

“For wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” It is the most profitable exercise: “for godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Go to Christ for it, for the residue of the Spirit is with him. He hath the seven Spirits of God for dead souls. Amen.

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*Ettrick, August 29, 1714.*

[Sabbath after the Sacrament.]

S E R M O N X I.

P S A L M xlv. 10,

*Hearken O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.*

THIS Psalm is a marriage song. It celebrates the marriage of king Jesus, with the daughter of Zion, the church of believers; and has no respect to Solomon’s marriage with Pharaoh’s daughter, as many have thought. For the royal Bridegroom is here represented as a mighty warrior, vers. 3, 4, 5; whereas Solomon was no ways such, but eminently a man of peace. Besides, how can what is said, ver. 6, any way agree to Solomon. The apostle expressly determines that it is said to Christ, Heb. i. 8. The first part of the psalm is directed to Christ. The second part, which begins with the text, is directed to his spouse. The scope of these words is not to solicit the bride’s consent. She is supposed to be gained already, and espoused to king Jesus, vers. 9, 13. But the design of the text is to shew Christ’s espoused bride, how she may be most acceptable, and best please her husband, ver. 11. If it be asked, Who is the speaker? Not to insist upon the various conjectures about it, I think the same person who saith to the Son, ver. 6, “Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever,” in the text speaks to the spouse; that is, God the Father, Heb. i. 8, compared with ver. 5.

These words then, are the Father’s advice to the newly espoused bride, how she may please her husband, his Son. And in them is to be considered,

1. The appellation given to the soul espoused to Christ: *Daughter*. Here is the name which believers receive. The person that natu-

rally was a child of the devil, on the espousals with the Son of God, becomes a child of God. Christ's Father accounts the soul espoused to his Son, his daughter. Though he brings home a spouse out of an ill house, and has nothing with her, yet his Father welcomes her into his family, and gives her no worse word than daughter.

2. The advice. Many consider the last clause only as the advice; and the first only as a preface to it, to stir up the spouse to take the advice. But the pointing in the Hebrew, plainly shews there are two purposes in this verse, and the connecting of them with it, also confirms it, which otherwise would be redundant. So there are two parts of this advice; or two advices here to the spouse, how she is to please her husband.

1. She must be very obsequious to her husband, and in all things to follow him as his own shadow. This is proposed in these words, *hearken* and *consider*. Hebrew, *hear* and *look*; namely, to thy husband. Let thine ear and eye be upon him, to hear and receive his orders, that you may obey them. Thus God said to Abraham, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." You must look to him to observe his motions and countenance, that you may suit yourself to him in all things. This is what a dutiful wife owes to her husband. While one is a single woman, she is mistress of herself, but when once espoused to her husband, she is no more so. "Her desire must be to her husband, and he shall rule over her." Her husband's will must be hers. Her ear must be to him, and her eye upon him, that she may please him well in all things lawful, and suit herself to his desires. So while you were not espoused to Christ, you took your own will; but it is not your duty to determine for yourself, but to hear and obey what he determines you to do. Your eye was upon your own inclinations to gratify them, but now it must be upon your husband to suit yourself to his desires. "Behold," says the psalmist, "as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

The pointing of the words is emphatical. "Hear O daughter," are two words joined in one, which, according to the propriety of the language, denotes acceleration from a vehemency of affection; so they point out the vehement love of Christ's Father to his Son's spouse—his earnestness that she may please her husband—and the readiness of that obedience which she owes to him.

Though hearing and looking are two different acts, yet they are here joined together; denoting that they do both together, hear him, and look to him at once.

This is amplified by the manner in which she should hear him; inclining her ear, as people do that do not hear well, or that would be sure to hear and understand well what is spoken. So it notes the utmost diligence in Christ's spouse, to understand her Lord's mind, and comply with it.

2. She must renounce and leave all others for her husband. This also according to the law of marriage in the text. "Forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house." She must not so much as entertain a secret desire after her Father's house. The more she minds them, the less pleasing will she be. More of this afterwards.

DOCTRINE 1. It is the privilege of the soul espoused to Christ, to be a child of the house of heaven, or Christ's spouse is the Father's daughter. This is the believer's privilege, and this is the way by which it is attained. "To them that believe on him, Jesus gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name." I shall here only inquire a little what they have by it.

1. That they may call God Father, and that is of more value than a thousand worlds. The most profane wretch may call him Lord, the hypocrite may call him Master; but Father is a kindly name, which only believers may call him. They may at all times cry unto him, "Abba, Father." Abba is the same, read it backward or forward; and in all the changes of dispensation, God is still the espoused soul's Father. Hypocrites will call him so, but God disowns the relation, and says to them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the deeds of your father you will do." But he encourages his people to do it, saying, "Wilt thou not from this time, cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

2. Access to God. They come much nearer to him than others. They may come forward, when others must stand back. "In Christ they have boldness, and access to God with confidence, by the faith of him." God allows them a holy boldness and confidence with him as children, to pour their complaints in his bosom, to tell him all their wants; and never did a father take so much delight in the talking of his children to him, as God doth in hearing his people.

3. Special immunities and freedom. Kings' children have great immunities. They are free of tribute. But God's children have the greatest. They are free from the law as a covenant of works, which is a yoke wreathed about the necks of all others. Free from the curse, which lies hard and fast on all others. Free from all condemnation, thundered out against others every day. Nay, from the hurt of every thing. "Nothing," says their husband, "shall by any means hurt you." Death itself, that kills others, shall not hurt them, Rom. viii. 35—39.

4. Pity, provision, and protection. The severe avenger of sin pities their infirmities, as a father pitieth his children. He that fights against the wicked as an enemy, will protect them. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge." Come what will, they shall be provided for. Though the Lord make not provision for their lusts, he will see to provide for their necessities. Matth. vi. 30—32.

5. Seasonable correction. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." This is a benefit of the covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 30—32. Nothing more true in the way of privilege, than that some may better steal a horse, than others look over the dyke. Some smart more severally for a lustful look, than others for taking their full swing that way; some, more for deadness in prayer, than others for neglecting it altogether. What is the reason? A small fault in a child will be checked, when a greater in another will be overlooked.

6. Perseverence. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." The term day is coming, when God and such as are not espoused shall part, but they that are, never. If a child wander from his father's house, he must be sought, and brought back again. A servant of the house, may be turned out of doors, as Hagar was; nay, a son of God by nature, may be turned off, as Adam and the fallen angels were; but they that are God's children, by being espoused to his Son, can never, Psalm lxxxix. 30—34.

*Lastly*, They have a portion according to their Father's quality. "They are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." So all is theirs. Grace is theirs, glory is theirs. Their portion will tell out through all eternity. Their Father gives them of his moveables as he sees meet, and these may be removed, but their portion is not of these; they shall receive a kingdom which cannot be moved.

USE.—EXHORTATION 1. To such as are not espoused to Christ. Let this move you to come into this match, that hitherto have not given yourselves away to Christ in the marriage covenant. While you are so, you are children of the house of hell. Your father the devil has hindered you from this match, having a mind to bestow you upon lusts, which you like better than the Lord. But remember I tell you, if any break not off this match in time, it shall be consummated, so as you and your sins shall never part through the ages of eternity. Sin comes to its perfection in hell, as well as grace in heaven.

2. You that are espoused to Christ, believe that you are children of the house of heaven; believe your privilege, that you may have the free use of it. If the people of God could follow it with

application, it would be a powerful mean of holiness. They would abhor sin as below their dignity; they would hate it as offensive to their Father; they would despise the world as too mean a thing for one so highly advanced. The unbelief and doubts of Christ's spouse, are no friends to her sanctification. I hope some of you have been in good earnest engaging with Christ in the marriage covenant; now I would have you to believe that your husband's Father calls you daughter, and looks upon you as a child of his house.

**OBJECTION.** How will I ever get it believed? **ANSWER.** If you cast not your eye on free grace, and expect not something from God that is not after the manner of men, you will never get it believed. But I will offer you some helps.

1. Have you accepted of Christ, as he offered himself in the marriage covenant, in all his offices. Were your hearts joined to Christ as well as your hands; that is, that your souls within you, did take him for your lord and husband, for all and instead of all, without any known reserve; after you had considered his holiness as well as his mercy, his cross as well as his crown; then I declare you espoused to Christ; John i. 12; Psal. lxxiii. 25; and therefore children of the house of heaven, according to the text.

2. Are you striving to be like the house of heaven. One newly married and brought home out of her father's house to her Husband's Father's house, will be labouring to suit herself to the house into which she is come, and to lay aside the manners of the house from which she came; especially if the two houses are enemies to one another, as in this case, that she may please her husband and his Father. If it be not so with you, though you be communicants, I will not bid you believe that you are children. But if it be so, why do you not believe it; 1 John iii. 1—3. Sin and self, are the things in which the houses differ.

3. Is the interest of the house of heaven your interest, have you joined interest with that house? While the damsel remains at home, she joins interest with her Father's house; but as soon as she is clothed with a husband, her interest is divided from that of her father's house, and she joins interest with that of her husband's, for now she is of that house. And if you be children of the house by espousals with the Son, though you never had any kindly concern for the interest of Christ before, you will have it now: You will have a kindly concern for the honour of the house, the ordinances, and laws and manners of the house, the children of the house, and all that you know belongs to it. Only let me tell you all that concern will centre in holiness and the power of godliness, which is the

main interest that house is carrying on in the world. Your zeal for pure ordinances, discipline, and government of the church, will be because of their tendency to holiness. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.

DOCTRINE 2. It is the duty of the espoused to Christ, carefully to hear his will, and observe his motions, so as they may suit themselves to his pleasure in all things. This I take to be the meaning of this first clause. For explaining this doctrine, I shall,

I. Show what is imported in it.

II. What it is for Christ's spouse to hear his will.

III. How she is to eye him and observe his motions, so as she may suit herself to his pleasure.

IV. Give reasons of the doctrine. We are then,

I. To show what is imported in it. It imports,

1. That Christ's spouse is not left to walk at random. She is to notice every step of her carriage. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." The careless walking at all adventures, is walking contrary to the Lord, and is opposed to hearkening; Lev. xxvi. 21. The espoused are not under the law as a covenant of works, but they are not lawless, but under the law to Christ. The iron yoke of the first covenant is off, but the soft yoke of the second covenant is on them.

2. That those that are espoused to Christ, must renounce their own will, and not seek to please themselves. "If any man," saith Jesus "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Our corrupt self will seek this, and that, to please itself, as it was wont to get in our Christless condition; but we must deny its cravings now, forasmuch as by our espousals with Christ, we have put our desires into the hand of another, to grant them or not, as he thinks fit, according to the law. Gen. iii. 16. In our espousals we made this renunciation of our own will, let us not draw back when it comes to the point of practice, lest we shew we are but mocking, not in earnest.

3. That our great aim in all things, must be to please our Lord and husband, this is the law of marriage. "She that is married, careth for the things of the world, that she may please her husband." This is the law of Christ to his spouse, "That we walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Displease whom we will, we must please him. Be they the greatest on earth, and be the danger of displeasing them ever so great, we must not run the risk of our Lord's displeasure for them all; even as a dutiful wife will never

lay the pleasing of her husband and his servants in a balance. So Daniel and his fellows, would not please the king, by worshipping the golden image which he set up.

4. That we must trample upon our own inclinations when contrary to his, and suit ourselves to his will, as Abraham did with respect to offering up his son. Is our inclination to the world? it is not his will, therefore we must subdue this carnal inclination. Is it our desire to be rich and honourable? perhaps this is not his will, but that we should be poor and under a cloud: we must suit ourselves to his pleasure, and "learn in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content."

5. That when Christ's will and pleasure and our own go together, our main end must not be to please ourselves, but to please him. "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God." Otherwise, we do not hearken to our husband, but to ourselves; as those who will please their husband in those things in which they please themselves, and which they would do, whether they pleased their husband or not. Do we profess to hear and obey him? Let us then do these things, that we may give contentment to the heart of our Lord. Do we eat and drink? Let it be because Christ says, "thou shalt not kill." Do we marry? Let it be because he says, "do not commit adultery." Do we work? Let it be because he says, "do not steal."

6. That we must not think to please him with our own devices. Christ's spouse hearkens and considers what her Lord says, that she may do it. The whore of Rome speaks and commands for pleasing Christ, what she never heard from himself, and thereby declares herself as an imperious whorish woman. So does the Church of England, contrary to the duty of the spouse of Christ; in that they suit themselves to their own pleasure, not to Christ's. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." So many take up opinions and practices which they never learned from Christ; and while they think to please him with them, they incur his displeasure, for thinking to please him with the productions of their own fancy.

*Lastly*, That our ear must be to himself, our eye on him, that we may know his will to do it. Psal. cxxiii. 2, quoted above. This implies these things, that we must be content to know sin and duty. Many sit with much ease under the covert of ignorance. What the ear hears not, the heart receives not. By their conduct, they say unto God, "depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They entertain their lusts, as some did intercommuned persons in time of persecution; they are content they

be in the house, but they do not desire to know it. That not hearkening, they think they have not to obey. Again, we must learn what is sin and what is duty from himself. The apostle tells "wives, that if they would know any thing, let them ask their husbands at home." Our husband is in heaven, we on earth, yet we may learn of him. His word is in our hands. His spirit is into our hearts, if we be espoused to him. We want not the holy oracle to consult, if willing to learn. Farther, we must apply ourselves diligently, to learn of him our duty. We must incline our ear. We are so dull and slow at taking up our duty, there is so much din about us by our unruly hearts, while our Lord puts our lesson into our hands, that if we do not take very great care, we may mistake. Finally, we must hearken with a readiness to obey, as the servant hears his orders to do them, and a dutiful wife hears her husband's pleasure to suit herself to it. Hearing that is not for obeying, our Lord regardeth not.

USE.—Let us exhort you to hear and observe Christ's motions, so as to suit yourselves to your husband's pleasure.

MOTIVE 1. This would be a noble evidence that indeed you are espoused to Christ. Would you not fain know, that you were espoused to Christ for ever, at the communion last sabbath? Would not your hearts leap for joy, to know that Christ and you have met, never to part. This will evidence it. "For," saith Jesus, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

2. For what end did you take the royal bridegroom by the hand? You heard the laws of the espousals, that you were to renounce your wills particularly, and take him wholly, only, and for ever. Will you stand to it, or will you draw back?

3. Which of the two, the bridegroom or his spouse, is most fit to be the guide in the married state? Did you not acknowledge you were not fit to guide yourselves through this wilderness, and therefore gave up yourselves to him as a prophet; not able to manage and protect yourselves, and therefore gave up yourselves to him as a king and husband, to rule and defend you? Are you wiser or abler now? Do you already repent your choices?

*Lastly,* Thus you would have a comfortable state till the great day of the marriage. You shall be your husband's delight, Psal. xlv. 11; but if not, you discover your hypocrisy, or at best you will grieve his spirit, and make your own condition uncomfortable.

II. We proceed to shew, what it is for Christ's spouse to hear his will. Besides what hath been already said, you must consider for this, how Christ speaks to his spouse, signifying his will.

1. By his works. All the works of God, are speaking works. He speaks by the works of creation, these silent preachers of his will, Psal. xix. 2—4. See how the Psalmist heard and answered this voice of his: "When I consider," said he, "the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The very heathens are rendered inexcusable, by this voice of the Lord, how much more Christ's spouse, if she hear it not. The work of redemption is a speaking work: and what is the language of it? "It is we are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Nay, all the ten commandments come to Christ's spouse in the language of the Redeemer's blood: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. He speaks to his spouse by the works of providence. There is not a mercy but it hath a voice, nor a rod thou meetest with, but it speaks. "Hear then, O daughter, the rod, and who hath appointed it.

2. By our own consciences. That is the bosom preacher, our Lord's deputy-governor, whom he hath placed in every man's breast; and every deaf ear turned to it speaking from the word, is a refusing of him that speaketh from heaven. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

3. He speaks to us by the word. He speaks to us in the word read. The Bible is the book of instructions, which Christ puts into the hands of the espoused, to shew them how they are to please him, till the marriage of the Lamb. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." Therefore, they who intend to perform their vows of espousals, will be conversant with the Bible. He speaks also by the word preached. "He that heareth you," said Jesus of his disciples, "heareth me." Taking Christ, you took him for a prophet, and by the minister of the word, he exerciseth the office. So they that wish to know how to please Christ, will wait on the ordinances for that end.

4. By his Spirit, whereby we have the mind of Christ. "The Comforter," saith Jesus, "which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, she shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And your not hearing him, thus grieves the Spirit, and provokes him to depart. Now our duty with respect to these consists in these two:

1. We must discern Christ's voice in one and all of these, saying with the spouse, "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh." Samuel heard the voice of God, but thought it had been Eli's. So alas! when we hear our duty, oftentimes we do not take up God as the party speaking to us, hence we are nothing bettered.

2. We must comply with his voice. "This," saith God, "is my beloved Son, hear ye him." To hear and not obey, is but to expose yourselves to double stripes. He is our Lord and king, and must have our obedience to his will which, in the day of espousals, we take for our law. This is the hearing which the text requires. And so we must hear him only whoever speak. Satan, the world, and our lusts, will each of them have their word, and their will is always contrary to Christ's will. But whatever you did before, being now espoused to Christ, you are to hear him only, giving a deaf ear to all other.

Again, We must hear him without disputing. Christ's subjects are not to dispute his will, but to obey. Any intimation of his will, is sufficient to determine us to a compliance. "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me." So did Abraham obey; at the call of God he "went out, not knowing whither he went." They to whom Christ's bare will and command, is not a sufficient reason for compliance, give no evidence of their being espoused to him. Finally, we must hear and obey, because it is his will. To do his will, but not because it is his will, is not near him; for Christ's will must be the reason, as well as the rule of our obedience. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. We are now,

III. To shew how Christ's spouse is to eye him and observe his motions, so as she may suit herself to his pleasure.

1. We must eye him as our Lord and Master, whose will must be our law. "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters; and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us." "Have we given our ears to be bored, that we might be his servants for ever, then let us look to him as our master, and never more say in word or deed, who is Lord over us. Let us never refuse any work which he puts into our hand, whether doing work or suffering work.

2. Eye him as our teacher. Christians are Christ's disciples. Scholars among the Jews, sat at the feet of their masters, as Paul at the feet of Gamaliel; so must we sit at our Lord's feet meekly, and humbly to learn of him. It is little we know of God or our duty, and for that end, we profess to have taken Christ for our

teacher. We must then learn of him what we are to do, and what to forbear.

3. Eye him as our guide and leader. We are in a wilderness, where we are apt to mistake our way. We will never get our way to heaven without a guide. God hath given Christ for that purpose, even a leader and commander to the people, and we have been professing to receive him as such; let us then keep our eye on our leader, to follow him whithersoever he goes. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

4. Eye him as our last and chief end, to whose honour we may direct the whole course of our life. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Self must no more be the mark we aim at, but God must have the room of self, endeavouring to please him in all things. Thus the apostle made Christ the end of his life. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

5. Eye him as our witness in all things. Wherever we are, he is present with us. Let us walk as under the view of his pure eyes. He sees what is within us, as well as without us. Let us take heed to our spirits, as under the inspection of the heart-searching God.

6. Eye him as our Judge, for to him we must give an account. Did the thief see the eye of the judge upon him, while his eyes go out after his covetousness, it would oblige him to hold up his hands.

*Lastly*, Eye him as our husband. That is a name of love and authority, which as it binds us to obedience, so it should kindly draw us to it. And here should we observe what pleaseth, and what displeaseth him, that we may carefully follow the one, and avoid the other. This we may know both by the word and by experience. An observant Christian might have a well confirmed rule hereby, how to walk; and this should be the glass by which Christ's spouse should dress herself, taking up what pleaseth, and laying aside what displeaseth her husband.

We should also diligently observe his countenance towards us, whether it be with us, or turned from us; that if with us, we may be careful to keep it; if turned from us, that we may recover it. Two things in which the spouse of Christ often shews her neglect of her husband.

We should also observe his dispensations, and way of his dealing with us. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Some courses deprive us of the communications of his love and Spirit. Some others make to us a prosperous time while we follow them. Let us

eye these, to follow the one and avoid the other. It now remains,  
IV. To give reasons of the doctrine.

1. Why these that are espoused to Christ should suit themselves to his pleasure :

1. Because we owe this to him as our Lord and Husband, by virtue of our marriage covenant, whereby we have taken him as our Lord, our head ; and by virtue of the relation of which we claim the privileges, we must also comply with the duties. "For a son honoureth his father, and a servant his master." If we have any respect then, to our own voluntary covenant, the ordinance of God, and the duty of that honourable relation, we should suit ourselves to his pleasure. This God has made the due of every husband from his relative, and shall it not be given to the great Lord and Husband of our souls. "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands, in every thing."

2. Because he is our Lord God to whom we owe absolute unlimited obedience. "For he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Our Maker is our husband, and therefore double ties are upon us to suit ourselves to his pleasure. Shall not the Creator's will be the creature's law ? He that made us, have dominion over us ? What a strange matter is it that the potsherd should rise up against the potter ; the will of man to offer to take place of the will of God.

3. Because without controversy he is fittest to be head. In other cases, the husband is not always fitted to be head in respect of wisdom ; yet even in such a case, "the woman ought not to usurp authority over the man." How much more then ought we to be subject to this husband, who is light while we are darkness, who is the wisdom of the Father, and undoubtedly knows better what is good for us, than we ourselves do.

4. This is the very end for which we are espoused to Christ. "I have espoused you," says Paul, to believers, "to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Man's will by Adam's fall, fell to be at variance with the will of God ; whereas before, it lay straight with it. To recover man to this rectitude, he is united to Jesus Christ, as to a husband. And therefore, whensoever the marriage of the Lamb is consummated, the end shall be fully obtained. There shall never more be the least jarring betwixt the will of God and the saints.

2. Why we should hear him and observe his motions to that end, that we may suit ourselves to his pleasure.

1. Because we are naturally in the dark as to what is his pleasure. Unknown as it is, our hearts are against it, our will is opposite to his, and we cannot learn it but from himself. "No man

hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Never was a wild ass more untractable than we are, much need then to learn.

2. Because we will never suit ourselves to his pleasure, if we do not humbly keep our ears and eyes on him; for our will and pleasure are the contrary way: so that, in scripture phrase, for a man to do what seems good in his own eyes, is the same as to do what is hateful in the eyes of the Lord.

3. Because we are in a state of trial, in which we must lay our account to have ill advice from the devil and the world, and our ears will be forced to hear many things wrong. So that there is a necessity to stop our ears to all others, and to keep them open to him alone.

3. Why ought we to hear so carefully, inclining the ear?

1. Because even Christ's spouse is dull of hearing. Jesus said, even to his disciples, "O fools! and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Our ears open easily to Satan's temptations, but when Christ speaks, our ears are heavy. "God speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

2. Because oftentimes we are at a distance from him when he is speaking to us. Yea, a locked door between him and us; Song v.

2. Yea, a partition wall to interrupt the communication; Song ii.

9. There is also much noise about us, occasioned by Satan, the world, and our evil hearts, while Christ speaks so that we cannot hear him.

USE. Of Exhortation.—O! then, whosoever pretends to be espoused to Christ, suit yourselves to his pleasure in all things, and carefully hear and observe his motions for that end. Let his will be your will. Suit yourselves to the will of his commandments, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" To the will of his providence. Do it cheerfully, and without grudging.

MOTIVE 1. Consider what he did for us, suiting himself to our case. What Zipporah said to Moses, he may say to his spouse: A bloody spouse hast thou been to me. If cords of love will bind us to our duty, in this we need not want them. He left the bosom of his Father, the hallelujahs of angels, took upon him our nature, and died for us; and shall we not behave dutifully to him, who did all this for us. Consider Christ pleased not himself, that he might save us? His Father put a cup of unmingled wrath into his hand, and bade him drink it, otherwise his designed spouse should drink it for ever. His holy human nature shivered at it, saying, "O Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but he suited himself to his Father's will, for our sake. Besides, has he not

bought the satisfaction of our dutifulness to him, at a dear enough rate. We had never stood espoused to him, had he not by his death, removed the impediments which lay in the way of it. And on every part of the spouse's duty to him, may be written, "The price of blood!"

2. The angels in heaven, suit themselves to his pleasure, in all things. His will is done in heaven. They run at his command. They stand and wait his orders, and the least piece of service put in their hand, they refuse not. They are more excellent creatures than we; and shall we not be ashamed to be refractory to him, whom all the angels obey. He is their head indeed, as well as ours, but he is not their husband, that is the peculiar privilege of the saints.

3. His pleasure is that which is best for us. He bids us do nothing but what is for our good; yea, for our best. That which seems heaviest in his pleasure concerning us, is really for our advantage. "He even chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." He hath so linked together our duty and interest, that it is impossible to separate them. We cannot consult our own happiness, but by suiting ourselves to his pleasure. We cannot be miserable, but by slighting his directions. Consider we need but our own will to ruin us. It is a fearful thing for a man to be given up to himself, Hosea iv. 17. Let us carve for ourselves, and certainly we will be like the child that cuts his own fingers. O! what a work do we make to get our own will, and yet a more fearful plague we cannot meet with out of hell. A man left to himself, will be his own ruin. Whereas on the contrary, we need but suit ourselves to his pleasure, and we are happy. We have then a sure hold of our true interest. Whatever is his will concerning his spouse, is really best for her. For why, is it the product of infinite wisdom mixed with infinite love. Could we but believe this, how easy would it be. If it be his pleasure thou be poor and afflicted, it is best.

4. It will be a great satisfaction to thy Lord and husband, if thou suit thyself to his pleasure; and would you not desire to give contentment to the heart of Christ, "that he may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied?" Would you be lovely in his eyes, and have communion with him, this is the way to attain it, "for so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." O! the many sweet hours of fellowship with heaven, the ravishing sweetness, the blessed communications of the love of the Lord, of which Christ's spouse robs herself, by neglecting her husband.

5. Your neglect and refractoriness, will be grieving to his spirit. The wicked world despise his will, and will have their own, if it should ruin them. But shall he be grieved also with your wilful-

ness? The nearer the relation is, in which you stand to him, the more piercing is your neglect of him. Psal. lv. 12. And the grieving of his Spirit will, sooner or later, bring a fearful confusion to your case.

9. There is a necessity for suiting yourselves to his pleasure. The rejecting of his commandments doth but lay up matter for repentance for you, and it will be bitterness in the end, go as it will, here or hereafter. Your struggle with the will of his providence is a vain struggle, "for his counsel shall stand," and what he will have crooked, thou shalt not make straight. It makes it more heavy than it would be. For fight against God who will, he will always be the conqueror.

7. The honour of your Lord and husband requires it, so shall you be a crown to him, but otherwise a dishonour to him. Oh! how is the name of God blasphemed by the undutiful conduct of those espoused to Christ.

8. While you suit not yourself to his will, you suit yourself to the will of his enemies. There is no midst. And what can you expect, but the fire of his jealousy to burn against you.

ADVICE. Put that will of yours into the Lord's hand, that he may mould it into a conformity to his own. And believe that he will do it, and in the faith of the promise use the means. Endeavour to get the firm faith of this, that what is his will is best for you, and apply that to particulars and your own spirit.

ADVICE 1. Put that will of yours in the Lord's own hand, that he may mould it into a conformity to his own. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." The will of man is a refractory piece, which we can no more master of ourselves, than a child can master a giant. There is no forcing of it, and we cannot bow it of ourselves. Lay it then before the Lord often, with that, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned: for thou art the Lord my God." He is a husband that can cure the wilfulness of his spouse, can give her heart a set that it shall be according to his own. He is the only physician for the stone of the heart; and though you cannot break it, put it in his hand that he may do it. You may tell him where you are pained, as the child cried to his mother, my head, you may cry to him, my heart. You may tell him it is your burden, and you would fain be freed of it, but you cannot. You may lay it over on him, that he may do that for you, which you cannot do for yourselves.

ADVICE 2. Believe, in order to the getting of your will suited to your Lord's will. Would you have this mountain removed, it must

be done in the way of believing. There are three things I would have you to believe, 1. That you are not fit to be your own choosers. All the saints, in one voice, have given this verdict of themselves. "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved." God from heaven has witnessed it, in his giving Christ to be a leader, a head and husband to them; thereby not trusting them, but him, with bringing the children to glory. Christ himself has put this lesson into our hands teaching us to deny ourselves, and to be jealous of ourselves. The event has proved it often, in that people getting their own will, has been their ruin. Psalm lxxviii. 29; and the best of the saints getting the reins in their own hand, have set all on fire.

Again, Believe that whatever is the Lord's will is always best for you. All our wilfulness proceeds on a mistake. We think sinful liberty best for us, ease, plenty, and the like. God knows it is otherwise, and therefore he will have us hear him for our good. To help you to believe this,

1. Consider God's will is the product of infinite wisdom, and may we not trust that infinite wisdom that contrived the world with the guiding of it? Will we hold up our taper to the sun shining in its brightness, or shall our weakness pretend to tell him what is best for his creatures? Why do we not then sink down into our seats and say, good is the will of the Lord, and let him do what seemeth him good.

2. Christ loves his spouse more dearly, and cares more for their good than they do themselves, and so whatever is his will for them is best for them. He loved them so as to lay down his life for them, and may not that evidence his will to be best for them. "As the Father," saith he, "hath loved me, so have I loved you." Why doth the Father hedge up his unruly child, why does he refuse him his will, but because he loves him?

3. By virtue of the covenant of grace, God's glory and his people's good are both in one bottom, and cannot be separated. Is his will then always most for his own glory, consequently it is most for his people's good.

4. His will is ever right; it is seldom but our will is wrong, and never right when opposite to his, Dent. xxxii. 4. There is no flaw in the way and will of God; and whatever hardships those espoused to Christ, may now seem to see in it, when they come to the other world, they will make their recantation, and say, he has done all things well.

*Lastly,* Consider your experience. Have you not seen many times, how God has done you good against your wills, good which you would never have got, had he given you your will.

Moreover, consider that God will make out his promise of suiting your will to his, who have put it into his hands, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. How shall we get the good of the promises, but by believing them. Have you given up your will to him, to be rectified by him, believe that he will do it, and it shall be done.

ADVICE 3. In the faith of the promise, use the means. Stretch out the withered hand to Christ. Labour to drag your hearts to a compliance with his will in all things. "For to him that hath shall be given." Study also to be heavenly, and much in converse with your husband. While the heart grows cold, it grows stiff also; but warmed with love, it becomes pliable. Consider also the relations in which he stands to you, as a Father, Husband, your King, and your God. Finally, consider the vows of God are upon you, for that effect.

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[Same subject continued.]

## SERMON XII.

PSALM xlv. 10,

*Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*

THIS is the second advice given to the spouse of Christ, in order to the pleasing of her husband, namely, that for him, she renounce all that formerly was dearer to her than he was. The advice is delivered in figurative terms, and in it there is a plain allusion to that law of marriage, Gen. ii. 24, by which married persons are obliged to prefer their relatives to their natural parents, in point of affection and interest. When a woman is single, and at home in her father's house, her affection runs strongest to her father's family. Her interest is joined with theirs, and she conforms herself to them. But being married, her husband and his family takes the place with her; her affection must run strongest towards her husband and his family.

The advice, I think, is equivalent to that, "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts." Or that, "as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance." As if he had said, seeing ye are now espoused to Christ,

bring not your old manners and ways into your new state, but forsake and forget them, and behave no more as your father's daughter, but as Christ's spouse. In the words there is,

1. The natural relations of Christ's spouse pointed at, in contradistinction to those of her husband. She wants not relations, indeed, but they are such as she can have no credit nor good from them, but will be the worse of them, and therefore her husband has taken her out from among them, and would have her to forget them.

She has some that are her natural country people, her own people. Who are these, but the world that lieth in wickedness; and before she was espoused to Christ, she was one of their own, but he hath chosen her out of the world. Every country hath its own fashions, and in former times she followed the fashions of the country as well as the rest.

She has also a father's house in that country. Who is her father naturally but the devil? John viii. 44, and though she has left the house, yet he keeps house there still, with his children and servants; Luke xv. 15. It denotes the state of unregeneracy, which men are in while in the black state of nature, out of which, when they are brought to Christ, they are brought as it were out of their father's house. Every house has its own fashions, and Christ's spouse followed the fashion of the house as well as others, while she was in it.

2. There is the duty of Christ's spouse with respect to these. She must forget them, both of them. And here there is something supposed, that is, that Christ's spouse is apt to have a hankering after her own people and father's house, even after she has left them, as Laban alleged that Jacob sore longed after his father's house. There may be eager looks back again, while the soul minds them, and that with too much affection, not sufficiently weaned from them.

There is something also expressed, that Christ's spouse ought to forget them. Not absolutely, for she not only may, but ought to mind them for her own humiliation and thankfulness. "For we ourselves also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." But in respect of affection, her heart must be weaned from them, she must not desire to return to them; and in respect of practice, she must no more conform herself to them. She must forget also her people, must not conform herself to the world. Rom, xii. 2. She must forget also her father's house, her former lusts in her ignorance. A man's country is dear to him, but his father's house is dearer. So what is dearest to us in the world, must be forsaken for Christ.

DOCTRINE 1. The hearts of those espoused to Christ, are often found much unweaned from their father's house and former lusts, therefore is she taught to forget them. As it is with a childish new married woman, they have a foolish hankering after the house from which they came.

I. I shall show in what this unweanedness appears.

II. Whence it is that those who are espoused to Christ are so much unweaned from, and cannot forget their father's house and former lusts. We are then,

I. To show in what this unweanedness from their father's house and former lusts appears.

1. In the cooling of our zeal against our father's house, and the fashions thereof. Our husband's house and our father's are at war with each other; and this war is zealously prosecuted on both sides, by Michael and the dragon. When Christ's spouse then remits her zeal against sin, she appears partial in favour of her father's house. Christ finds fault with her, because "she hath left her first love." And so far as she is not with Christ, in prosecuting the quarrel vigorously, she is so far against him. So far as she is not gathering with him, she is scattering abroad. But O! how quickly does the heart harden, and how soon does sin turn from being such a frightful spectacle, as it was before, and at the espousals.

2. In kindly reflections on the entertainment in our father's house, remembering with any delight or pleasure our former ways. The Israelites were not sufficiently weaned from the house of their bondage in Egypt, and they gave evidence of this by weeping, and saying, "who shall give us flesh to eat." We should never reflect on our former evil ways, but with shame and sorrow; but often, by kindly reflecting on these things, we as it were return to our vomit. And the looking back on them stirs up love, not loathing.

3. In uneasiness under the restraints of our husband's house, saying, with the Israelites, "here there is nothing at all besides this manna, before our eyes." A heart used to sinful liberty, cannot easily take up with the restraint. The soul used to gadding abroad, will not easily become a keeper at home. But were the soul duly weaned, it would be very easy under all the holy restraints of the house of heaven, and would find a free walk within the inclosure of the divine law. The soul will say with David, "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts."

4. In hankering after our father's house, and former lusts, in our hearts turning back to Egypt. Nothing can be more plain evidence, than these rueful looks to our old lusts. This was the fault of Lot's wife, for which she was turned into a pillar of salt, yet it

is most incident to the children of men. When Adam was in paradise, his heart was hankering after the forbidden fruit; and though Christ brings sinners into a paradise on earth, yet they are still greedily looking over the hedge.

5. In kindly entertaining any sent from our father's house; by this people express their old kindness to the house. Our father, as long as we are in the world, will be sending to us; we will not want messengers of Satan, even temptations to our old sins; but if we were duly weaned from the house, we would deny them; we would deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We would do with them, as Elisha did with the messenger whom the king of Israel sent to take away his head; we would shut the door, and hold them fast at the door, saying, Is not the sound of their master's feet behind them.

But alas! they are readily received, they are welcomed and fed by us, according to their kind. 2 Sam. xii. 4.

6. In serving our husband after the fashion of our father's house; like a new married woman, who though she has changed the house, yet she keeps the fashions of that from which she came. So though the man will not neglect prayer, hearing, and other duties, yet he is so far unweaned, that he performs these often only as they do who are still in his father's house. This our Lord peremptorily discharges: "When thou prayest," says he, "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." He will have his own work done after the fashion of his own house.

7. In our stealing visits to our father's house, and secret tampering with former lusts. Stealing it must be, for our Lord and Husband will never give his consent to the meeting again. Ezek. vi. 9. But alas! how often is Christ's spouse missed out of her husband's house; her Lord is seeking her, but she is not at home, but gadding abroad, even lying in the embraces of former lusts and lovers. And though the soul that is truly married, will never rest there, but return to her first husband, Hosea ii. 7, yet that woeful departing is a sad appearance of a heart unweaned from former lovers.

*Lastly,* Many that have been espoused to Christ before the world, but not from the heart, quite forsake their husband, and go back, for altogether, to their father's house by their apostacy. Like the mixed multitudes that came out of Egypt, but ere they were gone far in the wilderness sounded a retreat back to the place from which they came. "The dog is thus turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. These are they that draw back into perdition." The case of many, alas! is like that of the Levite's concubine; Judges xix. Concubines were

indeed wives contracted to their husbands, though not with so great solemnity as proper wives; but they were bond servants, not free, not mistress of the family, nor could their children inherit. She played the harlot and went back to her father's house; and though means were used, yet she never came back to her husband's house, but perished in the way she had chosen. We now proceed,

II. To show whence it is that those who are espoused to Christ are so much unweaned from, and cannot forget their father's house and former lusts. There are some who have been joined to Christ only by the hand, who have given him the hand, but never gave him the heart. They are hypocrites, who have in profession only accepted of Christ in the marriage covenant. Others are joined to him with the heart who have really given themselves away to Christ without any dissimulation, as all true believers have done. Both these may fall under this charge, though they cannot go back an equal length to their former ways. Now for the reasons:

1. The consent of many to Christ is an involuntary consent. It was but a forced pretence, that ever they came into the covenant, no wonder then that they quickly look back. There are many things that may force a consent to the gospel covenant from a man; such as the power of the rod, an awakened conscience, and the like, may do it. Psal. lxxviii. 34, 36, 37. The stone thrown up in the air, will fall down of its own accord, when the force ceaseth. So will a rod forcibly bowed together extend itself again, when the hand that bowed it is removed; and a sow brought into a palace, will return to wallow in the mire, as soon as the restraint is removed. So will the heart return that is driven, but not drawn by love, into the covenant.

2. Because the heart has not been freely loosed from some one sin or another. Satan sometimes makes such an offer to his vassals, as Pharaoh did to Moses. "I will let you go," said he, "that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away." They accept. They go a great length with that young man, Mark x. 20, but still, as he, so they lack one thing, verse 21. There is some one lust or another, with which they can never freely part. Any thing but that they will do, and when they seem to be putting their lusts in Christ's hands to destroy them, the secret voice of their hearts concerning that one is, what David charged Joab concerning Absalom, "Deal gently with the young man." And this serves Satan as a handle, by which he draws them back.

3. Because sin has never been made bitter enough to them, they have never been thoroughly weaned from their father's house.

Hence, they are as the drunkard, who says, "they have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Men will never forget, nor cease to suck the breasts of their lusts, till God lay gall and wormwood on them in such measure as to make the enjoyment of them more bitter than the want of them. What lightly comes, lightly goes. They who never had the fallow ground of their hearts ploughed up, and ploughed deep enough, must needs sow among thorns. Jer. iv. 3, 4. The child that never found bitterness on the breasts, is easily set on again; and the soul that never tasted the bitterness of sin, will break over purposes, vows and resolutions, to get to it again.

4. Because by reason of their not living by faith on Christ, they find not that soul satisfaction in him which they expected. No wonder she long to be back at her father's house, who is disappointed of comfort in her husband's. The heart of man is an empty, hungry thing, that must always have something to feed upon; and if it feed not on Christ, it will go back to feed on lusts. The mixed multitude that came out of Egypt, not being brought, as they expected, to Canaan directly, they soon began to long after the enjoyment of Egypt.

5. Because there is a principle of corruption in the best, which still inclines the wrong way. "But I see," says Paul, "another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Hence the best have deceitful hearts; "yea, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." They are as deceitful bows, ever ready to carry beside the mark. They are difficult to be known, and unworthy to be trusted. The root of all sin, the spawn of all iniquity is in them.

We are naturally simple souls. However resolute and peremptory we may be in things carnal, we are all of an easy temper, easily led aside to our own spiritual loss: easily beguiled in things that concern our souls' welfare. Esau, though a cunning hunter, was easily betrayed in the matter of the birthright.

We are also unstable souls. Unstable as water. A good frame is hard to get, and easily lost. It is like letters written in the sand, that a blast of wind doth obliterate. Hence the soul often turns aside very quickly, and on very slender occasions, as Peter at the voice of a maid, and that even soon after some remarkable manifestations from the Lord. Thus it is said, that even "the disciples considered not the miracles of the loaves, for their heart was hardened."

*Lastly*, Because those of our father's house are still exerting themselves to make those espoused to Christ to keep up their former correspondence with them. While we are in the world, we will not want temptations. Satan is very diligent to improve all opportunities to make Christ's spouse deal falsely in her covenant. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." He is a subtle enemy, and has his devices, by which to entrap unwary souls. So we may blame our unwatchfulness for this.

USE 1. This may serve for our conviction and humiliation. We may lament and be ashamed of this bias of our hearts, so ready to look back to our former lusts, and after vows to make inquiry. Alas! are we not already found guilty in this point. How quickly is our zeal gone against our father's house, &c.

USE 2. Beware of looking back, and of hankering desires after your father's house and former lusts. For motives, consider,

1. The evil of this, the retaining any kindness to your former lusts in your ignorance, will be very grievous to the Spirit of Christ, whom you call your Lord and Husband. And no wonder, will you love them that hate the Lord, will you retain kindness to the enemies of your Lord; will you embrace those that were the cause of his death, and long to return to these, to deliver you from which Christ has done and suffered so much.

2. It will mar your communion with Christ. If you grieve his Spirit, he will depart. If you do not leave off your adulterous glances to your idols, it will procure you his frowns instead of his smiles. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us. So much of our hearts as our lusts get, so much Christ loseth of them; and so much as we enjoy of them, so much we lose of the enjoyment of the Lord. Our loss, therefore, will be far greater than our gain.

3. It will keep you still unfixed and unstable in religion, so as you shall not make progress in it. They will never look to purpose to the house of their husband, nor duly take his interest to heart, that do not forget their father's house. A divided heart will never be hearty for the Lord.

4. It is very dishonourable to Christ. Is not this blessed match with the Son of God sufficient to compensate the loss of what you had in your father's house. Can any thing be more dishonourable, than that the soul should still be hankering to be away, as if they repented the bargain with the Lord of glory.

*Lastly*, It is the fountain of apostacy. They that are often looking away, will be fair to break away at length. The way of sin is

down the hill, from less to greater. This is the blowing of the coal, which in time may proceed to a consuming flame.

DOCTRINE 2. Those that are espoused to Christ, must forget their own people and their father's house. There are two points here: namely, *first*, the forgetting of our own people; and *secondly*, the forgetting of our father's house. I will speak to these in order. And in speaking, *first*, of forgetting our own people, I shall,

I. Shew who are our own people, whom we must forget.

II. In what respects we must forget them.

III. Why we must forget them. I am then,

I. To shew who are our own people, whom we must forget. In a word, it is the wicked world, "the children of disobedience, among whom, in time past, we had our conversation." When the soul comes to Christ, it must say as Ruth to Naomi, "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." When Christ calls a soul to himself, he calls it out of the world. The church is a congregation gathered out of, and separated from the world; though not in place, yet in respect of affection, which is the greatest separation. But to be more particular, a saint may know who are his own people, by taking a look of himself, as corrupt and carnal.

1. Then they are our own people, who are yet living in darkness, unacquainted with the corruption of their nature, and misery of it; strangers to the spirituality of the law of God; strangers to the majesty and holiness of God, their absolute need of Christ, and his preciousness and excellency. The saints may remember the day in which they lived in that same region of darkness, and knew not more of these things than they, and may hence conclude these are their own people. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light."

2. They who are living in the same way and manner that the spouse of Christ did before her espousals; they are their own people walking on in the way which they have left; Eph. ii. 2, 3. Are they following the course of the world? do they venture frankly over the hedge of God's laws? You may know, then, by your former conversation, that they are your own people, from amongst whom Christ plucked you, as brands out of the burning.

3. They who are going the same way your carnal hearts would go, if they were left to their own corrupt choice. These are your own people; for as in water face answers to face, so do your hearts, as corrupt, answer to theirs. It is grace only that makes the difference, for the same nature is in both, only the power of that corrupt

nature is broken in those that are espoused to Christ, but it is entire in others. There is another principle beside it in the godly, but it is alone, and sways all, in others.

4. They who are living in the same barren region, in which the saints lived, before their espousals to Christ. The state of nature is that barren region; that is a far country, far from God and his covenant, and therefore there is no communication betwixt God and them, no influences for making them fruitful in the works of holiness; but a fulness of these our grapes of wickedness. These are our own people: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy; hateful, and hating one another." We now proceed,

II. To shew in what respects we must forget them.

1. We must forsake their company; it is evil company, unbecoming Christ's spouse. "Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." While we are in the world, indeed, there is no shunning of evil men altogether; but you must not make wicked men your familiar friends, you must not choose their company; and if necessity lead you into their company, you must take heed to yourselves in it, and haste out of it as a plague house. They that are espoused to Christ, and yet keep wicked company as before, give no great evidence of their sincerity. Birds of a feather flock together, and you may know what a man is, by the company which he loves best.

2. We must not conform ourselves to them, nor be like them in their way. The command is, "be not conformed unto this world." If we pretend a difference in our state from theirs, let there be a visible difference betwixt our way and theirs. Do Satan's drudges bear the devil's mark, let us hate to take it on, or learn of them their ways. All that have a mind for heaven, must be nonformists to the world, because the way of the world is against God and his law.

3. We must forget them in affection, saying, Depart from me, ye bloody men. Though we are to wish well to the persons of all men, we must hate their evil ways, saying with David, "I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave unto me." We must no more esteem their way as we were wont, nor desire to return into it. Have we been coming out of Sodom, we must not look back with a rueful look, otherwise we are not fit for the kingdom of God.

III. Why we must forget them.

1. Because they are not going our way. All men are on a journey to heaven, or to hell. There is a strait and narrow way that leads to heaven, a broad way to hell. If we are espoused to Christ,

then we are on the narrow way ; and how can we but forsake them that are going the quite opposite way. Nothing is more opposite than the way of holiness, and the way of the world ; therefore we must either give up pretences to Christ, or give up with the way of the world, “ wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world.”

2. Because the godly and the wicked world are on two different sides, under two opposite heads, Christ and the devil. All the world is divided betwixt these two, the Saviour of the world, and the god of the world. Christ’s party are his spouse, brethren, members of his body. The devil’s are his captives, prisoners, slaves. And though these of Satan’s party may come over, yet the truly godly will never mix with them in their ways. “Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

3. Because, in consenting to Christ, we give up with them. If you take me, let these go their way. Their company is infectious. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” Their way is destructive, therefore let not your hearts go after them and their ways. When you engaged with Christ, you engaged against both, and said, “thy people shall be my people, and where thou goest I will go.”

4. Because the world’s friendship is enmity with God. James iv. 4. What is wicked company but a combination against God, to trample on his laws, dishonour his Son, and grieve his Spirit. What are the ways of the world, but a direct opposition to God. So far, then, as we go with them, so far we go away from God. So much as they and their ways get of our affections, so much we lose of affection to Christ.

*Lastly,* Because there will be a total separation at last of the godly and wicked, Matth. xxv. Grace begins it here. Grace gives a new nature, new principles, new designs, and new motives, all which make a new conversation, opposite to the way of the world. Therefore if we would not lodge with them in eternity, we must give up with them in time.

USE. Be exhorted then to forsake evil company, to stand at a distance from it, and conform not yourselves to the way of the world.

MOTIVE 1. Consider how unaccountable it is, that Christ’s sheep should be found among the devil’s goats ; and Christ’s servants joining issue with the devil’s slaves ? 2 Cor. vi 14—16. If you have given up your name to Christ, why are you found on the devil’s ground. Let the swine of the world feed together on the husks of

sin, lie down together on the dunghill of their filthy lusts ; but what has any to do among them that pretends to be a child of God.

2. The closer you are linked with them, the farther are you from God. Mix with the world and their way, and God will not know you as his. He commands a separation from these, if you would have a reception from him. "Wherefore," says he, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord ; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." Men must go to the one side or the other ; there is no keeping up with both God and ungodly company. Will men be swearing a covenant with God one day, and swearing with profane swearers another ; drinking at the Lord's table, and at the table of drunkards, 1 Cor. x. 21. God will never own such vagrants for members of his household. See their doom, Jude 13.

3. It hardens the wicked in their way. It is Solomon's observation, "they that forsake the law, praise the wicked ; but such as keep the law contend with them." The sins of professors, going the way of evil men, is a practical testimony to the way of sin, emboldening the wicked to go on in their way. Whereas a testimony is to be kept up for God in the world, by a walk contrary to the way of the world. Thus Noah contended against the security and wickedness of the world, by a holy life, "by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

4. Evil company is an affecting plague. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." How many fair blossoms of religion have been killed in the bud, by the poisonous breath of evil company ? How many have been dragged over the belly of good principles, vows, and resolutions, by the violence of it. There is a mighty efficacy in it to advance the devil's kingdom, and men being once drawn in, it is a thousand to one if they go not far beyond these bounds which they had prescribed to themselves. For the devil's agents have that off their master, let them once get in a finger, and they will endeavour to get the whole hand to follow.

*Lastly*, If you do not be separated, you will share with them. Weighty is that word, "a companion of fools shall be destroyed." How many have cursed the day that ever they saw the face of those by whom they have been first led into sin, and next to ruin. It will be no comfort to suffer God's wrath with company, whatever may be in sinning together. If we go in the way with the wicked, we must go to the same place with them. And though mercy should rescue you, it will be so as by fire, as we see in Lot's case.

Let all take this warning, and observe it in their occasional en-

counters, that they be on their guard, and likewise in their fixed communications, in all changes of our lot, choose good company; and when you see that you are inevitably connected with naughty companions, mark them, that you may avoid them as much as possible.

II. I proceed now to speak of the forgetting of our father's house. This father is our father the devil, who keeps house in a wicked world, and in every unregenerate heart. But we must give up with it, if ever we would see the house of our father in heaven. Here we shall,

I. Shew with what of our father's house we must give up.

1. You must part with the master of the house, Satan, and renounce your relation to the house. Though you have no express compact with him, you have need to do this. There is a twofold relation all natural men have to the house. They are servants of the house, hence it is said, ye were the servants of sin; their work is sin, and their wages is death. It is sad work, miserable wages; for he is the worst of masters, and they are the meanest sort of servants. Sinners have no term when they may leave their master, for they are slaves to Satan, and wholly in their master's power, taken captive by him at his will. He has a threefold title to them as his slaves. They are his slaves taken in war, "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage." The devil having proclaimed war against heaven, attacked man as heaven's ally and confederate, and gained the victory over him. He is pursuing this war still against mankind, and driving the unrenewed world before him as prisoners of war, and so at his will. Isa. xlix. 24, 25. They are also his bought slaves. Men, in general, like the Israelites, "have sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger." Where there is such a sale, Satan must needs be the buyer. It is a very low price, indeed, even for nought. The foolish sinner thinks not so, while he makes the bargain; but when the latter end comes, he will see it is all naught he has gained, in comparison of the soul that is lost. Rome drives this trade. Rev. xviii. 13. Where have they learned it, but from the devil, who early set it up, buying our first parents for a parcel of forbidden fruit, and had the impudence to order the second Adam to fall down and worship him. He is daily buying a drunkard for some strong drink, a covetous worldling for a little pelf, a hypocrite for a name, unjust persons and liars for a very little thing. They are also his born slaves, born in his house, Eph. ii. 3. Many are born of parents, slaves to the devil, themselves, all their days; even those who themselves are free, yet their children are

not therefore free too, for "they were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did their mothers conceive them." It is not the first birth, but the second, that will make us free men. Now we must give up that relation to the house. We must renounce our service, and break away from our old master, and betake ourselves to Christ, as a new master, who makes all his servants free men.

They are sons of the house. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said our Lord to the Jews. A sad sonship, for it is an ill house; it is to be a son of hell, a prison house, a dark house, a dreadful house. Never was a child liker a father, than unregenerate persons are like the devil. His nature is enmity against God and his law, so is theirs. He is fallen, and so are they; lying in wickedness, and so are they.

Now we must give up that relation to the house. We must be born again, we must be new creatures, or we will be ashamed of our pretended espousals to Christ. For if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." The image of Satan must be defaced, the image of God restored in sanctification, and that work advanced in daily mortification to sin, and living to righteousness.

2. You must quit the work of the house. We must cast off the works of darkness. There is never an idle person about our father's house. Satan keeps all his children and servants busy at their task, that so they may not think of ways to escape, or of leaving him, as Pharaoh did with the Israelites. And what are they always about that keeps them busy. They are always at one of two things, they are either weaving the spider's web, or hatching the cockatrice egg. "They are weaving the spider's web." They are very busy doing nothing. Nothing for God, their souls, or eternity. Their webs will not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works. All that they are busy about, will do no more to help their souls in the day of wrath, than a cobweb will clothe a man to defend him against the cold. The besom of death will sweep them and it away together; and about this heads and hands are employed. Or "they are hatching the cackatrice' eggs. He that eateth of their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. They weary themselves to commit iniquity. They draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and treasure up wrath against the day of wrath." This is work. It is hard, toilsome, and dark work, soul-ruining work. Yet it is the work of the house, in which each strives to outdo another, and undo themselves. But as in other houses some are employed in coarser work, and others in finer, so it is in this house. The master of the house puts his coarser

work in the hands of the profane, ignorant, earth worm, that has not so much as a form of godliness; and their task is "to fulfil the lusts of the flesh." He employs their tongues in swearing and lying, their bellies in gluttony and drunkenness, their bodies in uncleanness, their hands in picking and stealing; and their heads, hearts, hands continually about the world; so that on their belly they must go, and can never get up their head above the world, and their eye must never be satisfied with seeing, nor their ear with hearing, but like the grave, cry give, give; and loading themselves with thick clay, which they will never let go, till death separate them.

He puts his finer work in the hands of the hypocritical professors, who work such a coat to themselves, as they shine in it like angels of light, and their task is, "to fulfil the desires of the mind." He employs them to deceive the world with their hypocritical pretences to piety, and to deceive themselves also. Their business is to oppose themselves to the very heart and life of the gospel, by their unbelief, self-righteousness, pride, and self-conceit; and to keep in the life of some lusts by their form of religion, and shelter them under a cover of religious duties; to do much mischief to the church of God, and stumble and bring to ruin many poor souls.

Now you must quit the work of the house, of whatever sort it be. You must not be like those that will give over their master, engage with another, and yet come back, and fall to their work again. You must take other work in hand: I do not say more work, for as the watch that goes wrong, goes as fast as that which goes right, you will have as much work in your father's house as in your husband's.

3. You must part with the provision and entertainment of the house. People use to get their meat where they work their work, and Satan's slaves get their meat also in their father's house. And what is their entertainment? He sets them down "to eat dust with the serpent," Is. lxxv. 25. He feeds them on filthy lusts, which may nourish their corruptions, but is poisonous to their souls. Satan did once eat angel's food in the enjoyment of God, but now dust is his meat with the serpent, that is, as it was the meat and drink of Christ to do the will of his Father, so it is Satan's to sin against God and to do mischief, all the pleasure he hath lies there. So it is with Christless sinners, the sweetest milk which they suck is out of the breasts of their lusts; the enjoyment of God was never so sweet to those whose god is their belly, as meat and drink; the dishonest person hath not so much pleasure in the gospel treasure, as in some thing that he can catch to please the covetous heart.

He sets them also "to eat husks with the swine," Luke xv. 16. He feeds them with the empty dry things of the world, and they are dressed up according as every one likes best. Some get the pleasures, others the profits, others the honours of it set before them, and on these they feed. So the voluptuous man has more delight in carnal pleasures than in communion with God; "for they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." The worldling hath more pleasure in his goods and chattels, than in all the spiritual gains of true godliness. These things are to him but shadows, but what he can hold is substance. "I am become rich," says he, "I have found me out substance." The ambitious man hath more delight in a name and honour among men, than in the honour of God's approbation. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only."

Now you must quit the entertainment of the house, and betake yourself to the entertainment and provision of the house of heaven. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." You ask bread in your father's house, and he gives you a stone, for what he gives is not bread, and satisfies not the soul. The dust of lusts is not good, change your dust then, and "eat that which is good." God, grace, communion with God, and all the benefits of the covenant are good. They are good for the soul and the body, for time and eternity. The husks of the world have no fatness in them, change them therefore, and "let your souls delight themselves in fatness." Spiritual things are full of sap, and will make your souls prosper.

4. You must quit the fashions of the house. Every house hath its own fashions, and so hath your father's; but that must not keep them up. "Be not conformed unto this world." They are evil fashions, you are not to bring them along with you to your husband's house. The fashion of the house, in natural actions, is to follow these actions in a mere selfish way, to gratify a carnal appetite, without any eye to God in them, or fitting us thereby for his service. You must quit it, and must not be like your father's house in them. Modesty and sobriety, and referring all to the honour of God, is the fashion you must fall in with, as the fashion of your husband's house. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The fashion of your father's house, in civil actions, is to be sunk and swallowed up in these things, to be minding them more "than the one thing needful," and to have no respect to the command nor honour of God in

them; and so to make these things either jumble out duty to God altogether, or to take such a lift of them, that no vigour of spirit, and sometimes even no strength of body, is left for duty to God. To be untender in these things, and even to give conscience a stretch, if a person can gain any profit or ease by it. To count truth in words, and exact uprightness in dealing, and to do no other way to others, than we would they should do to us, but needless nicety. If you quit not these fashions, you will never see the house of heaven. Luke x. 41, 42; 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9; 1 Thess. iv. 6. If ever men get more religion, they will get more moral honesty.

The fashion of your father's house in religious actions, (for there is some religion even in that house, but it is of the fashion of the house), that is to hold with the one half, and that too the worst half, the outer half, the mere form of godliness. To hold with bodily exercise, but endeavour not to worship God in spirit. So that men in that house shut the eyes of their bodies, yet their hearts are going after their covetousness; they bow their knees, but their hearts remain inflexible. It is their custom to seek to please themselves more than God, Matth. vi. 2. To go about these duties that they may sin the more freely, and so make a covering of them to some lust, Prov. vii. 14, 15. They put them in Christ's room, "going about to establish a righteousness of their own." If you quit not these fashions, you are not God's people, "for God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." "His people are the circumcision, who worship him in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Hypocrisy is a mask which God will pluck off.

5. You must quit the garb of the house. Under the Old Testament, when people were to make any solemn appearance before God, they were called to change their garments, Gen. xxxiv. 2. And if you would shew yourselves Christ's spouse, you must part with the garb of the house, off which you are come. You must part with the inner garment of the house, "that is the old man with his deeds." Ephes. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9. The old man is the corrupt evil nature; his deeds are the corrupt workings of that nature in heart and life. These cleave close to us, as a girdle to the loins of a man, but we must be putting them off by daily mortification. In vain do we pretend to be espoused to Christ, if we still retain our former lusts. Christ has another garment for his spouse, which we must put on, if ever we see heaven, that is "the new man," the new nature with a new life, Ephes. iv. 24. It is made up of two pieces: righteousness, the whole of our duty to man; and holiness, the whole of our duty to God. For true religion is universal, and therefore it is called a man; not a member or two of a man, but a whole man.

You must also part with the upper garment of the house, that is the filthy rags of your own righteousness, Is. lxiv. 6; Zech. iii. 4. The way in our father's house, is to cover their unrighteousness with their own righteousness, their evil with their good, their sins with their duties. But alas! all this is but a covering of rags, that will not hide thy shame before the Lord; a covering of filthy rags, that will make thee more vile. Christ hath provided the white raiment of his own righteousness for thee, that must be put on by faith; and all thou doest must be washed in the blood of the lamb, or thou wilt be ruined with it. You must learn that lesson in your husband's house, that never one could yet learn in their father's house, even to work in religion, as if you were to win heaven by working, and then to overlook all, as if you had done nothing.

*Lastly,* You must quit the interest of the house. People readily are concerned for the interest of the house of which they are members, and none more than the members of our father's, that do their utmost to support it. Now, if you mind for heaven, you must quit this interest, and pursue the interest of the house of heaven. You must not interest yourselves in the quarrels of that house. That house hath a quarrel against the image of God, the power of godliness, and the people of God, Gen. iii. 15; and all the members of the house interest themselves in the quarrel, one way or another, to bear down the exercise of godliness. Persecutors strike it down; mockers jest upon, and laugh at it; the worldly man gravely pronounces it to be folly; the hypocrite's heart rises bitterly against it, and bears it down and smothers it, with contention and strife about outward things. All join together in the quarrel, though they go different ways to work. But you must stand upon the side of godliness.

You must not support the interest of your father's house. Christ was sent to pull it down, "to destroy the works of the devil;" do not you put to your hand to hold it up. The members of the house are very much concerned to hold it up. They will not give their help to curb sin, but, upon the contrary, they encourage one another by example and otherwise, like Babel-builders, to go on with the work. Let none that mind for heaven, support the interest of Satan in the family, or in any place where they are. We now proceed,

II. To give reasons, why these that are espoused to Christ, must forget their father's house.

1. Because our father's house, and husband's house, are quite contrary the one to the other, as heaven and hell, light and darkness, and there is no reconciling them, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. Therefore we must renounce our part in, and relation to the one, if we

mind to plead a part in, and relation to the other. They never shall mix. "God will preserve his people from this generation, for ever." They never can mix. "You cannot serve God and mammon." The heads of these houses are opposite, the work, the entertainment, the fashions, and interests; therefore, as you would not renounce your part in Christ, forget your father's house.

2. Because, as our husband's house is most honourable, so our father's house is most base. These that are espoused to Christ, as Christ is their husband, they are God's children; they are of the same family with the angels; nay, the very angels are ministering spirits, to take care of them who are joint heirs with Christ. They are honourable in their relations, and rich in their title to heaven and glory. But our father's house has nothing in it but baseness, for it is a fallen house, fallen from honour to the deepest disgrace, from happiness to extreme poverty and misery. For us to follow the ways of it, is as if one brought into a noble family could not forget, but bring along with her, the way of the beggarly family from which she came.

3. Because we will never apply ourselves to the way of our husband's house, if we forget not our father's house. While the hearts of the Israelites were set on the flesh pots of Egypt, they could make no progress in their journey to Canaan. Laban knew that Jacob could not enjoy his service, when he much longed after his father's house. The affectionate remembrance of the work and provision of our father's house will be a dead weight on those that have begun to run the race set before them; and always, the more we give way to our corruptions, the more tenderly we handle our lusts, religion will be the more difficult.

4. Because it is the worst of houses. No wonder, for the devil, the worst of masters, is the master of the house. No slavery like the service of that house. It is soul slavery. No entertainment like it, for it can never satisfy; nay, it is destructive to the soul. The work thereof is sin, the wages death, eternal death. The fashions of the house are the very reverse of all that is good. The interests of the house are the dishonour of God, the ruin of mankind. The garb of the house is filthy rags, and the shame of their nakedness will at length appear before the world.

USE 1. Of Information. It informs us,

1. In vain do we pretend to be espoused to Christ, if we do not reform our lives according to the rules of the gospel, but still hold on the old way, 2 Cor. v. 17. The old life, with a new profession and an engagement to be the Lord's, will make men but whited sepulchres; or like an old rotten wall new plastered, that will burst out fearfully, and go to ruin.

It is not enough to be like neighbour and other. It is but a sorry character. All the people of God must be nonconformists to, and dissenters from the world. The broad gate is room enough for multitudes, but they that will be at heaven, must be a singular sort of people, for they are men wondered at; content to take on them the hatred of their native country, and father's house.

USE. 2. It reproves those that will not forget their father's house, but cleave to it and to the way thereof. And who are these?

1. Those that, in the midst of gospel light, yet continue in the darkness of the house; even all grossly ignorant persons. They that are brought out of their father's house to Christ, are brought out of darkness to light, though they know not a letter. "They were sometimes darkness, but now are they light in the Lord." If people remain ignorant under gospel means, we know what is the cause, their father has put out their eyes. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 4. This will end in eternal darkness. "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."

2. Those that retain the language of the house. When Peter spoke, the damsel knew what countryman he was. "Thou art a Galilean, for thy speech bewrayeth thee." And what shall we say of thee, that art a curser, a swearer, a liar, a filthy speaker, but thou art a Hellilean. I appeal to your own consciences, what sort of language that is, whether it sounds like heaven or hell. To hear a man speak as if hell were opening; breathing out lies, as if inspired by the father of them; speaking, as if an unclean devil were speaking out of him; what can one think in such a case, but that the person speaks like the house to which he belongs. But if you will not forbear that language, it will turn to blaspheming at length through a long eternity. For the former is the language of the house in time, the other in eternity.

3. Those that wear the badge of the house on their breasts, the master of the house's mark on their foreheads, so that those who go by may easily know who they are. Profane people. You that will not bow a knee to God. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." You that take room to yourselves in all licentiousness, that have nothing to do with religion, but to shew aversion to all that is good; if not to mock and reproach others that seem to be religious. Will you pretend to any portion in Christ? No, no, you know not Christ, and he will disown you. A dumb devil possesseth you now, that you cannot, will not pray to God now; the day will come, that you will cry to the hills to fall upon you, and hide you from the face of the judge.

You will have a merry life of it now, but you shall weep; you will make a jest of religion now, but that will make you roar at length. Your heart is averse to all that is good now, the copestone will be put on it in hell. You care not for prayers, godly discourse, examinations, or sermons; but some of you will go to the hill with the beasts, Sabbath after Sabbath, and desire no person to take that task off your hand. Well were it for you, if, as you live with the beasts, you were to die with them also.

4. Those that give up themselves to the trade of the house, minding nothing but the world, earthly things. They have no trade with heaven. They know not what communion with God means. They will have their work on earth as far advanced as their neighbours, but their work for eternity is yet to begin. They are so busy they cannot get time for it. They have so much to do otherwise, they cannot get anything done to purpose for their perishing souls. That is folly, for the world will be consumed in flames, when that soul of yours shall continue to exist, to be either eternally happy or miserable, as it is now seen to be in time.

*Lastly,* Those that are the hidden servants of the house. It has been said of some, that they have stealed away to heaven, without being observed; but there are others that steal away to hell, and the world never hears the sound of their feet: even deep veiled hypocrites, whited sepulchres. "They are disobedient, deceiving, serving divers lusts and pleasures." They wear Christ's livery, but yet are Satan's drudges. There are always some lusts that have such persons absolutely under their power. The broad way is wide enough, so that they can easily get a bye path in it, to go by themselves to destruction, without mixing with the profane rabble that keep the highway. However, all come to one lodging at length. "As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity."

USE OF EXHORTATION. Be exhorted to forget your father's house. Leave the master of the house, the work, and the provision of the house. Renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and betake yourselves to Christ and his service.

MOTIVE 1. Your father's house will remove, and it will be a sad removing. Our Lord's family will remove also, but it will be a happy removing. Christ hath a higher house in heaven, to which he will remove all the family he hath on earth. The devil hath a higher and a lower house also. His higher house is in this world, and it is a throng house; but the day is coming that his family will remove into the lower house, the bottomless pit, so as not one shall remain behind. There are some removing out of it daily, and

then the rest that remained behind are secure, but it will not be always so. There was a horrible cry at Dathan and Abiram's removing, Numb. xvi. 31—34; what a cry will there be when the family goes away together, and "shall all be cast into the lake of fire," which is their new house! Leave it then quickly, lest ye perish with it.

MOTIVE 2. It is highly reasonable, if you will have any part in Christ. You can have no part in him, but as espoused to him; and if espoused, then "you must leave your father and mother, and cleave to your husband." Did he not say to you in the offer made, If you take me, let these go their way. Will you come into this house, and not forget your father's house? Nay, if you do not, he will pursue you as he did Israel, like those who break wedlock. You have all professed your acceptance of the marriage covenant, all have had the seal of it in baptism, and some of you in the ordinance of the supper. Remember, then, you have lifted up your hands to the Lord, and cannot go back.

*Lastly*, Consider the motive in the following verse, "So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." From this you have several arguments, your leaving off these will truly beautify you in the sight of the Lord. Holiness is a beauty, it is soul beauty, a lasting beauty. Now, thus beautified, you shall be amiable and acceptable in the sight of thy Lord and Husband, and he will take pleasure in thee. He is a King worthy to be pleased, and his favour worthy to be sought. *Finally*, thou shalt be at no loss, whatever you part with for his sake. Communion and fellowship with him will make up all your losses. Amen.

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 May 1, 1712.

CHRIST JESUS DULY PRIZED.

SERMON XIII.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 8,

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

THE apostle, in the preceding verse, having spoken of his privileges in his unconverted state, and told how meanly he thought of them