastly, Throw the doors of your hearts wide open to receive the Lord of the ark. Let all things be dismissed that have kept Christ at the door, and heartily embrace him in the gospel offer.

Doctrine 2. The doors of the hearts of sinners ought to be thrown wide open to Christ the King of glory, demanding admission by the gospel. Here I shall

I. Shew what is supposed in the gospel call here given.

II. What it is to open the doors of the heart to Christ.

III. Offer some reasons why sinners should open to him. I am

I. To shew what is supposed in the gospel call here given. It supposeth,

1. That the hearts of sinners are naturally shut on the King of glory. Whoever be shut in, Christ is shut out. "For behold, says he, I stand at the door and knock:" God made man with an heart open towards heaven, into which his Spirit might have ready access. But man receiving God's enemy, they together shut the door, and shut out the great Master. And in this case Christ finds every man's heart when he comes before it in the gospel.

2. That man naturally keeps his heart shut against Christ. As long as the sinner is left to himself he will never relent. "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." He will not open the door, and go and seek the King of glory. He will not sit at the door and espy Christ afar off, as Abraham did the angels, and run to meet him and invite him to come in. Alas! It is much if he will give him admission, when he comes to the door and demands once and again.

3. Christ comes by the gospel and demands open doors for himself. He could by a word have set the house on fire, as soon as it was shut on him, and might have justly done it. But he graciously condescends to demand entrance, so the proposals of peace begin on his side. He sends messengers to put sinners in mind to return to their duty. And O that you could be persuaded that Christ is demanding admission into every heart among us.

4. Christ is willing to come into every heart. Why does he de-

mand open doors, but because he is willing to enter. Though the house be not worthy of his presence, though he has received many indignities from it and in it, yet he is willing to grace it with his royal presence. He makes no exceptions in the offer, and none are excluded from his favour, but those who by refusing his gracious offer exclude themselves. "For if any man, says he, hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

Lastly, That Christ will not come in but with the sinner's consent. He will not break up the door. He will be King of the hearts of his subjects, and rule in their affections, or not at all. They must open to him, he will not force himself in upon them. He makes them willing in the day of his power, but will not enter against their will. We proceed now,

II. To shew what it is to open the doors of the heart to Christ.

This is the great duty for which the text calls, and what we are called to on this occasion. There is a two-fold opening.

1. Initial opening. That is when those that never opened to Christ before, do open to him in their conversion, and their first believing and coming into the covenant. Then Christ makes his first solemn entry into the soul. And thus sinners, natural men, are called to open.

2. Progressive opening. So saints open to him. To them Christ says, "Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with drops of the night." This is an opening more and more to the King of glory. Sometimes though the soul be open to Christ in respect of one's state, yet it is closed in respect of the frame. Though there be grace yet it is either not in exercise at all, or weak and languishing. Yea, grace at best while here is but imperfect. Though Christ has room in the heart, yet he has not all the room, and therefore there must be a progressive opening, till we come to the place, where Christ shall not only have the whole man, but the whole of every part of the man without competition.

The text seems to aim at both, and so to take in both saints and sinners. The work of conversion is imperfect in respect of degrees, and so must be carried on to perfection. And indeed the lines of God's image drawn at first on a soul, are sometimes like a new written sentence, which rashly touched by any thing, is so defaced, that though the letters be not quite blotted out, yet it must be run over anew with the pen. "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." There must be new conviction, humiliation, believing and covenanting.

There is a twofold door to be opened to Christ.

1. You must open the outer door of the understanding. Open the eyes of the mind blinded by the deceitfulness of sin. "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness unto light." Have we not, like Samson, fallen into the hands of the Philistines, who have put out our two eyes and sport themselves with our miseries? Are not the eyes of many closed, so as they see neither their danger, nor the means of deliverance, neither their disease, nor the remedy.

You must open your eyes to see your sinfulness, to take a right view of your sins. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Without this view there will be no access for the King of glory into our hearts. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see." See your heart, what it is, a cage of unclean birds, a sepulchre full of rottenness, a receptacle of filthy lusts, a piece of cursed ground, fruitful of briers and thorns. "For, from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it." See your life what it is, a mass of disorder and confusion, unfruitful, unprofitable, dishonouring to God, grieving to his Spirit, leading to utter darkness.

See the evil of your sins. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts." See how contrary sin is to the holy nature of God. "Thou Lord art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." It is contrary to his holy law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." See how sin dishonours all his attributes, omniscience, omnipresence, justice, truth, holiness, and the rest. How provoking to the eyes of his jealousy. See also the loathsomeness of your sins. Pull off the mask which Satan hath put upon sin and view it in its own ugly colours; how the beauty of your souls is thereby marred, the image of God defaced, the image of Satan set up in its stead. How it unfits you for communion with God, as one in his vomit is

unfit to approach the presence of a prince. 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. Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee! I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

See to the heinousness of your sins. What light, love, mercies of many kinds you have sinned against. What reproofs and warnings you have disregarded.—What vows, purposes and resolutions to amend you have broken. “I will arise, said the prodigal, and go to my father and will say to him, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.”

Lastly, See the multitude of your sins. “Who can understand his errors.” They are more than the hairs on your heads. The longer you have lived, the more is your debt increased. The law requires all perfection at all times; but you could never do one thing, which weighed in balance of the law would not have been found light. Whatever you have done, with so many sins you are chargeable; thoughts, words, actions; yea, more, inasmuch as there have been many sins in one action. Omissions too, who can reckon them up?

Again, Open your eyes to see your misery by sin. What miseries has it brought upon you and to what it has made you liable. Has it not separated between God and you, kindled the Lord’s anger against you, displayed by temporal and spiritual plagues upon you. Has it not marred your communion with God, and prevented the communications of gracious influences, and left you a withered soul? Who can express the misery of a person out of Christ. Poor soul! thou art a condemned man. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Being under the fearful sentence of a broken law, every moment ready to drop into the pit, having nothing but the thread of thy brittle life betwixt thee and everlasting burnings.

See also your utter inability to help yourselves, by yourselves. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: but in me is thine help.” Such a sight the prodigal got, “I perish, said he, with hunger.” Look to your crimson guilt, and you will see it to be of a deeper dye than that tears of blood can wash it out. Look to the power of thy lusts, and see thy slender arms utterly unable to break them; thyself as unable to grapple with them, as a little child with a giant, or a weak man with the leviathan that will count his darts as straw, and his spear as flax.

Lastly, Open your eyes to see a Saviour in the glory of his mediatory office. “Look, says he, unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” You have

long been saying, "what is thy beloved more than another beloved?" You have shut your eyes that they could not behold his glory. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." But open the outer door, and see the King of glory, that being ravished with the sight, you may open the inner door also and make him welcome to the innermost recesses of your heart. See him, in the glory of his suitableness to your case. If thou art blind, he hath salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see; if thou art naked, he hath white raiment to clothe and adorn you; if thou art poor, he hath gold tried in the fire that will enrich thee for ever. "He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." If thou be a poor foolish creature he is wisdom. If thou be hungry his flesh is meat indeed. There is a fulness of merit in him and of the Spirit. Whatever be thy want, there is a suitable supply in him. If there be a curse on thee, he knows the way of removing the curse, and he hath a blessing to bestow. View him also in the glory of his ability to save. "He is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Though your sin and misery were heavier than the sand of the sea, a dead weight of guilt hanging at thy soul like mountains of brass, yet hear the Father's testimony concerning him, "I have laid help, saith he, upon one that is mighty." He is God as well as man, and therefore though the controversy be betwixt God and you, he is fit to be Day's-man, to lay his hands upon both. The virtue of his blood is infinite, because it is the *blood of the Son of God, and it cleanseth from all sin*. So the virtue of his Spirit, because he is a divine person.

See the glory of his willingness to save. His whole word is full of demonstrations of this. "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." Yea, he has written his willingness to save in characters of his blood, having laid down his life to save sinners, and made even them welcome to the benefit who embrued their hands in his blood. Even to them, it was said, "Repent and be baptized 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." Does he not stand stretching out his hands, crying, Behold me, behold me.

2. You must open the inner door of the will. Be willing and obedient to the call of the gospel. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah and

inhabitants of Jerusalem." There is an iron sinew in our neck, that must be renewed, that we may bow to him, to whom every knee shall bow at length. Whatever light hath entered into the mind, Christ hath no possession of the soul till the heart and affections become pliable to him. This inner door Satan keeps fast as well as the other, till a day of power cause them to open, Psal. cx. 3. So the sinner may say to Christ laying siege to his heart, as the Jebusites said to David in another case, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither:" the blind mind, and the crooked will. But exhortations and gospel calls are the means, which he blesseth for that end; therefore we call upon you to open this door also. Open the door then, in a hearty acquiescence in the grand device of salvation through Jesus Christ, "who is the power of God and the wisdom of God." This is God's contrivance for bringing many sons to glory. Let your own hearts say amen to it, so as to venture your souls upon that foundation, upon which God has laid the weight of his glory. Be well pleased with the King of glory. Do not any more find fault with him, with whom the Father is well pleased. Listen no more to the surmises of unbelief against him: for it is ever finding some fault with the mystery of Christ. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in him.

You must open also in a hearty willingness, to part with all your old guests to make room for him. There is not an empty heart among all the children of men. If Christ be not there, there are others in his stead. But be they who they may, Christ says, if you love me, let these go their way.

Away then with your carnal wisdom, that room may be made for Christ's guidance of you by his word and Spirit. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." Shut up the eyes of self-wisdom, that you may walk in his light. Following that false light has led you into many a snare in the wilderness of the world. The following of it has made the ship of the soul dash on many a rock in this troublesome sea.

Away also, with all your false and self-confidences before the Lord, that room may be made for the blood of Christ, the only procuring cause of peace, pardon, and salvation. "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 count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Depend no more upon mere mercy before the

Lord, nor to your good hearts, blameless lives, your duties, or any thing that is yours. But as the young man, leave all these and flee from them naked, Mark xiv. 51, 52. Pretend to nothing to recommend you to God, or Jesus Christ, nothing in or about yourselves.

Away with your lusts and idols, that the King of glory may reign freely in your hearts. "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 so no more." Whatever room you reserve for lusts or idols you refuse to him. If you be not willing to part with them all, you are not willing to receive Christ. If there be a Delilah left that must be spared, a right eye, which you cannot endure the pain of plucking out, you do in effect judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

Again you must open in a hearty willingness to receive Christ as the gospel offers him. Take up the offer of the gospel rightly, and let your souls be ready to fall in with it. Come over all your objections to the marriage covenant, as contained in the offer. All things are ready on his part, be you so also. "All things, says he, are ready, come ye to the marriage." Will you be content at length to take him for your prophet, and only oracle and director; for your priest to bear the whole weight of your salvation on his merits; for your King and absolute Lord; to take his will for your law, to obey it without disputing.

You must open also in a cordial actual consent of the soul to Christ. "To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." Now stretch out your hand to God in Christ in the everlasting covenant. You that never before could be brought to be espoused to the Son of God, now throw open the doors that the King of glory may come in. You that have formerly given but a hypocritical consent of hand, but not of heart, give now a cordial consent. Take him for your Lord, head and husband, for a covering of the eyes, for all in all. And you that have honestly consented before, renew it with more cordiality, as those that have seen how good the Lord is.

You must open in a cordial resignation of yourselves to the Lord, giving up yourselves to him wholly, and that for ever. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Long has the Lord been calling to us, saying, my son, give me thine heart. O then give your own selves unto the Lord. You have endured a long siege, O then yield yourselves. "Now, be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord and enter his

sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God." The devil, the world and the flesh are his competitors in this matter, to the one, or to the other you must belong. But shall any be reckoned preferable to the King of glory. You must open in a cordial love to him. O stir up in your souls a flaming love to the King of glory. That was a blessed opening when the disciples exclaimed, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Love him for his benefits to the children of men, for the peace, pardon, grace and glory, which he hath purchased by his blood, and bestows upon his people. Love him, for himself, his glorious perfections, his holiness, love, grace. Love him for what he hath done for sinners in obeying the law and for what he hath suffered by enduring the penalty. Look at him striking hands with the Father from eternity for an elect world, and love him. Look to him in his birth, his life, his death, in the garden, on the cross, and love him.

Finally, Open in your fervent desire after communion with him. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." This is the native effect of opening of the heart to him in love. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death." An opened heart will have holy breathings after the Lord. "O that I knew where I might find him, then I would go even to his seat." If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, long for more of the communications of his grace. If not, yet if you have heard and believed, it may excite your ardent desire.

Thus we must open to Christ. And not only so, but we must open the door wide. The heads of the gates must be lifted up to make a large wide entry. You may take up this in these things.

1. There must be room made to take in all that our Lord brings along with him. We must not choose and refuse in this according to the disposition of our own hearts; like those who would take something of his, but have not room for taking in all. Open the door then so as to take in his broad law with him. If you have exceptions against any of his commandments, if there be any particular with which you have no will to comply, you receive him not. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments." You must open so as to take in his cross with him. "If any man will come after me, said Jesus, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." If you be not content to take Christ with his cross, to follow him at all hazards whithersoever he goes, you cannot receive him. Many have room for Christ's salvation from hell and wrath, but they never open so as to receive him with his law and his cross.

2. There must be room made that our Lord may enter in what way seems best in his own eyes. We must not limit him, for he is the holy one of Israel. In respect of time we must set no hours to him, but wait on, till the Lord look down from heaven; nor must we limit him in respect of the manner of his coming, but whether he come in the high way of consolation, or the low way of further humiliation, we must welcome him. Nor in respect of the measure of enjoyments, we must be thankful for the least crumb.

3. We must be always endeavouring to have the entrance enlarged. To get more sense of sin, farther insight into the Mediator's glory: more willingness to part with sin, more love, faith, desire, and the like. For the mystery of iniquity in us, the mystery of the Mediator's glory, are depths into which we may penetrate farther and farther. And whatever graces are kindled in the heart may be blown up to burn more keenly.

4. We must receive him honourably, as the King of glory making his triumphant entrance into our souls. A high esteem of Christ in his superlative excellency is necessary in order to the receiving of him.

Lastly, We must receive him joyfully, as citizens casting open their gates to receive their king with joyful acclamations, when making a triumphant entrance. Let us proceed,

III. To give a few reasons of the point.

1. Because, The house is his own. He is the righteous Lord and owner, and how unreasonable is it, that the house should be open to strangers and shut upon the Master. The visible church is Christ's house, and his entertainment there is in the hearts of the members of it. "I brought him, says the spouse, into my mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived me." He has a right to it, by the Father's gift, who has made him heir of all things, and by redeeming the house by his own blood, when it was mortgaged. Is it not then highly reasonable to receive him?

2. The Father that gave him the house, requires you to open it to him. "This said he, is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." He comes not without his Father's commission to take possession. He served his Father in the great work of man's redemption, and having been obedient to the death, the doors of heaven were opened to receive him triumphantly, and the doors on earth charged to open to him, for the reward of his obedience.

3. It was solemnly made over to him in your baptism. There are none of us but are baptized Christians, by which we were engaged to be the Lord's. Thus his name is upon us, as our proprietor by consent. And if we refuse to open to him, we do in effect declare,

that we will not stand to the bargain made for us in our infancy. And truly this is the language of the practice of many.

The Improvement.

Use 1. Of reproof to those that will not open to Christ.

1. Those that do not so much as open the outer door to him. The gross ignorance of many, in the midst of gospel light, holds Christ at the door. They live in darkness and will not use means to obtain light. The door was never yet opened by conviction of their sin and misery; but they have still lived in darkness and deep security. You are slighsters of the Saviour. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour. Jesus will be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Those who though the outer door has been opened, yet keep the inner door shut fast. How many are there, who do not want competent knowledge, and have had light conveyed into their minds by piercing conviction; yet alas! they still stand out against the Lord. They see what they should do, but their hearts will not comply with it. Their lusts keep such fast hold of their hearts, that all their convictions are baffled. They rebel against the light, keep Christ at the door, and follow their lusts, with a witness against them in their own breasts. The more light, the heavier will their doom be. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

3. Those that will neither open themselves, nor suffer others to do it, so far as they can hinder. There are many who are agents for the devil, who themselves stand aloof from holy things, and discourage others who are beginning to seek after them; and do what they can one way or another to keep others from the covenant and true seriousness. "But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

4. Those who pretend to open to Christ, but never open wide enough, so as the King of glory may come in. There is always some secret reserve in their closing with Christ, which spoils all. The door is not opened so as to receive Christ in all his offices. Hence instead of opening to him, he is in effect shut out, because they are not pleased with the covenant, as the Lord has made it; their heart is divided.

Lastly, Sleeping saints, continuing in their security notwithstanding his knocking. To them he says, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with drops of the night." They reply, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? Such maltreatment our Lord often meets with even in the house of his friends, which must be so much the worse as those who give it are of a character distinguished from the rest of the world. "But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company."

Use second of Exhortation.

Cast the doors of your hearts open, and wide open, to the King of Glory. Behold he cometh in the preaching of the gospel and in the holy sacrament demanding admission into your hearts. Hold him no longer at the door, "but lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

To enforce this exhortation, I shall,

I. Point out some things which keep sinners from opening to Christ. And O! that they may speedily be removed.

1. They know not who demands admission. They know not the King of glory, and therefore they treat him rudely. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Before one open a door, the question is, who is there? Accordingly the question is proposed, *who is this King of glory?* Many will not be at any pains to enquire about him; they do not concern themselves with any that come to the door of their hearts that bear another than the hellish chap. Many propose the question, but like Pilate, they stay not for an answer. So they know him not, they have no desire to know him. If they knew him and their own need of him, they would invite him to come in. Ignorance and unacquaintedness with Christ are a strong bar to keep him out.

2. They cannot come to the door, the house is so filled with stuff. The woful world blocks up the way to the door, Luke xiv. 16,—20. This and the other worldly advantage calls them to look to it, that they may lose nothing. The pleasures of the world like syren songs arrest them. The cares of the world like a thicket entangle them; they cannot get forward. This weary earth interposes between them and the sun of righteousness; so his beams cannot reach them.

The clay-idol bewitches them, so as they have neither heart nor hand to open the door.

3. Their hands are so full within and they have so many crying about them that they cannot come to the door. They have so many hungry lusts to feed, still crying give, give, that either they cannot hear Christ knocking, or if they do, their lusts so hang about them, that they hold them fast. "They have loved strangers and after them they will go." Love to their lusts leaves them no room for their Lord. They love their disease, they value not the Physician. And so while they feed their lusts, they starve their souls.

4. They are afraid the house will be spoiled so they dare not open the door. It was an old engine of hell against the gospel. They cried, these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. Sinners entertain Christ's message as Nabal did David's, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. Shall I give up with the ways of sin, which are so profitable and pleasant? Shall I be bound up to the strictness of a holy life, that I shall have no more liberty to do as I please? Therefore to keep what they have, they will not open to Christ.

5. The strong man keeps the house, and will not suffer them to go to the door. "They are in the snare of the devil, and taken captive by him at his will." While Christ speaks at the one ear, Satan speaks at the other; and he uses every possible mean to keep them from opening to Christ. Sometimes he will tell them it is too soon, and sometimes that it is too late to do it. If they begin to entertain thoughts of opening, he will exert himself and vex them with temptations, so as not having a spirit of resolution for Christ, they are obliged to give it over.

6. They think he is already received. As one is sometimes kept at the door upon this mistake, so Christ is shut out of the hearts of many by reason of delusion and self conceit. "They think themselves rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing." They are beyond opening to Christ, for they think that they have opened already. A dangerous case, which should put all of us to an impartial trial of ourselves, and to be doing in opening to Christ, as if nothing had ever yet been done.

Lastly, They are in bed and they cannot rise, Song v. 3. A soft sleep in the bed of sloth, keeps Christ long at the door with many. They have lost the taste and relish of spiritual things; they have fallen out of use of wrestling with God. They have put their hands in their bosom, and it grieveth them to bring them to their mouth.

II. I shall bring forward some motives to urge you to open. May they be effectual.

1. Consider who keeps the house, while Christ is kept at the door, "While a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." Who is this but Satan, God's enemy, and the usurper of his throne. And as is the master, so is the furniture of the house. It is replenished from hell with divers lusts, each of them as Egyptian taskmasters filling the sinners' hands with works of darkness, and never saying it is enough. And such will be the reward, shame and everlasting sorrow. That heart that should be a temple for God the Saviour, is a workhouse for Satan. Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

2. Consider who it is that asks admission. A King, even the King of glory. Let the dignity of the person command your reverence and readiness to open; who would shut his door on a crowned head? Behold the crowned King of Zion demanding entrance into your souls. If you ask, who is this King of glory? He is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Therefore resistance is in vain. It will but ruin the person who makes it. For he is a mighty King against whom there is no rising up. Behold the end his enemies will make. "These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." For he will be the last on the field, and will see all his enemies turn their backs, with the devil that deceived them, and led them on to oppose him.

He is the Lord mighty in battle, therefore you need not say, you cannot open. Give him but your consent, do but cordially bid him welcome, and he will see to the work himself. "But when a stronger than the strong man shall come upon him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusteth, and divideth his spoils." He can make the iron gates open of their own accord. A touch of his hand upon the lock will make it give way. Your strongest lusts he can soon subdue and make them as weak as water, if you be but willing.

3. Consider how unworthy the house is of him. When Solomon had built a glorious temple for him, he said in holy admiration: "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?" How much more may we say so of our hearts, that naturally are a cage of unclean birds, a habitation of devils. O wonderful, that ever he should vouchsafe to knock at these doors, and to dwell in such a lodging. Dreadfully heinous then must be the sin of refusing him access.

4. Consider that yet he will come in, if you will open to him. Neither the majesty of the King of glory, nor the meanness of the

place which the sinner has to lodge him in, will keep them asunder, but only sinners refusing him access. He that has the upper house of heaven for his throne, will take the humble heart for his lower house. "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." And if he come in, he will bring a troop of blessings with him, pardon, peace, grace and a title to glory. "He will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly."

5. This offer stood the King of glory dear. There is no such knocking at the door of the heart of fallen angels; because "Jesus took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." And neither would you have had this offer, unless the Son of God had taken upon him man's nature, and satisfied justice, so that now with the good will of justice, mercy may be extended to the rebels. He purchased his kingdom with his blood, and now he is demanding access to it. For this is the voice of the King of glory returning from the battle which he has fought for sinners; calling them to open the gates to let in the conqueror triumphantly. May we not then say, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."

6. Remember the day will come, that you, to whom he now calls to open to him, will call to him to open to you. He *has the keys of hell and death*: And whom he sends there, none can keep back, and whom he keeps back, none can set forward. For he opens and none can shut, and he shuts and none can open. He carries the keys of heaven's gates, and gives answers to those that knock at the door. And how can you expect that he will admit you into heaven, if you will not now receive him into your hearts. "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 to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

7. You have a very solemn call at this time. Christ is opening his heart to you now by his word, to bid you welcome; next day we have the prospect of his opening it to you in the sacrament. This is a special time, in which the ark of gospel ordinances comes to your gates. Beware of slighting the King of glory in such a solemnity. It is the solemnity of his espousals and his coronation too, the time in which some will in a special manner be espoused to him

and put the crown on his head. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." But a time of blessing to some proves a time of a withering curse to others. "For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

8. Consider the offer will not last always. Our Lord stands and knocks, Rev. iii. 20. He does not sit down at the door but stands, which is a way going posture. He has nothing to do, but turn his back and be gone. And indeed patience when still abused, turns to fury at length. You have had many knocks, if you sit this, the next may knock your souls out of your bodies, and where are you then.

Lastly, There is no other way to be saved, but by opening to Christ. Thus it shall be well with you, but otherwise you sin against the remedy of Christ to your eternal ruin.

Say not it is too soon. Ah! Is it too soon to have the soul plucked as a brand out of the burning? Is there not a danger of delaying? The longer you be in coming unto Christ, the harder work will it be. Nay, who knows but the Lord may cease knocking at thy heart, and that by delaying thou mayst outlive thy day of grace. There were several with us last sacrament, who are now gone.

Say not it is too long to be done now. No, thou shalt yet be welcome, if thou be willing. There is no case so far gone as to be hopeless, that is put into Christ's hand. "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he had been dead four days. Jesus said unto her, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" The stone that has lain long before the builder, and has been often rejected while others about it were taken up, may come at length to get a place in the building. *For yet there is room.* Our Lord often comes back, and washes them that were formerly overlooked. "For I will cleanse, says he, their blood, that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

But Oh! will ever the Lord come into such a heart as mine? Answer, our Lord makes no exceptions. "If any man, says he, will open the door, I will come in to him." This may encourage thee. Our Lord never finds any heart good, but makes it good. He comes in as a Physician, and therefore thy sickness will not drive him away. The more desperate the disease is, the greater is the glory of his grace. Christ can make a stepping stone of thy sinfulness and misery, by which to ascend to his throne.

Let me conclude with giving some advices to those that would open to, and receive him at his table.

1. Search the house. Set about the duty of self-examination. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Examine yourselves as to your state, frame, graces, sins, wants, resolutions and the like.

2. Labour to purge the house of the idols of jealousy. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Renew your repentance. See what have been the great hinderances betwixt Christ and you, and take them out of the way.

3. Be sure to keep in the fire, the holy fire of grace. Quench not the Spirit. Cherish every good motion. And if you have got any thing strive to keep it.

4. Put the key of your hearts in the Lord's hand. Commit your unruly spirits to him, in the way of believing, lest Satan catch the key and the King be shut out.

5. Have on your best clothes, the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness applied by faith. Put off also the old man which is corrupt, and put on the new man, with all the ornaments of the hidden man of the heart.

6. See you be at home. Let not your hearts be a seeking, wandering through the ends of the earth. But be deeply concerned about your own case.

Finally, See you be not in your beds, when he comes to the door, "And you say I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" But shake off security. Let your loins be girt and your lamp burning, that you may be ready to open to him when he comes. Amen.