THE GREAT GOSPEL MYSTERY OF THE SAINTS' COMFORT AND HOLINESS,
OPENED AND APPLIED FROM
CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE,
IN
FOUR SERMONS,
PREACHED AT STEPNEY, A.D. 1647.
ON
CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

SEROON I.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and a faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation (or atonement) for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 17, 18.

The apostle Paul, (whom I take to be the penman of this epistle) having in the former part of this chapter, shewed the reasons, why it behoved Christ for to suffer death: he comes now, in the latter end thereof, to give you an account, by laying down some reasons, "Why it behoved Christ, to be in all things made like unto us," whom the apostle here calls the brethren of Jesus Christ.

In other scriptures we find, that our Lord and Saviour Christ, is called our Father, "The Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." Here he is called our Brother, we his brethren. Now the same person, to be both a father, and a brother unto the same man, in nature it cannot be.

But because all these relations, are too scant, and narrow vessels to hold forth the love of Jesus Christ towards us: therefore inconsistent relations are given unto him. A father provides for his child, which the brother doth not. A brother can stoop, and condescend unto his brother, which the superiority of the father will not bear. So that here is held forth unto us, the stooping, condescending love of Jesus Christ: and therefore he is called our Brother, and we his brethren.

But why, and what reason is there, that the Lord Jesus Christ should in all things be made like unto us his brethren?

The apostle in these words gives the reason, "That he might be a merciful, and a faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," &c. The Lord God our Father, sware unto Jesus
Christ, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." He was to be the great High Priest. Among the Jews, in the times of the Old Testament, they had an high priest, that was in all things to stand between God and them, and in case any sinned, to make an atonement for them. As the Jews had their high priest: so the Lord Jesus Christ, he was to be, and he is, the Apostle and the High Priest of our christian profession, as Aaron was of the Jews' profession. And therefore says the apostle, "It behoved him, in all things to be made like unto us."

But could not Jesus Christ be merciful unto poor tempted souls, unless he were in all things made like to them: like in their natures, like in their affections, like in matter of temptations?

Christ as God, could have been merciful unto us, although he had not been made like unto us: but not as our High Priest.

There is an ability of sufficiency, and of power: and so Christ as God, was able to succour those that are tempted, although himself had never been tempted. But there is an ability of idoneity or fitness, or aptness and disposition: and so the apostle says here, "For in that himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

It is plain then, what that is, that is the great support of a christian against all temptations: wherein lies our succour against all temptation, namely, in the priestly office of Jesus Christ.

The priestly office of Christ, it is the great magazine and storehouse of all that grace and comfort which we have on this side heaven: it is that whereby we are reconciled to God the Father, and relieved against all temptation. This is the great thing that these words hold forth.

And therefore, upon this account, the apostle Paul, finding the Hebrews labouring under great temptations, doubts, fears, and much unbelief; he does not only here, but all along in this book of the Hebrews, open the priestly office of Christ unto them.

And indeed, what comfort can we have in God himself, but through Christ? and what comfort can we have in Christ himself, but as he is clothed with his priestly garment, with
the office of High Priest? Whatsoever comfort we have in
the other offices of Christ, namely his kingly and his pro-
phetical offices, it is all originated and principiated in this:
the priestly office of Jesus Christ, it does give a life, and
being, and efficacy to both the other offices. And therefore
the high priest, in the times of the Old Testament, (who was
a type of Christ) he wore a crown upon his head, and the
breastplate of Urim and Thummim upon his breast: showing
that both the other offices, the kingly and the prophetical
office, were planted upon the priestly office of Jesus Christ.

Yea, if you look into the ist, iiind, and iiird chapters
of the Revelation, you will find, that whatsoever streams of
comfort did run down upon the churches through the other
titles and attributes of God, they are all fountained here. In
the iiind chapter and the 1st verse, the Lord Christ hath
this title, that he holdeth the seven stars in his right hand!
"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his
right hand." In the 8th verse, writing unto the church of
Smyrna, he takes up another title or attribute: "These
things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is
alive." At the 12th verse, writing unto the church at
Pergamus, he takes up another title: "These things saith he
who hath the sharp sword with two edges." Now look into
the ist chapter, and you shall see that those several titles,
wherewith he clothes himself when he speaks unto the
churches severally, are all summed up together at the 16th
verse. "And he had in his right hand seven stars:" that is
his title unto the church of Ephesus: "And out of his mouth
went a sharp two-edged sword;" that is his title unto the
church of Pergamus. And at the 18th verse, "I am he that
liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore;"
that is another title that he useth when he speaketh unto the
church of Smyrna. But in the 13th verse is opened the
fountain of all these streams: "In the midst of the seven
candlesticks, I saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed
with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps
with a golden girdle." This was then the robe and attire
of the High Priest: whose garment came down unto his feet,
and he was girt about with a golden girdle. So that all these
other attributes and titles of Christ, they have their rise
here; here is the spring-head of all those consolations, even the priestly office of Jesus Christ.

Usually those excellencies and attributes of Christ are most beneficial unto the saints, that are most opposed by the world. What title, attribute, or excellency of Christ is there, that is more invaded by the world, than the priestly office of Jesus Christ? What is the whole body of anti-christianism, but an invasion upon this priestly office of Christ? What is the popish mass (that unbloody sacrifice) but a derogation from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once upon the cross, and so a derogation from his priestly office? What are all those popish penances, and satisfactions enjoined, but a derogation unto the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and so unto the priestly office of Christ? What is all their praying to saints and angels, but a derogation unto the intercession of Jesus Christ, and so unto the priestly office of Christ? What does the Pope call himself? he calls himself the high priest, the very title that our Lord and Saviour takes unto himself. So that the whole body of anti-christianism, is a great invasion upon the priestly office of Jesus Christ. Now that which is usually opposed most by the men of the world, that excellency and that attribute of Christ is of all other the most comfortable and beneficial unto God's people. The truth is, this priestly office of Jesus Christ is an office of mere love, and tender compassion; erected and set up on purpose for the relief of poor distressed sinners; and there is no mixture of terror with it: there is a mixture of terror with the other offices of Christ. The Lord Christ, he is King, and he hath a kingly office, and by his kingly office he rules over the churches, and rules over all the world: but all do not obtain mercy that he rules over. "As for those mine enemies, that will not submit, will not have me to reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me." The prophetical office of Jesus Christ, it extendeth unto many that shall never be saved: "Light shines in darkness, and darkness comprehendeth it not." "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." But now, wherever the priestly office of Jesus Christ is let forth upon a soul, that soul shall certainly be saved for ever.

What was the great relief amongst the Jews against their sins? The Jews, you shall observe they had many reliefs:
when they were in the wilderness, and were stung with the fiery serpents, then they had a brazen serpent for to look upon, as a relief against that distress. When they wanted water, they had the water out of the rock, as a relief against that distress. When they wanted bread, they had manna from heaven, as a relief against that distress. But when they sinned, whither did they go? Then they took a sacrifice, and went unto the priest, and he was to offer for them. So that the priestly office then, was the only relief they had against sin.

And so now, the priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is that great succour and relief which christians have against all temptations under heaven.

You will say unto me, But general things affect not: let us see it in some particulars, wherein this priestly office of Christ is the great magazine and storehouse of all our grace and comfort?

For answer hereunto, I will begin this exercise with one particular of the priestly office of Christ, in showing what a relief and succour it is unto a christian against all temptations, and what a bottom of comfort, and special means of grace and holiness.

The text says that the work of the high priest is, "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people." In the times of the Old Testament, the high priest made an atonement for the people: in case any man had sinned, he brought a sacrifice, and his sins were laid upon the head of the sacrifice. Once every year the high priest did enter into the holy of holiest, and with the blood of the sacrifice did sprinkle the mercy-seat, and laid the sins of the people upon the head of the scape-goat, and so made an atonement for the people. All which will clearly appear in that xvith chapter of Leviticus, at the 14th verse: "He shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward: and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." And at the 21st verse: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, and
so he shall make an atonement:” as in that chapter. This was the work of the high priest, in case any had sinned, to make an atonement and satisfaction (by way of type) for the sins of the people.

Now for the better proof of this great gospel truth that I have propounded, I shall insist on these five things.

First, That when the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, he did offer up himself a sacrifice unto God the Father.

Secondly, That when this sacrifice was upon the altar, then the sins of all believers, past, present, and to come, were all laid upon Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, That when these sins were thus laid upon Christ, he did thereby give full satisfaction unto God the Father, unto divine justice.

Fourthly, That all this he did as our great High Priest, and in a more transcendent, and eminent manner, than ever any high priest did before him.

Fifthly, How all this doth conduce to our comfort, and to our holiness.

First, When our Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, he did offer up himself a sacrifice unto God the Father. He did not (as the Socinians say) die only as an example for to teach us how to die; but he offered up himself a sacrifice unto God the Father then. Yea, as if all sacrifices were met in him; all those titles that are given unto other sacrifices, they are given unto him. There are three sorts of sacrifices: some were living; others were not living, and those were either solid, as bread and the like; or else they were liquid, as wine and oil. There was always, destructio rei oblatiae, a destroying of the thing offered. If it were a living thing that was sacrificed, then it was said to be slain: in answer to that, Jesus Christ is said to be a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. If it were a dead thing that was offered up, as bread, or corn, a solid thing, then the sacrifice or offering was said to be bruised: in answer to that, our Lord and Saviour Christ is said to be bruised for our iniquities. If it were a liquid thing that was offered up to God, as wine or oil, then it was said to be poured out: in answer to this, it is said of our Lord and Saviour, that his soul was poured out unto death. Thus all sacrifices meeting in him. “Behold the Lamb of God!” (says John the Bap-
tist) when he saw Christ. He does not say, Behold the bull of God, or the goat of God; and yet bulls and goats were sacrificed. Why does he rather say, Behold the Lamb of God, than the bullock or the goat? For when the high priest went into the holy of holiest, and sprinkled the mercy-seat, he did not sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood of the lamb, but with the blood of a goat; and yet, notwithstanding, it is not said, Behold the goat of God, but, Behold the Lamb of God! Why so? Not only because that Christ was of a lamb-like and meek disposition (as some would have it): not only because that the great type of Christ was the paschal lamb (though these be reasons), but there was a daily sacrifice in the temple; whether men brought any offering or no, there was a standing sacrifice in the temple, morning and evening, and that sacrifice was a lamb. Now therefore, to shew that Jesus Christ is the daily sacrifice, therefore he cries out, and says, Behold the Lamb of God, and not the goat of God? for the goat was not sacrificed every day as the lamb was.

For proof of this take the apostle's exhortation, Eph. v. 2, "Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God." Here are three things considerable. First, He does not say, Who hath redeemed us; but to shew his great love unto us, "Who hath given himself for us:" he doth not say, Who hath given himself for our sins; yet he says so in Gal. i. 4, "Who gave himself for our sins?" but, "Who gave himself for us." Why? To shew who they were that he gave himself for: he gave himself for us, as sinners. Again, he says here, he gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice; not only an offering, but a sacrifice too. So that this first proposition is clearly proved, That our Lord Jesus, when he died upon the cross, he did offer up himself as a sacrifice unto God the Father.

Secondly, As he did offer up himself a sacrifice unto God the Father, so when he was upon this altar, this sacrifice; the sins of all believers were then laid upon Jesus Christ: those that do now believe, or shall hereafter believe, they were all then laid upon Jesus Christ. Look into the liiird of Isaiah, verse 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath
laid on him the iniquities of us all." That which God lays on shall never be taken off, no man shall take it off: the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

Yea, our iniquities are not only said to be laid on him, but (to use the same word that is used for the sacrifice) it is said, He bare our sins upon the cross; as the goat bare the sins of the people: so says the apostle, "He himself bare our sins upon the cross."

Moreover, he did not only bear our sins upon the cross, but, says the apostle, "He was made sin for us." It is not said, He was made a sinner, or accounted a sinner only for us, but "He was made sin for us." All our iniquities were laid on him; he bare our sins, and he was made sin for us upon the cross. Thus briefly the second proposition is cleared, That when he did thus offer up himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, the sins of all believers were then laid on him.

Thirdly, When the sins of believers were laid on him, then he did make full satisfaction unto God the Father, and divine justice for all our sins. This is a bottom of much comfort. For if the Lord Jesus Christ our Surety had not satisfied to the utmost farthing, our great Creditor, God the Father, for all our debts, God the Father might come upon us the debtors. But our Surety, the Lord Christ, hath given full satisfaction unto God the Father, that no more demands can be be made upon us. And indeed else, how could our Surety ever have come out of prison: he was under arrest, he was in the jail, in the grave: the Father, the great Creditor lets him out; and did not only let him out, but the Lord Jesus Christ, he goes into heaven, and sits down there at the right hand of the Father; surely, if the Creditor had not been satisfied, the Surety should never have been released out of prison.

He was so fully satisfied, that "he looked for iniquity, and he found none" (says the text). He looked over all his books, to see if he could find any thing upon the score, but he found none: all our debts were paid. "Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world." He does not say, That takes away the sin of the Jews only; but takes away the sin of the whole world. He does not say, That takes away the sins (in the plural number), but takes away
the sin (in the singular number): sins go so together, as if they were but one: but let the sin be never so twisted to¬gether, as if it were but one sin, this Lamb of God, he takes away the sin of the world. And he does not say, That hath pardoned the sin of the world: for then a poor soul might say, Aye, but though he hath pardoned my sin, yet my sin is not mortified. Neither does he say, Behold the Lamb of God, that mortifies or destroys the sin of the world: but he gives you a word that takes in both pardon and mortification too. Behold the Lamb of God that takes them away: both in regard of pardon, and in regard of mortification: “Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world.”

There is nothing that does so satisfy God the Father, as obedience, and the more full the obedience is, the more God the Father is satisfied thereby: now it is said of our Lord and Saviour Christ, that in this great sacrifice upon the cross, he was obedient. “He was obedient even to the death of the cross.” That he that did make the law, should come down from heaven, and be subject to the law, what obedience was here! “Obedient to the death.” Yea, unto the deaths (in the plural number). And he made his grave with the sinners: and his deaths was with the rich. “He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich had his deaths,” Isa. liii. 9. It is in the plural number in the Hebrew, though in our English translation it is in the singular. As if the Holy Ghost had called death, the second death that our Lord Christ had in some measure suffered. For, if you consider things truly and rightly, I believe you will find that our Lord and Saviour Christ when he died, and was in his agony, he did not only endure the first, but the tortments of the second death. He overcame no more than he submitted to: he overcame death by submitting to death. Now he overcame the second death also, and therefore in some measure submitted to the tort¬ments of it, so far as he was capable. Look what the first Adam should have endured for his sin in the fall, that the second Adam now did endure in some measure for to take it off: “The day that thou eatest thou shalt die the death.” It was not barely the corporal and outward death, but it was the second death. If our Lord and Saviour Christ did not endure the tortments of the second death, the wrath of God upon his soul; why did he sweat drops of blood, and trem¬
ble, and shake so, when he came to die? There is many saints and martyrs, when they come to die, they go skipping, and leaping, and rejoicing: and our Lord and Saviour, when he came to die, he sweats drops of blood; surely there was more than an outward death: Oh! the wrath of God, and the torments of the second death were upon his soul. Thus obedient he was, and this obedience of his, it was voluntary, for he needed not to have died; but he saw that God the Father was dishonoured by man’s sin, and that poor man would be lost, and rather than that should be, he does voluntarily offer himself unto this obedience. “Lo I come, (says he,) in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, and thy law is within my heart;” Psalm xl. 7, 8. Mark what an expression there is in that Psalm, it is spoken concerning Christ, as is plainly interpreted by the apostle in the xth of the Hebrews, at the 6th verse: “Sacri¬fice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened” (or bored). The apostle when he translates these words, he translates them thus: “My body hast thou prepared.” But read them as they are here in the Psalm: “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ear hast thou bored.” That as when a servant was willing to stay with his master, and to do him yet more service, the servant’s ear was to be bored: so says the Lord Christ, I am as willing to do this work, to be thus obedient, as a servant whose ear is bored is willing to stay with his master: “And mine ear hast thou bored,” says he; ah, here is obedience, here is obedience: this now did infinitely satisfy God the Father; in so much, that ye may see what is said, in that same vth of the Ephesians, and the 2nd verse. “Who hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” The whole world was full of a stench before, and the Lord was displeased with man before: but now when Christ comes, and offers up his sacrifice, he did thereby give full satisfaction unto God the Father, for it was a sweet smelling savour unto God the Father. So that thus the Father he was fully satisfied.

To this I shall add one word: When the Lord Jesus Christ offered up himself a sacrifice unto God the Father, and had our sins laid upon him, he did give more perfect satisfaction unto divine justice for our sins, than if you, and I, and all
of us had been damned in hell unto all eternity. For a creditor is more satisfied, if his debt be paid him all down at once, than if it be paid by the week: a poor man that cannot pay all down, will pay a great a week, or sixpence a week; but it is more satisfaction to the creditor to have all paid at once. Should we have been all damned, we should have been but paying the debt a little, and a little, and a little: but when Christ paid it, he paid it all down to God the Father. Had we gone to hell, and been damned for ever, we had always been satisfying of God, aye but God had never been satisfied: but now when Christ makes satisfaction, God was satisfied. The creditor, if he be a merciful and a good man, is more truly satisfied where the debtor is spared; he does not desire that the debtor should be cast into prison, and there lie and rot; but he is better satisfied with the sparing of the debtor; let me have but my money, and so the debtor be spared I am willing, nay I desire it, says the good creditor. Now if all we had been cast into everlasting burnings, indeed the debt should have been a paying, but there the debtor had been lost: but now when Christ comes, and makes satisfaction unto divine justice, Ah! poor man is redeemed; here is the debtor spared. And therefore, the Lord he is infinitely more satisfied, by the satisfaction that Christ made upon the cross for our sins, than if all we had gone to hell; and been damned to all eternity. Oh! what a glorious and blessed satisfaction did this our High Priest make unto God the Father!

But you will say then, If the Lord Christ made this full satisfaction unto God the Father, how is it that believers, many of them have their sins and debts standing upon the score still, in their consciences so perplexed in regard of sin, as if there were no satisfaction at all made?

Luther calls this aspect of sin, a sacrilegious aspect and beholding of sin. As now (says he) if a man take out of an holy place some goods, and bring them into his own house; this is sacrilege. So for me to go and take my sins from Christ, and lay them in mine own bosom, this is sacrilege, says Luther.

But the reason of it is this, because that men do not study this truth, but are ignorant of it. As, suppose that a man do owe three or four hundred pounds to a shopkeeper for
wares and commodities that he hath taken up there: a friend comes and pays the debt, crosses the book: but the debtor, when he comes and looks upon the book, he is able to read all the particulars; item for such a thing, and item for such a thing, and item for such a thing; but the man being not acquainted with the nature of crossing the book, he is able to read all the particulars, and he charges it still upon himself, because he does not understand the nature of this crossing the book, and he is as much troubled how he shall pay the debt, as if it were not paid at all. So now it is here the Lord Jesus Christ, he hath come and crossed our book with his own blood: the sins are to be read in your own consciences, but we being not acquainted with the nature of Christ's satisfaction, and the crossing of the book, we charge ourselves, as if no sin at all were satisfied for us: yet when the Lord Jesus Christ was made an offering for sin upon the cross, then he did give full satisfaction unto God the Father. And that is the third.

Fourthly, This now he hath done as our great High Priest, and in a more transcendent and eminent way, than ever any high priest did before. For, though the high priest did come and make an atonement for a poor sinner, yet he himself was never made a sacrifice; the priest offered up a sacrifice, but himself never was made a sacrifice. But our great High Priest does not only offer up a sacrifice, but himself is made a sacrifice. Yea, that sacrifice that was then in the times of the Old Testament, it could not purge the conscience; not only because, as the apostle speaks, it was the blood of bulls and goats, but because the sacrifice was performed successively: as thus, a man sinned, then he brought a sacrifice; sins again, and then he brings another sacrifice: and once every year, the high priest goes into the holy of holiest to make an atonement. But in the meanwhile a poor soul might think thus, What if I die before the year come about, what will become of me? the high priest, he goes once a year into the holy of holiest, and sprinkles the mercy-seat, but what will become of me if I die before that time? But now, our great High Priest, he does not only offer up a sacrifice, and himself the sacrifice; but he offers up a sacrifice once for all: so says the apostle. So that now, when a christian hath sinned, he is not to think of a sacrifice that is
yet to come, a year hence, but he is to look unto that which is done already, a sacrifice once offered, and once for all: so that he needs not be in suspense now, as the Jews were; his conscience it may be fully purged from sin.

Again, take the high priest in the times of the Old Testament, and though he did make an atonement for the sins of the people, yet sometimes also he did make the people to sin. It is said of Aaron the great high priest, concerning the golden calf, that he did make the people naked: but the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, he makes an atonement for sin, and never does make them sin: he is so far from making the people naked, that he covers them with his righteousness that their nakedness may not appear. Here is a glorious High Priest.

Yea, this High Priest of ours, he does not only make an atonement for sin committed, and pays the debt; but he does also become our Surety unto God the Father: he does not only pay the debt that is past, but he becomes a Surety for time to come. None of all those High Priests that ever did so; not Aaron, not any high priest that ever gave his bond unto God the Father, that any sinner should never sin no more. But our Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, he becomes our Surety: and what Surety? not an ordinary Surety; for amongst us the Surety joins and does become bound with the debtor, but still it runs in the name of the debtor, and the debtor he gives the bond for to pay the debt. But now here, our Surety, he gives the bond, and we that are the debtors, we do not give the bond for to pay the debt: there is no godly man or believer that ever gave a bond unto God the Father that he will pay the debt: but our Surety comes, and the bond goes in the name of the Surety, and the debtor's name is out. Oh! what a glorious and blessed High Priest is here? here is a High Priest, beyond all the high priests that ever did go before! And that is the fourth thing.

Fifthly, How does all this conduce to our comfort or holiness?

I. How does all this make to our comfort?

1. Is it not a comfortable thing in the ears of a poor sinner, that there is a magazine and a storehouse of mercy set up? that the Lord hath erected an office of love, and of
mere compassion for poor sinners? Is it not a comfortable thing that God the Father is satisfied, and so your sins pardoned? "Son," says Christ unto the palsied man, "be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee," Mark ii. 5. He does not say, Be of good comfort, thy disease is healed: no, whether thy disease be healed, or whether it be not healed, this is comfort, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

If the Lord Jesus Christ hath satisfied for my sins, may a believer say, then whatsoever affliction I do meet withal, it does not come upon me as a punishment (properly), it does not come upon me as an arrest for to pay my debt. When a reprobate is smitten and afflicted, all his miseries, they are arrests for to pay his debt. Hath the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied divine justice, and God the Father for me? then surely these afflictions they do not come for me to make satisfaction.

Again, if the Lord Jesus Christ hath satisfied for my sins, may a believer say, then I shall never be damned, I shall never fall from grace. I have had many fears that I should fall from grace, and so go to hell, and perish at last: but if the Lord Jesus Christ hath satisfied divine justice for my sin, then God the Father will never punish my sin again, for it was punished in Jesus Christ, therefore I cannot fall from grace, therefore I can never be damned.

And if the Lord Jesus Christ hath satisfied divine justice as our great High Priest, then I may come with boldness unto the throne of grace. A debtor, so long as his debt is unpaid, he dares not come by the prison door, by the compter door; he is afraid of every sergeant, he is afraid of his friends that they should be sergeants: but when his debt is paid, then he dares go up and down with boldness. And so the poor soul, when he knows that his debt is paid, and Christ hath satisfied, then he may go with boldness unto the throne of grace.

But you will say, I cannot have the comfort of this, because I cannot say that Christ hath satisfied for me: How shall I know that Jesus Christ is my High Priest, so as to have satisfied for me? Ah, if I did but know that the Lord Jesus Christ were my High Priest in this particular, so as to have satisfied for me, then should I have comfort indeed: how shall I discover that? I am afraid he hath not satisfied for me!
And why not for thee? (man or woman) why not for thee? I shall tell you what I have heard concerning a young man, that lay upon his death bed, and went to heaven: while he was lying upon his death bed, he comforted himself in this: That the Lord Christ died for sinners. Oh! blessed be the Lord (says he) Jesus Christ hath died for me. Satan came in with this temptation to him: Aye but, young man, why for thee? Christ died for sinners, but why for thee? how canst thou make that appear, that Christ died for thee? Nay Satan (says he) and why not for me? Ah! the Lord Jesus, he died for sinners, and therefore, Satan, why not for me? So he held his comfort, and went up to heaven triumphing.

So say I to thee, poor drooping soul, that labours under temptation; why not for thee? why not for thee? and say so unto Satan, Why not for me?

Again, Christ's satisfaction it lies open for all sorts of sinners to come unto it. As the promise, it runs indefinitely; and if a man come to the promise, and apply it; his very applying the promise does make it his. You say, Oh! that I did but know that the promise belongs to me: I say, thy very resting upon the promise makes it to belong to thee. So, the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, this piece of Christ's priestly office, it lies open for all sorts of sinners for to come unto it: and your very resting upon it, and applying it to your own souls, it makes it to belong unto you.

Furthermore, if Jesus Christ be willing that you should think that he hath satisfied for you, then it is no presumption for you to think so. Now says he at the Lord's Supper, Take my blood that is shed for thee, I apply it to thee. Behold thy King cometh unto thee. When he rode upon an ass's colt, it was not said, Behold thy Lord cometh, but Behold thy King cometh to thee: he would have every one so to think.

More especially, if that a poor christian now, might not go unto Jesus Christ as unto his High Priest, and say, that he is an High Priest to me; then are we Christians, in a great deal worser condition than the Jews were; for when a Jew had sinned he might carry his sacrifice to the priest, and he might say, That this priest here belongs to me. And there was never a Jew, amongst all the people of the Jews, but
when the high priest sprinkled the mercy-seat, but he might say, This he hath done for me. Now, we are not in a worse condition than the Jews were: this High Priest is beyond all the high priests that ever was before him: and therefore there is never a poor Christian but he may go to the Lord Christ and say, Oh! my High Priest, and, This my High Priest hath satisfied for me. Oh, what comfort is here to poor drooping souls! Lift up your heads, Oh all ye saints and children of God; methinks here is that indeed, that might bring you off your own sands. When there is no water in the river but his own, the tide comes not in, no sea water, only the water of the river, the native water, (as I may so speak) then your bottoms, your ships they stand upon the sands; but when the tide comes in, then they are raised, and come off the sands then. And so long as thou hast nothing in thy own channel, but thine own righteousness, thou stickest upon the sands in the deep mire; but now, when the tide of the Lord’s satisfaction comes in, there is a full sea of mercy, and satisfaction (able to swim the heaviest vessel) made by Jesus Christ. Ah, methinks this should lift up a poor soul and fetch him off from his sands: Be of good comfort then. Thus it is evident how this truth does much conduce to our comfort.

But you will say, Does it not much conduce to our grace or holiness too? Or if it do, I pray how?

Yes, this truth does conduce much to our holiness too. You shall observe, that the new covenant of grace, it is laid and founded upon the satisfaction of Jesus Christ upon the cross, upon that oblation. Three times the apostle Paul makes mention of the new covenant of grace in the book of the Hebrews, the viiiith, ixth, and xth chapters: and in all these places he lays the covenant of grace, and founds it upon this satisfaction of Jesus Christ. But especially in the ixth chapter, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses. The 14th: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.” Then at the 15th verse, “And for this cause, he is the Mediator of the New Testament.” For this cause: plainly laying the new covenant of grace upon the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, upon this part of his priestly office. So
then, thou mayest now go unto God the Father and say, Lord, thou hast made a covenant of grace with poor man, and this covenant of grace is founded upon the priestly office and satisfaction of Jesus Christ; and the Lord Jesus Christ he hath satisfied for me; and the new covenant promises, that we "shall be all taught of God." Lord, I am ignorant, Oh! therefore now, by the satisfaction of Christ let me be taught of thee, that I may be made wise unto salvation. And so again, Lord, thou hast made a covenant of grace with poor man; this is laid upon the satisfaction of Jesus Christ: the covenant of grace says, "I will write my law in your inward parts:" now, O Lord, seeing Jesus Christ hath founded this covenant in his blood, and I am one of those that he hath made satisfaction for; Oh! write thy law in my inward parts that I may do all thy wills.

But again (in the second place) that we may see how this doth conduce to our holiness: strengthen faith, and we strengthen all: if faith be weakened, all grace is weakened: strengthen your faith, and you strengthen all your holiness, and all your graces. The way to strengthen a bough, or a branch of the tree, is not to carry dung up into the tree, but to lay it to the root: strengthen the root, and ye strengthen all the branches. Faith is the root-grace: now the knowledge, and the thorough digesting of this truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ is our great High-Priest, in this point of satisfaction, it does wonderfully strengthen our faith. For, the more I know that God is willing, and Christ willing to shew mercy unto me, the more my faith is strengthened: I know this, that every man is willing to do the work of his office, if he be faithful: a porter is willing to carry a burden: why? because it is his office to do it. It is the office of Jesus Christ for to bear our sins: it is his office to be the great High Priest, that does satisfy God the Father for our sins: surely therefore, he is willing to do it, for he is faithful in his office.

But besides, the more I see an holy necessity upon Christ Jesus, for to show mercy to me, the more my faith rises. It is very remarkable the Lord Jesus Christ, as God, he may refuse, and might refuse, whether he would shew mercy to us or no: but now as a High Priest, he cannot refuse a poor sinner that does come unto him. If I know that Christ
is able to satisfy, is able to shew mercy to me, my faith stirs a little, at the sight of Christ's ability; if I know that Christ be willing to shew mercy to me, my faith rises higher: but if I know that Christ cannot refuse me, if I do come unto him, then my faith rises up to a great height indeed. When a poor sinner amongst the Jews, had sinned, and brought his sacrifice to the high priest, the priest might not refuse it: our Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest; I say, as God he may refuse, but now, he being our great High Priest, therefore when a poor sinner comes to Jesus Christ, as a High Priest he cannot refuse: oh what a great strengthening is this to faith! Strengthen faith, and you strengthen all: the right understanding of this truth, doth wonderfully strengthen faith.

Further, the more a man is engaged to Jesus Christ, and takes himself to be engaged to him, the more holy he is: the more a man sees himself freed from sin by Christ, the more he takes himself to be engaged to Christ, for freeing of him from his sin. Now this truth tells us how Christ hath satisfied for our sins, freed us from sin; and so we shall be the more engaged to Christ. If a man were going to prison, even at the compter door, for a great sum of money; and the door were unlocking: if a man should come and speak to the sergeant, Hold your hands, here is money for you, I will pay this man's debt, and lays the money down; would not this poor debtor take himself for ever engaged to that man, that should thus come, and lay down the money, and free him so seasonably from the compter, and prison? Thus it was with the Lord Christ; Ah, we were all going to prison, everlasting prison, chains of darkness, and he comes and lays down the money, makes full satisfaction to God the Father as our great High Priest: Oh! what an engagement is this to every soul unto the Lord Christ, to become the Lord Christ's for ever.

Lastly, the more a man does deny his own righteousness, the more holy he is with gospel holiness. It is said of the Jews, That they going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not unto the righteousness of Christ. So on the contrary; when a man does go about to establish the righteousness of Christ, then he submits unto it, and then he denies his own righteousness. The more we see a
fulness of satisfaction made by Jesus Christ, for all our sins, unto God the Father, the more we acknowledge Christ's righteousness, and the more we establish it, and the more we shall be brought off from all our own righteousness.

Oh! therefore now, as ever you do desire, to have more grace, more holiness, more comfort; study, and study much this priestly office of Jesus Christ. There are many that complain, that they cannot profit under the means of grace: that they have hard hearts: that the ways, and ordinances of God are not sweet to them: prayer they do perform, but with no sweetness, they do not relish the blood and Spirit of Christ upon their spirits in their duties, &c. Many complain that their sins, and temptations (like the sons of Zeruiah) are to mighty for them, and that one day they shall be slain by the hand of Saul, such a lust, such a corruption. No wonder that we have these complaints, when we do not go unto the storehouse of comfort and grace that the Lord hath set open for us. The priestly office of Christ, it is the great magazine, and storehouse, of all that grace and comfort which we have on this side heaven: if ye do not go unto it, is it any wonder that ye want comfort, or that ye want grace? I appeal to you now; are there not some, nay, many that never went to Jesus Christ as their High Priest to this day? Ah, are there not some even professors, that do not know what the priestly office of Jesus Christ means? Oh! no wonder (poor soul) so uncomfortable, no more strength against thy temptations. If the State should appoint a man for to relieve poor, maimed soldiers, that go a begging: if they meet with the same man that is appointed by the State, and they beg of him in the streets as an ordinary man, he relieves them not: but now, if they come unto him, as a man appointed by the State for relief of such, then he relieves them according to the duty of his place. So it is with men, they go to Christ in an ordinary way, they do not go to Christ as the great Lord Treasurer of all our graces, as our great High Priest, they do not go unto him as in office; set up in office by God the Father for such relief: they do not address themselves to him as their High Priest to make satisfaction for them, and therefore they go away and have no relief. But would we have more strength against corruption? would we walk more comfortably in our course? would we find the ways of
God, ordinances, and duties more sweet and comfortable to our souls? then read, and consider that place in the Canticles ii. 3, "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons: I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." The spouse speaks it concerning Christ. What is this fruit of Christ? Your justification, adoption, vocation, sanctification, consolation, it is all the fruit of Christ: all your own duties, your prayers, reading, meditation, they are all the fruit of Christ: the enjoyment of all his ordinances, and all your spiritual privileges under the gospel, they are the fruit of Christ. Now says she, "I sat down under the shadow, and his fruit it was sweet unto my taste." As it is unto a man that does love fruit; be it pears, apples, cherries, or the like: I love this fruit (says he) but yet notwithstanding, I must needs go where this fruit grows, and gather it off the tree; and when he hath gone to the tree, and taken the fruit off the tree, (says he) I sat down under the tree. I had not the fruit, the apples, or cherries, brought unto my house, but I went unto the tree, and gathered it off the tree, and I sat down under the shadow of the tree, and Oh! how sweet was the fruit unto me! So says the soul, so says the spouse of Jesus Christ: I sat down under the shadow of Jesus Christ, and then his fruit was sweet unto my taste. It may be we have had other shadows: we have sat down under the shadow of our estate, our outward estate hath been sweet unto our taste. We have sat down, it may be under the shadow of friendship, and the fruit of friendship hath been sweet unto our taste; but behold here a tree, the tree of life, whose shadow reaches to the end of the earth: Ah, come, come and sit down under the shadow of Jesus Christ. If there be ever a poor soul, that never yet knew what comfort meant; Ah, come, come under the shadow of the Lord Jesus; the priestly office of Jesus Christ, it hath a very sweet shadow; come therefore, you that say you cannot profit under the means, and you that complain of such and such temptations, and such and such sins; and that you were never yet comforted, your consciences never pacified: come now, and sit down under the shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ. I tell thee, from the Lord, this fruit of his, it shall be sweet unto thy taste: thou shalt go to prayer, and prayer shall be sweet
unto thy soul, though heretofore thou couldst find no sweetness in it; so the word and other ordinances shall be sweeter unto thee than the honey or the honeycomb.

Thus it is evident how comfortable the priestly office of Jesus Christ is, and how much conducing unto our comfort, and holiness: Oh! therefore let us study, now study the priestly office of Jesus Christ, and come and sit down under his shadow, and the Lord make his fruit sweet unto all our souls. And thus I have opened, and applied the first particular of Christ's priestly office. The second follows, &c.

SERMON II.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to godliness, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 17, 18.

I have begun to discover from these words, that the priestly office of Jesus Christ, is the great magazine, and storehouse of all that grace and comfort which we have in this world: that whereby we are succoured, and relieved against all temptations. This hath been made good in the general; and in one particular work of the high priest.

If we now inquire further, what the work of the high priest was, and is, that accordingly we may address ourselves unto Jesus Christ for succour. We shall find, that it is also, to pray, and intercede for the people. "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people," says the text, "To make atonement for the sins of the people," says the Old Testament. Which reconciliation, or atonement, was made in the times of the Old Testament, not only by offering of a sacrifice, but by taking the blood thereof, and presenting that with prayers, and intercessions, unto God, to accept of it for the sins of the people. As we shall find in that same xvith of Leviticus: after the sacrifice was killed, the priest was to take the blood of it, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat; as we read in the 14th verse. And at the 12th and 13th, "He shall take a censer full of burning coals of
fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat.” He was to cause a cloud of incense to arise upon the mercy-seat. All which was a great type of the prayers, and intercessions of Jesus Christ: who having once offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins, hath carried the blood, and the virtue of it into heaven, there sprinkled the mercy-seat, and there still by his intercessions does appear for us; as it is proved at large, in the 6th chapter of this epistle to the Hebrews, 11th and 12th verses, “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves: but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” And at the 24th verse: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” And if you duly consider this book of the Hebrews, you will find, that this work of Christ’s intercession, is the essential work of his priestly office: it seems rather to go beyond the former, than to fall short of it. Hebrews, the 8th chapter, and the 4th verse, “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest.” That is, look as it was in the times of the Old Testament: if the priest had only offered a sacrifice, and had not gone into the holy of holiest with the blood thereof, sprinkling the mercy-seat, praying, and interceding that it might be accepted for the sins of the people, the priest had not done the work of the priest, and so he had not been a complete priest: so now, (says the apostle) if Jesus Christ had only offered up himself here a sacrifice, and had not gone into heaven, the holy of holiest, and carried the power and the virtue of his death thither, to pray and intercede for us, he had not done the work of the great high priest. Every priest might sacrifice, but every priest might not go into the holy of holiest, that belonged only to the high priest to do. Now therefore, Jesus Christ going into heaven, the holy of holiest, there to make intercession for us, is the great, and the special work of this High Priest.
That I may clear up this mysterious truth, I shall deliver myself these four ways; by opening.

First, Wherein the intercession of Christ consisteth: and what he doth when we say he intercedes in heaven for us.

Secondly, How powerful, and prevailing his intercessions are with God the Father.

Thirdly, That he doth now intercede as our great High Priest and in a more transcendent and eminent way and manner, than ever any high priest did before.

Fourthly, This does conduce to our comfort, and to our holiness.

First, if it be demanded, Wherein consisteth this intercession of Jesus Christ.

I answer. First it consists in this: His appearing for us in heaven, his owning of our cause, and of our souls to God the Father: it is the word that is used in that ixth chapter of the Hebrews, the 24th verse, "Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He does not in an ordinary way and manner appear for us in heaven; but with an emphasis, he does openly, and publicly, before all the saints and angels, appear for us in the presence of God the Father. It is a comfort unto a man, sometimes to have a good friend at court, at the king's elbow, that may own him, and appear for him: but though a man have a friend at court, sometimes if there be any danger, he will not appear and own a man; it may be he will own him, and countenance his cause as long as there is no danger, but no longer. But now, here, we have a friend in heaven, that will appear for us, and own our causes, and our souls, and in all conditions appear for us. That is the first.

Secondly, He doth not only appear for us; but by virtue of his priestly office, he does carry the power, merit, and virtue of his blood into the presence of God the Father in heaven, and sprinkles the mercy-seat with it seven times. Seven is a note of perfection. Those that Christ suffered for, he does intercede for. He takes all their bonds, and he carries them in unto God the Father, and he says, Father, I have paid these bonds, I have paid this debt, I have satisfied thy justice for these poor sinners, and now my desire is, that they may be acquitted from these bonds, and from these debts,
This also is remarkable in that ixth chapter of the Hebrews, 11th and 12th verses.

Thirdly, He doth not only carry the power, and virtue of his blood, and present it to God the Father for our discharge: but he does also plead our cause in heaven, answering unto all those accusations that are brought against us. And therefore we may read what the apostle says in the viiith of Romans 33rd verse. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God: who also maketh intercession for us." Upon this ground the apostle speaks thus; Who shall condemn them? Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God the Father, to take off all accusations that shall be brought against them. Let the world condemn, let Moses condemn, let Satan condemn; Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God the Father, to take off all accusations that shall be raised against them. Concerning this there is a clear and full instance in that notable scripture the iiiird chapter of Zechariah, and the 1st verse, we find Satan standing at the right hand of Joshua to resist him. "He shewed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." It was the custom of the accuser, to stand at the right hand of the accused: Psalm ixth verse 6th, "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand:" take the wall of him in his accusation, condemning of him. Now here Satan standing at Joshua's right hand, notes his accusing of him. Well what was the matter that he accused him of? Ye shall find that there was matter, verse the 3rd. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." Satan came and accused him that he had filthy garments: and so he had: for the priests had defiled themselves in Babylon, in marrying of strange wives, as Joshua and his children are charged, in the xth chapter of Ezra, and the 18th verse. Give me leave a little to open this charge of Satan, that we may see Satan had matter of charge, and accusation against Joshua. "And among the sons of the priests, that were found that had taken strange wives: namely the sons of Joshua." He was high priest. So that now, Joshua had defiled his garments:
there was then matter of accusation for Satan to work upon. But now, our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest steps in, and takes off this accusation: the Lord said (at the iiird of Zechariah, 3rd verse) unto Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee." The word used by the Septuagint, is the same that is used for excommunication. And it is here twice repeated, "The Lord rebuke thee, even the Lord rebuke thee:" not only to show the fulness of Satan's rebuke: but to show the fulness of the intercession of Jesus Christ. Now would we see the fulness of Christ's apology for Joshua? says the Lord unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, even the Lord rebuke thee: and (says he at the latter end of the 2nd verse) "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Thus it is true Lord, that Joshua hath filthy garments: but yet not withstanding, Joshua is but as a brand plucked newly out of the burning. Take a brand, and pull it newly out of the fire, and there will be dust, ashes, and dirt about it. Lord (says he) Joshua is but newly pulled out of the burning, and therefore, Lord, he must needs have some ashes, and some dirt, and some filth about him: O Lord, (says Christ) although that Joshua be clothed with filthy garments, I will take away those filthy garments: verse the 4th, "He answered and spake unto those that stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him: and unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." This can be none but Christ. Thus Christ takes off the accusation that was brought against Joshua by Satan, for his filthy garments. And so does the Lord Christ now; if a poor soul fall into any sin, defile his garments, Satan, he comes in, and takes the right hand of him, stands at the right hand and accuses, by reason of this filthy garment: but our Lord Jesus Christ our great High Priest, he being at the right hand of the Father, takes up the cause, and answers to the accusation: True Lord, this poor soul, indeed hath filthy garments; but he is but as a fire-brand plucked newly out of the burning: he was in his natural, and sinful condition the other day, in his burning, and he is but newly changed, and therefore he must needs have some dirt, and some filth upon him, as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning; and therefore consider him in that respect,
and though he have filthy garments now upon him; yet I will give him change of raiments, and take away his filthy garments. Thus the Lord Christ steps in to God the Father, and answers to all those accusations that are brought against him to God the Father. This is the third thing that he does by way of his intercession.

Again, he doth not only plead our cause, and take off accusations that are brought against us: but he does also call for absolution, and pardon of poor sinners, at the hand of God the Father, in a way of justice and equity: and therefore he is called, our Advocate: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," 1 John ii. 1. The work of an advocate differs from the work of a petitioner; an advocate does not petition the judge, but an advocate, he tells the judge what is law, what is right, and what ought to be done. So the Lord Jesus Christ being in heaven, and making intercession, is there as our Advocate: Lord (says he) this man, he hath sinned indeed, but I have satisfied for his sins, I have paid for them to the full, I have satisfied thy wrath to the full: now therefore, in a way of equity, and in a way of justice, I do here call for this man's pardon; thus Christ intercedes. And thus we see, briefly, wherein the intercession of Christ consisteth, and what he does when we say, That he intercedes for us in heaven.

Well, but suppose he does intercede, can he prevail in his intercession, hath he any potency, power or prevalency with God the Father in his intercession?

Yes very much: and therefore we find in that same iiiid of Zechariah, that Joshua goes away with a fair mitre upon his head; verse 5, "And I said, Let them set a fair mitre (or a crown) upon his head: so they set a fair mitre (or a crown) upon his head, and clothed him with garments, and the angel of the Lord stood by." Satan at the beginning stood at his right-hand to accuse him; but this accuser of the brethren goes away with a double rebuke, and Joshua goes away with a crown: through the intercession of Jesus Christ he goes away with a crown upon his head.

All which will appear to you if we consider three things. First, what great interest our Lord and Saviour Christ hath in the bosom of God the Father. Paul prevailed with Philemon for Onesimus, through the great interest that Paul
had in the bosom of Philemon. Our Lord and Saviour Christ, he hath lien in the bosom of God the Father from all eternity: he is his Son, his natural Son, his beloved Son, his Son that did never offend him: and therefore surely when he comes and intercedes for a man, he is most like to speed, to prevail. We know that David going out against Nabal and his house, Abigail comes forth, meets with David, and intercedes for Nabal; and Abigail did so powerfully intercede even for Nabal, that she turned David's heart quite round about. David swore he would not leave one of the house, and after Abigail had interceded a little for Nabal, in 1 Sam. xxv. 32, David said unto Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood." Pray what did Abigail say, that she turned David thus about, that her intercession was thus powerful? Says Abigail, "As for Nabal he is according to his name. And it shall come to pass (at the 30th verse) when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart to my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself." This shall be no grief at all unto thine heart, says she, and other words that she used, by which she prevailed here with David. But Abigail was a stranger to David: and Abigail she prays and intercedes for Nabal, a wicked, vile, foolish man. Shall Abigail, a woman, a stranger prevail thus with David for a Nabal? and shall not the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, not a stranger, nor a stranger to his bosom, but beloved from everlasting, shall not he prevail much more, when he comes and pleads the cause of the elect, and of the children of God, in the presence of God the Father, whom the Father loves also? Great is the rhetoric of a child: if a child do but cry Father, especially if the child be a wise child, he may prevail much with a tender-hearted father. The Lord Jesus Christ he is the Son of the Father, and he is the wisdom of the Father too; and God the Father is a tender-hearted Father. Oh! surely therefore, powerful are the intercessions of Jesus Christ with God the Father.
Secondly, the prevalency of Christ's intercessions with the Father will appear, if we consider the inclination and disposition that God the Father hath unto the same things that Christ prayeth and intercedeth for. If a child should come and intreat his father in a matter that the father hath no mind to, or that the father is set against, possibly he might not prevail: but if a beloved child shall come and pray the father in a business that the father likes as well as the child, surely then the child is very like to speed. Thus it is: the Lord Jesus Christ comes and he intercedes for us, and the Father hath as great an inclination and disposition unto the work that Christ intercedes for, as Christ himself hath; and therefore says Christ, "Lo, I come to do thy will: I come not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." That which Christ did, that he had a mind to; it was rather the will of the Father than Christ's will: the Father is as strongly inclined and disposed to what Christ did and wills, as Christ himself. "Those that thou hast given me," says he, "I have lost none:" they are thine own, Lord, and therefore I pray for them. We have a notable expression to this end in the xth chapter of John and the 17th verse. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again." "I lay down my life:" here is his suffering and his satisfaction. "That I may take it again:" go up to heaven and take it again and intercede. "Therefore doth my Father love me:" Oh! what a round of love is here: God the Father out of love sends Christ into the world to die for man: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Well, Jesus Christ out of love to us he dies for us: "Who hath loved us and given himself for us." The Father loves the world in giving Christ; the Son loves the world in dying for us; and the Father he loves Christ again for loving us. Christ loves us, and the Father loves Christ again for loving of us. A mighty high expression! that the Father should love Christ for loving us. So then look wherein the love of Christ is seen unto poor sinners, the Father's inclination and disposition is unto that as much as Christ's. So that when he comes unto God the Father and does intercede, he must needs prevail, because the Father loves him for his inter-
ceeding, the Father likes the matter as well as he, loves him the better for it.

Thirdly, this will appear also, if we consider upon what terms our Lord and Saviour Christ, our great High Priest, was taken and admitted into heaven, the holy of holiest: so it is called. He was honorably received into heaven, and he was received thither for to do the work of the high priest. He was honorably received when he came to heaven: “Sit thou down at my right-hand,” says God the Father to him; a note of honor. When Solomon would express his honor to his mother, he set her down at his right-hand. Thus God the Father would express the honorable welcome that Christ had when he came to heaven: Sit thou down at my right-hand, says he. Now ye shall observe, that whenever this is made mention of, the sitting down at the right-hand of God the Father; it is made mention of, not with the kingly office of Christ, but with the priestly office of Christ: as if he were set down there to do the work of the priestly office. One would think, I say, that this should be expressed with the kingly office of Christ, but you shall find it running along in the scripture still with the priestly office of Jesus Christ. Look into Hebrews viii. 1. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: “We have such, an High Priest, who is set on the right-hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” It is named with the priestly office. And so again in the xth chapter of the Hebrews, at the 11th and 12th verses, “Every high priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin: but this man (speaking of Christ) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God.” It is carried along with the mention of the priestly office of Christ; as if he were sat down at the right-hand of God the Father in heaven, on purpose to do the work of the priestly office. When Jesus Christ came into heaven, into the holy of holiest, he came thither as our great High Priest; and he said unto God the Father, Lord, I am not now come in mine own name, for my own sake only, but I come as the great High Priest, having on this breast-plate the name of all the elect: and I come to intercede for poor sinners; I come as High Priest. Says God the Father to him, Welcome
upon those terms, welcome upon those terms; notwithstanding thou dost come in their names, come and sit down at my right-hand, says God the Father to him. Thus the Father is engaged, for he received him upon those terms into heaven, as our great High Priest. The Father therefore is engaged to hear his intercession, and so the intercession of Jesus Christ must have a great deal of power and prevalency with God the Father in heaven. This is the second thing.

But, thirdly, Does the Lord Jesus Christ intercede for us in heaven as our great High Priest?

Yes, and he does do this in a more transcendent and eminent way and manner than ever any high priest did before him.

For, first, he hath gone through more temptations than ever any high priest did. “He was tempted,” says the text, “that he might succour those that are tempted,” as an High Priest. If he was tempted that he might succour those that are tempted, succour them as an High Priest; then the more he was tempted, the more experimentally able he is for to succour those that are tempted. Never any high priest that was tempted like unto Christ. “He was (says the apostle) in all things tempted like unto us, sin only excepted.” Poor soul, name any temptation that thy heart is scared at the thoughts of, and you will find that the Lord Jesus Christ he was tempted with that temptation. You will say, I am oftentimes tempted to doubt whether I be the child of God or no, and that very often. So was Christ too: you know the place in the ivth of Matthew, “If thou be the Son of God,” and “If thou be the Son of God,” twice that the devil would set an if upon Christ’s Sonship. Oh! but I am tempted often times to use indirect means to get out of trouble. So was Christ too: “Command that these stones be made bread,” says the devil to him. Oh! but sometimes I have been tempted even to lay violent hands upon myself. So did the devil tempt Christ too: “Cast thyself down off the pinnacle of the temple;” that was a temptation. Oh! but I am tempted unto such evil things, that truly I am afraid to speak of; such blasphemies, such horrid, and wretched blasphemies, as I think never came upon the heart of any child of God, so that I am afraid to think of them, and ashamed to mention them. And was not Christ so? was not he
tempted so? Says the devil to him, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Oh! horrid blasphemy! blush, blush, O sun: that the Lord Jesus, the God of glory, should fall down to the devil, and worship the devil; what wretched blasphemy was here, that he should speak this! and yet the Lord Jesus Christ, he was tempted to it. What shall I say, He was in all things tempted like unto us, sin only excepted. Now, there was never any high priest that was so tempted, and he was therefore tempted, that he might succour those that are tempted. He is more able as our High Priest to intercede, to put in for you, and to succour you, than ever any high priest was before him.

Again, as he hath gone through more temptations than ever any high priest did: so also, he is filled with more compassions. It behoved the high priest to be merciful: it is an office of love, and mercy. Now our Lord and Saviour Christ (says the apostle) is such an High Priest as cannot but be touched with your infirmities: the high priest that did go before him, sometimes, was not touched with their infirmities: Hannah came and prayed, and Eli's heart was not touched with her infirmity, at the first. But our High Priest cannot but be touched, he does sympathize with us under all our infirmities. He is afflicted in all our afflictions. It was the work of the high priest to sympathize with the people; and yet notwithstanding, there was a law, that the high priest might not mourn for his kindred, in that he might not, as others, sympathize or mourn. But now, our Lord Jesus, he does fully sympathize with us, and therefore goes beyond all the high priests that ever were before him.

Further, He is more faithful in his office, and place, than ever any high priest was. Aaron was an high priest, but unfaithful in the matter of the golden calf. But our Lord and Saviour Christ, he is more faithful than Moses was. In this iiird of Hebrews 1st and 2nd verses, (and so on) "Wherefore, holy brethren, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." He steps over Aaron; who was the high priest, and he compares him here to Moses in faithfulness. Now Moses was faithful in all his house: but our Lord and Saviour here, he is preferred before Moses in point of faithful-
ness; yet it is said, "Moses was faithful in all his house." When that the Lord commanded Moses any thing, as the Lord commanded so did he, and rose up early in the morning to do the commandment of God: he was faithful in all his house; and yet our Lord and Saviour was more faithful than Moses in the matter of his priesthood. For so it is brought in here, at the iiird verse, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house." Verse the 5th. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after: but Christ as a son over his own house." Look now, as a child or a son is more faithful in his father's house than a servant will be: so (says the apostle) Christ is more faithful than Moses. And look as the builder of the house, does go beyond, and excel every beam, and stone in the house, or every part of the building: so does the Lord Christ in faithfulness, exceed Moses. You will say, there is a great difference between a stone in the building, and the maker of the house: look what difference there is between a stone, or a piece of wood, and the maker of the building: so great a difference there is (says the apostle) between Jesus Christ, in the matter of his priesthood, and Moses; yet notwithstanding, Moses is faithful in all his house. Oh! then how faithful is Jesus Christ, in the matter of his priesthood! He goes before all that ever went before him.

Again, take other high priests, and though they were never so good, they could not always intercede, they died; the high priest died, and another came in his room: but this man liveth for ever to make intercession.

Yea, take the high priest in the times of the old testament; and while he lived, he did not always intercede for the people: once in a year, the high priest came to enter into the holy of holiest to sprinkle the mercy-seat with blood, and caused a cloud to arise upon the mercy-seat, with his prayer, and intercessions for their acceptance: and then he went out of the holy of holiest, and laid aside his garments. But now, our great High Priest, is ascended into the holy of holiest never to put off his priestly garments: and he does not once a year sprinkle the mercy-seat with his sacrifice, but
every day: and therefore he goes beyond all the high priests that ever went before him.

And yet further: take the high priest in the old law, in the times of the old testament: and though they did offer sacrifice for some sins, and intercede; yet there was other sins again, that no sacrifice was to be offered for. If a man did kill another at unawares, there was a sacrifice. If a man sinned ignorantly, there was a sacrifice. But says the text in the xvth of Numbers 30th verse. "If any man sin presumptuously, he shall be cut off, and there shall be no sacrifice for him:" no sacrifice, no intercession by the high priest then. But we have such an High Priest, that makes intercessions for all sins. So he says himself: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." Every sin, though it boil up to blasphemy, it shall he forgiven; but without sacrifice there is no remission: and therefore he hath made a sacrifice; and so he presents the sacrifice, and intercedes for every poor sinner: and therefore he is such an High Priest, that transcends all the high priests that ever went before him.

In the fourth place, How doth all this conduce now to our comfort, or our holiness; to our grace, or peace?

First, To our comfort. Very much to our comfort. And therefore in the ist chapter of Zechariah good words, and comfortable are spoken upon this occasion: (verse 8.) says the prophet, "I saw by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were there red horses speckled and white. Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees, answered and said, these are they, whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. And the angel of the Lord answered, and said, O Lord of hosts, how long, wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three-score and ten years?" Here is intercession. "And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me, with
good words, and comfortable words." Give me leave to open the words a little, and we shall see how much it makes to our comfort, this intercession of Jesus Christ. At the 8th verse, "I saw (says he) a man riding upon a red horse." This is the Lord Jesus Christ presented thus to us. "And he stood among the myrtle trees." The saints and people of God they are called the myrtle trees, for their greenness, sweetness, and fruitfulness. "And these myrtle trees were in the bottom." That is, in a dark, in a low, and a poor condition: it is the condition of myrtle trees, and of the saints and people of God to be oft in bottoms, and in a dark and low condition. Well: "Behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white: and I said, O my Lord, what are these?" Now that this is Christ; first of all, he is called a Man, and an Angel too. Secondly, as Christ walked between the golden candlesticks, in the book of Revelation: so here he stood among the myrtle trees, among the saints. And behind him (attending upon him) were red horses, speckled, and white. That is, angels sent to and fro through the earth, upon his message, and upon his errand; and unto him they come and give an account, and to none but Christ. Then we shall see this angel, that stood among the myrtle trees, comes and intercedes: all the angels they come and bring in this report, that the church and people of God were in a low condition. "Then this angel that stood among the myrtle trees, answered and said, (at the 12th verse) O Lord of Hosts, how long, wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three score and ten years?" It must needs be Christ, for no angel intercedes, but Christ alone. What is the fruit of this intercession? (at the 13th verse) "The Lord answered the angel that talked with me, with good words, and comfortable words." Aye, indeed, good words, and comfortable are the fruit of the intercession of Jesus Christ. It is a matter of great comfort this, that the Lord Christ, our great High Priest, is in heaven to intercede for us. Is it not a comfort to a poor man, to have a friend above, near the king, or in the court, that may be able to do him kindness? a man sometimes says, I had a friend indeed in the court, but now he is dead. Aye but, here is a friend that never dies: he ever lives to make intercession. Friends
may alter, and turn enemies; but he changeth not. Our Lord and Saviour Christ said unto his disciples, rejoice not in this, that the devils fall down like lightning before you: but rejoice in this, "That your names are written in heaven?" it is a matter of great joy to have one's name written in heaven: Oh! but what is it then, to have one's name written in the chief part of heaven, to have one's name written there upon the breast-plate of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, that is gone into the holy of holiest. Thus it is, the Lord Christ is now gone to heaven, entered into the holy of holiest, and carries our names into the presence of God the Father, and there pleads and intercedes for us. Oh! what matter of comfort is here!

But you will say unto me: This is exceeding good, and very comfortable in itself: but what is this to me? for I am afraid that the Lord Christ does not intercede for me: if indeed I could persuade myself, that the Lord Jesus were in heaven as my High Priest, to intercede for me, I think verily I should have comfort, though I were in the lowest bottom, though I were in hell itself: but Oh! I am afraid to bear myself upon the intercession of Jesus Christ, lest I should presume.

This is the great objection, and stands up continually, to resist the comforts of God's people: give me leave therefore, to deal with this objection all along, and to take it off, that so the comfort may fall more fully upon you.

First, I will shew, it is no presumption for us to bear ourselves upon the intercession of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Who those are that the Lord Christ does intercede for in heaven. And,

Thirdly, How willing, how infinitely willing he is to intercede for us: that so I may bring the comfort nearer to our own bosoms.

First, I say it is no presumption for us to bear ourselves upon the intercession of Jesus Christ: no presumption to believe. We know the story of the woman in the gospel, that came unto our Lord and Saviour, touching the hem of his garment for her cure, and she was cured thereby. But our Saviour perceiving virtue to be gone from him, he calls out the person, Who hath touched me? come forth; and the woman came forth trembling. Our Lord and Saviour Christ
does not say to this poor woman, How dare you thus touch me? how durst thou thus presume to do it? Consider, the woman had no command to do it, no precept to back her: the woman had no promise to engage her, that if she did touch the hem of his garment she should be cured. The woman had no example; never any before that touched the hem of his garment and was cured. No commandment, no promise, no example: surely now, if any man or woman should presume, it should be this woman, that had no commandment, nor promise, nor example; and yet the Lord Jesus Christ does not chide her away, does not tell her she had presumed; but, “O woman, thy faith hath saved thee, thy faith hath made thee whole.” Let me speak this home: we have a command now to believe in Christ; and a promise: Those that come unto him, he ever liveth to make intercession for them. And we have examples of many that have come unto Jesus Christ, born themselves upon his intercession, and have gone away cured. What! was it no presumption for the woman to come and touch Christ, without a commandment, and a promise, and an example? and have you examples, and have you promises, and have you commandments to believe, and will you say this is presumption? Be not deceived, it is no presumption for thee, poor soul, to bear thyself at length upon Jesus Christ.

Secondly, to make this out a little more fully, I shall discover who those are that the intercession of Jesus Christ does belong unto. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” 1 John ii. 1. You will say, This is to be carried upon those that were spoken of before: and those were such as had fellowship with the Father: “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” chap. i. ver. 3. “Now if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” If any man that hath fellowship with the Father, or Christ, sin; they have an Advocate with God the Father. First therefore stand you by I pray, that we will take for granted, all you that ever had any fellowship with God the Father, or with Jesus Christ; this doctrine of the intercession of Jesus Christ, and the comfort hereof, does belong to you.

Moreover, in the xviith chapter of John, there we find that
our Saviour says, he prays for those that do believe, and should believe. Those that he prays for here, he intercedes for in heaven: "Neither pray I for these alone (at the 20th verse), but for them also which shall believe on me through thy word." I do not pray only for those that do believe now, but for them also which shall believe. Well then, here is a second sort, those that do believe, and those that wait upon the Lord in the ordinance, that they may believe, or shall believe: stand you by also, you are another sort of people that the intercession of Jesus Christ, and the comfort thereof, does belong unto.

But now yet further, if we look into the viith chapter of this epistle unto the Hebrews, at the 25th verse we shall find these words: "Wherefore he is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Who are those? Those that come unto God by him. Lay this, and the liiird chapter of Isaiah, the 12th verse, together: "He was numbered with the transgressors (speaking of Christ clearly), and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." It may be thou canst not say, I have fellowship with God the Father: it may be thou canst not say, I do believe, I am persuaded that I do believe; thou canst not say so: well, but can you say thus: Through the Lord's grace I do come unto God by Christ; I have been, and I am a great transgressor, but I come unto God by Christ; I am one of the coming transgressors: I have been a transgressor, but I am a coming transgressor, I come unto God by Christ. Stand you by also, this intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, it belongs unto you: and let me tell thee for thy comfort, poor soul, whatsoever thou hast been, that comest unto the Lord by Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, he is gone to heaven to intercede for thy soul.

But you will say, There is one thing that makes me afraid he will not intercede for me, I have been so great a transgressor: for I have been a transgressor against Jesus Christ, this High Priest: Oh! I have sinned against this great High Priest, Jesus Christ, and therefore I am afraid he will not intercede for me.

For answer to this, I shall only desire you to turn to the xvith chapter of Numbers, the 41st verse, and consider it
duly; we read there, that all the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron: Aaron was the High Priest: and, says the text, "all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." They had murmured against Moses and Aaron. Then, at the 46th verse, "Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, put fire therein from off the altar, put on incense, go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun." And see what Aaron did: "And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed." They had sinned against Aaron the high priest, and yet Aaron (but the typical high priest, he was but a type of Christ) he ran in, although they had sinned against him, and he stood between the dead and the living, and made an atonement for them. Oh! if there was so much bowels of compassions in the type, in Aaron, when they had sinned against him, as to go and intercede for them: how much more is there in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the typified High Priest, to poor souls, to intercede for them.

But now, this may be more fully made out to us, if we do but take in the third thing, and that is: The Lord Jesus Christ, he is infinitely willing to intercede for us. We have seen who those are unto whom the intercession of Christ belongs: namely, such as have had any fellowship with God the Father, or with Christ: such as do believe, or shall hereafter believe: and all those poor transgressors that come unto God the Father by Christ. Now observe, how infinitely willing the Lord Jesus Christ is to intercede for us that are thus: that will appear thus:

First, He must needs be willing to do that which he hath received his anointing for. It is said of Aaron that he was anointed; and that ointment ran down upon his beard, and unto the skirts of all his garment: not a piece of Aaron's garment but was perfumed with the ointment that Aaron was anointed with. Surely there is not a skirt of the garment of Jesus Christ, but the anointment wherewithal he, our
High Priest was anointed, does run down upon him. He is the Messiah, the anointment: so he is called in the xth of Isaiah. The anointment. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above all his fellows: above all the high priests that ever were before him. And he was anointed for this very end, that he might do the work of the high priest; which is, to intercede for the sins of the people. And therefore in that place in John, 1st Epis. ii. 1, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." Christ signifies anointed. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father: but who is that? he is Jesus, that signifies your Saviour, and so he is willing to intercede. Aye, but it may be he is not able to do it, it may be he hath not received the anointing to do it. Yes, he is called Christ. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ:" or, if you will, Saviour, Anointing. So that he is anointed for this end and purpose, to be your Advocate. Now if a man do receive money for to lay out for the benefit of others, poor orphans, or the like; if a man be faithful, certainly he will lay out the money for them, according to the intention of him that did trust him with the money. The Lord Jesus Christ, he hath received the anointing, he is anointed as our great High Priest, to do the work of the priestly office: and this is one work, to intercede, and therefore he must needs be very willing to do it.

Again, the more any thing is the work of a man's relation, wherewithal he is clothed, the more (if he be faithful) is he willing to do the work. And I pray mind it a little. When men are exalted, and come to greatness or honor, then they give down the comforts of their relation unto those that depend upon them: if a father come to any great preferment, the comfort of the relation of the father then falls down upon the children, runs down then upon the fruit of his loins. And so, if one friend do come unto preferment, the comfort of the relation (or friendship) falls down. Now the Lord Jesus Christ, he is our High Priest; and he is now exalted, he is gone to heaven: and therefore all the comforts of all the relations that he stands in towards us, do now fall upon us. And therefore he is willing, he is very willing, because this is the work of his relation.

And further, It is the work of his office. What a man
does by office, that he does willingly; what a man does by office, he does industriously, he does not do it by the by: what a man does by office, he does it readily; according unto a man's place, or office, so will his interpretation be. Suppose now a child that hath very good parts, come before three men, of three several professions; a lawyer, a minister, and a merchant. The child having very good parts; the merchant says, he will make a very good merchant; the lawyer says, he will make a very good lawyer: and the minister says, he will make a very good scholar: according to their three relations, or places, or office, or work, their interpretation is. So now, if three men, of three several trades, whose work lies about wood, come and behold a fine green tree: one man says, it is good for this: and another says, it is good for that: and the third says, it is good for another use: according to his place and calling will his interpretation be. So now, when a poor soul comes before God: Moses (the law) looks upon him: and the devil looks upon him: and Jesus Christ looks upon him: the work of the law is to condemn; the work of the devil to accuse; and the work of Jesus Christ is to intercede, it is the work of his office. Now therefore, as soon as the devil sees such a soul, Oh, says he, here is a fine instrument for me, here is a fit subject for me to enjoy. As soon as Moses sees this man, Here is a fine subject for me to condemn unto all eternity. But when Jesus Christ looks upon such a soul, says he, Here is a fine soul for me to save unto all eternity, to intercede for! Why? Because it is his office, and what a man does by office, he interprets accordingly. Therefore what the Lord Jesus Christ does, he does by office, and he does it readily and willingly. And I will give you one demonstration of it; it was the end why Jesus Christ was taken into heaven, into the holy of holiest: that he might intercede. According to scriptures mentioned before, in Heb. ix. 24: "For Christ is not entered into holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He does not say thus, Christ is now gone to heaven, to be glorified there; Christ is now gone to heaven, to enjoy the bosom of his Father, for his own happiness. No, but he is gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. This is the end of his ascension. And so again in the
viith of the Hebrews: "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us?" What! is he in heaven to be glorified there? No, but the end why Christ is in heaven, is to make intercession for poor sinners: and therefore, he must needs be infinitely willing to do this, because it is the end of his going thither into the holy of holiest. Oh therefore be of good comfort, all you that do come unto God by him, for he is willing to intercede for you. And let not any thing discourage you. It may be you will complain, and say, Oh! but I am much opposed here in this world. What matter, so long as Jesus Christ does intercede for me in heaven, and speaks good words unto God the Father for me in heaven; what though I be opposed by men? It may be you will complain, and say, Oh! but I am much tempted, and cannot pray. Be humbled for it; but yet know this, that when you cannot pray, Christ prays for you; and he prays that you may pray. It may be you complain, and say, Oh! but I labour under such and such corruptions, and the devil he is busy with me, exceeding busy, and I cannot overcome them: and the devil stands at my right hand for to tempt me, and to lead me into such and such sins. Well, be it so, yet, notwithstanding the Lord Jesus Christ, he is at the right hand of our Father, and he is set down at the right hand of God the Father, till all his enemies be made his footstool; and your sins are his enemies: and therefore be of good comfort, O all ye people of the Lord. Is there ever a poor myrtle tree, a soul that grows in a bottom, in a poor dark condition? be of good comfort, the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, he is entered into heaven, into the holy of holiest, there to intercede with God the Father for thee.

Aye but, you will say unto me, Does not this conduce to our grace and holiness too? and how does it do it? This intercession of Jesus Christ; this work of the priestly office of Christ, and the consideration thereof, it does conduce exceedingly unto our grace and holiness. For,

First, what a mighty encouragement is here unto all poor sinners, for to come unto Jesus Christ. "He ever liveth to make intercession for those that come unto God by him." Oh! then, who would not come unto God by Christ? who would not come unto Jesus Christ? Methinks a poor sinner
should say, Indeed my sins were so great, that I was afraid for to come unto God; but now I hear that the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven, to make intercession for all those that come unto God by him, though I have been a drunkard, now I will go unto God by Christ; and though I have been a swearer, and though I have been an unclean wanton, yet I will go unto God by Christ. Indeed I thought that my time was past, for I have been an old swearer, and I have been an old drunkard, and I have been an old Sabbath-breaker, and I have been a sinner so long, that I was even afraid of going to God at all, and thought there was no mercy, nor no pardon for me: but seeing now that this is true, that the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven to make intercession for all those that come unto God by him, well, through the Lord’s grace, now I will go unto the Lord Christ, I will go unto Jesus Christ. I indeed am a young man, and I thought it was to no purpose to go unto God, God would not regard poor ignorant ones, and I am a poor ignorant creature, and thought it was to no purpose for me to go unto God. But now I understand this, that the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven to make intercession for all those that come unto God by him; well then, though I am ignorant, yet will I go unto God by Christ; and though I am but a poor young thing, and scarce understand the terms of religion, yet will I go unto God by Christ. Oh! come unto Christ, come unto Christ. Behold here, in the name of the Lord, I stand and make invitation to poor sinners. Come, poor drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker, unclean heart, the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven to make intercession for all that come unto God by him; and will not you come? Oh, how will you answer it at the great day! when it shall be said, The Lord Jesus Christ made a tender and offer of mercy to you, and you would not accept of it, you would not come unto him. Here is matter of great encouragement unto all poor sinners to come unto Jesus Christ.

Again, secondly, the more I apprehend or see with a spiritual eye that the Lord Jesus Christ does appear in heaven for me, the more am I engaged to appear upon earth for him. Mark, I pray, that you may see how this does conduce unto grace and holiness. Ah! shall the Lord Jesus Christ appear in heaven, before saints and angels and God
the Father for my soul, and shall I be afraid to appear before poor worms for him? Shall the Lord Jesus Christ own me in heaven, and shall not I own him upon earth? Shall the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great High Priest, take my name, and carry it upon his breast into the presence of God the Father, and shall not I take the name of Christ and hold it forth to the world? Oh! I beseech you consider what a mighty engagement is here to stand to and appear for the Lord Christ, and to own his cause in these backsliding times, because he is now in heaven appearing for you, and making intercession for you.

Thirdly, the more I consider or apprehend that the Lord Jesus Christ does lay out himself for me, the more am I engaged to lay out myself for him. The Scripture says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for you." He lays out his whole eternity for you. Methinks we have here before us, the greatest argument in the world for to make us to walk closely with God in Christ; for shall the Lord Jesus Christ spend of his eternity for me, and shall not I spend of my whole time for him? He ever liveth: "He ever liveth to make intercession." Before the world was made, his delight was in the habitable parts of the earth, among the children of men. He laid out himself in delighting upon you before the world was made. Well, in due time he comes down into the world; and here, while he was upon the earth, he laid out himself fully for you. Then he dies, and goes up to heaven, and, says he, "I go to prepare a place for you." He was at work for you before the world began: then he comes down upon the earth, and here he spends all his time for you: and now that he is gone to heaven, the text saith, "He ever liveth to make intercession for you;" he spends off all his eternity for you. Oh! does not the Lord Jesus grudge me eternity, to spend off his eternity for my soul; and shall I grudge the Lord Jesus Christ a little time, to spend a little time for him? Surely people do not think what Christ is doing in heaven for them, (you that are saints especially) if you did, you could not be paddling in the world so much. Shall the Lord Jesus Christ be appearing in heaven for me, and shall I be digging in the world? Shall he be making mention of my name unto God the Father, and interceding for me; and shall I be sinning
against him, shall I be contending with his children, shall I now be joining with his enemies, shall I be opposing his ways? Oh! if people would but think what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing in heaven for them, they would not rebel so in the world against him as they do. Wherefore, that you may be kept from your sins, and kept from the world, think of these things. The apostle says, "These things have I written unto ye, that ye sin not: and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And so say I to you: I have been here delivering to you this doctrine concerning the priestly office of Jesus Christ; and these things have I preached unto you that you sin not. And therefore, that you may be kept from sin, and your hearts made more holy, think of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, he is gone into heaven to make intercession for you. And thus have I discovered the second particular of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. A third follows.

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SERMON III.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to godliness, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 17, 18.

We have found already, that the work of the high priest was and is, to satisfy and to intercede for the sins of the people.

Now if we inquire further, we shall find also, that the work of the High Priest was and now is, To offer up the gifts of the people unto God; to present our prayers, praises, duties, services, and all spiritual performances unto God the Father, and to procure acceptance of him. This was done thus.—In the times of Moses, in the Tabernacle there were two parts or courts, as we read in the ixth chapter of the Hebrews. In the one which was called the holy of holiest, there was the ark, the mercy-seat, the cherubim of glory, and the golden censer. In the other there was the brazen altar upon which they offered sacrifices, there was the
table of shewbread, the golden candlestick, and the golden altar upon which incense was. This is expressly laid down in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses of that ixth of Hebrews: "For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick and the table and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant, overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it is the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." And as every day, morning and evening, there was a lamb offered, a sacrifice for the sins of the people, upon the brazen altar; so every day, morning and evening, there was incense also upon the golden altar: which was performed while the people were without at prayer, mingling that incense with their prayers; as it is in the 1st chapter of Luke, the 8th, 9th and 10th verses: "It came to pass that while he (that is, Zacharias) executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord: and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." So that the incense was at a time when they were sweetly mingling their prayers and the incense together. But now, although that there was a sacrifice every day, yet once in the year the high priest came, and he took the blood of the sacrifice, and carried it into the holy of holiest, and sprinkled the mercy-seat therewith. And although there was incense too, from the golden altar, every day, yet once in the year the high priest came, and he took the golden censer, and putting incense into it from off the golden altar, went into the holy of holiest and caused a cloud of perfume to arise upon the mercy-seat. All which was a great type of Jesus Christ our High Priest: who though he offered up himself a sacrifice once for sin without, yet when he died and ascended, he carried the virtue of that his blood into the holy of holiest, into heaven, and sprinkled the mercy-seat therewith: although he began to make intercessions while he lived, as we read in the xviith of John; yet when he ascended up into heaven, the holy of holiest, then he did take his golden censer, and carried his intercession into
heaven, causing a cloud of sweet perfumes to arise upon the mercy-seat: which still he does, whilst we are praying here without, he mingling all our duties with his intercessions; and so taking altogether as one, presents it unto God the Father for our acceptance. And this he does now as our High Priest; for if we look into this book of the Hebrews, we shall find, that the apostle speaking of the High Priest, relating unto Jesus Christ; says, in the vth chapter and the 1st verse, that it was his work to offer gifts: “That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices.” And so in the viith chapter and the 3rd verse: “Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices.” Thus we have another great work, of our great Priest; which is, to offer up all our prayers, our duties, our gifts unto God the Father, which if ye will, we may call another part of Christ’s intercession; but I handle it distinct.

Now that I may open and clear this great gospel mystery, I shall endeavour to discover:

First, What Jesus Christ, our High Priest, doth, when he does offer up our gifts unto God the Father.

Secondly, What abundance of favour and acceptance this our great High Priest himself hath in heaven.

Thirdly, That he doth improve all that his own acceptance, for our acceptance; planting all our duties upon his own acceptance, upon that acceptance that he hath with the Father.

Fourthly, What abundance of acceptance therefore we have, in all our duties by him.

Fifthly, How this doth conduce to our grace and to our comfort.

First, What doth our Lord and Saviour Christ, our great High Priest, when he offers up our gifts unto God the Father?

First, He doth take our persons, and carries them in unto God the Father, in a most unperceivable way to us. He knows that if our persons be not first accepted, our duty cannot be accepted: Love me, and love my duty; love me, and love my service: hate me, and hate my service. In the covenant of works, God did first accept of the work, and then of the person; the person for the work: but in the covenant of grace, God doth first accept of the person, and then the work. Now, therefore, that our work and our duty may be accepted with God the Father; the Lord Christ, our
High Priest, doth first take our person and our name, and
carries them into the presence of God the Father. This was
plainly shadowed out unto us by that of the high priest;
who went into the holy of holiest, with the names of all the
tribes upon his breast. Which the apostle speaks out
plainly: "In whom we have access with boldness." The
word access, as some observe, is manuduction, hand-leading:
In whom we have an hand-leading; or by whom we are led
by the hand unto God the Father. As a child, having run
away from his father, is taken by the hand of a friend, or of
his elder brother, and brought again into the presence of his
father: so, all we having run away from God, are taken, and
led again into the presence of the Father by the hand of
Jesus Christ. He is that ladder that Jacob saw, upon whom
we do ascend into the bosom of God, and go into heaven.
Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, doth first take our persons,
and lead us into the presence of God the Father.

Secondly, As he doth take our persons, and lead, and carry
us into the presence of God the Father: so, when we do
perform any duty, he doth observe what evil, or failing there
is in that duty, and draws it out, takes it away before he
presents the duty unto God the Father. A child that would
present his father a nosegay or posy, goes into the garden, and
he gathers flowers and weeds together; but coming to his
mother, she takes them, and picks out the weeds, and binds
up the flowers by themselves, and so it is presented to the
father. Thus it is with us: we go to duty, and we gather
weeds and flowers together: but the Lord Jesus Christ, he
comes and picks out the weeds, and then he presents nothing
but flowers unto God the Father.

And this we have plainly set forth unto us, by that of the
high priest taking away the iniquities of the holy things of
God's people, in the xxviiiith chapter of Exodus: "Thou
shalt make a platform of pure gold (at the 36th verse) and
grave upon it like the engravings of a signet HOLINESS UN-
TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it
may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it
shall be." Then at the 38th verse: "And it shall be upon
Aaron's forehead (that is, the high priest), that Aaron may
bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of
Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be al-
ways upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.” Thus taking away the iniquity of their holy things. So it is said concerning our Saviour Christ, in the iiird chapter of Malachi, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th verses: “Who may abide the day of his coming?” plainly understood of Christ, as appears by the 1st verse. Then at the 3rd: “He shall sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old.” Then shall their offerings be pleasant. When? When he hath purged their sacrifices and their offerings. This in the days of his flesh, and now much more. This is the second thing, that the Lord Christ, our great High Priest doth in offering up our gifts unto God the Father, he takes out the weeds.

Thirdly, As he takes away the iniquity of our holy things, so he observes what good there is in any of our duties, or performances; and with that he mingleth his own prayers and intercessions; his own incense; and presents all as one work mingled together unto God the Father. This we have so fully in the viiith chapter of the Revelation, that I need name no other place: “Another angel (at the 3rd verse) stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke (at the 4th verse) of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel’s hand.” This must needs be understood of Christ; for no angel doth intercede but Christ, who is called, “The angel of the covenant.” It is said, he stood at the altar, having a golden censer: which none of the high priests had: and there was given unto him much incense, and this he offered with the prayers of all the saints; and the smoke of the incense came with the prayers of the saints, and ascended up before the Lord. He alludes unto the way, and custom of the Jews, and the high priest: shewing, that the Lord Jesus Christ doth all this for us, as our great High Priest: that is the meaning of it. So that this is plain what
he doth, when as our great High Priest, he offers up our gifts unto God the Father.

But in the second place: Suppose he doth so, what favor or acceptance hath this our great High Priest in heaven?

He hath very much: "Father (says he) I thank thee that thou hearest me always." He never spake a word unto God the Father, but the Father heard him always. We read (as I remember) but of two places in the New Testament where the Lord by an audible voice gives testimony of Jesus Christ his Son: and in both those places we have the same words uttered, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:" and again; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We may know what favour a man hath with another, by the trust that he doth commit to, and re¬pose upon him: Joseph had great favour in the eyes of Pharaoh; and how did it appear? it appeared by this, be¬cause Pharaoh trusted him with so much. Now God the Father hath trusted Jesus Christ, this our great High Priest, very much. This I shall evidence in four particulars, viz. What a great trust God the Father hath put upon him.

First, It was an agreement between God the Father, and Christ, the second Person, before the world was, that in due time he should come into the world, take flesh upon him, and die for sinners: and he did so. But before Christ came into the world, there were thousands of souls saved; how came they to be saved? They came to be saved by the blood of Christ, and before Christ had died. So then, God the Father saved them upon Christ's bare word, that he would come into the world, and die for them. What a mighty trust was here! That so many hundred thousand souls should be saved, upon a bare word of Christ that he would come into the world, and die for them afterward.

Again, the trust appears in this: that he was made when he did come into the world, the great Lord Treasurer of all the grace and comfort, that should be given out unto the children of men. When Pharaoh trusted Joseph, all the whole kingdom was put into his hand, with the corn thereof, and not a grain was to be given out to any but as Joseph gave it out: which argued a mighty trust. So now, that not any grace or comfort, given out to the children of men,
but only by the hand of Christ, it argues a mighty trust that the Father put upon him.

But yet further, when our Lord and Saviour Christ died, and ascended unto God the Father to heaven; as soon as ever he came into heaven, saith the Father to him, Thou hast now suffered, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession:" all the world at one word. Ask of me (saith he) and at the first word I will give thee the whole world. It was a mighty, and a great trust that the Father did put upon him.

Yea, as if all this were not enough; the Father did put the keys of heaven and of hell into his hand: the keys of heaven and hell into the hand of Christ. So we read in the 1st of Revelation 18th verse. "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." There is no man that goes to hell, but he is locked in by Jesus Christ: and there is no man goes to heaven, but Christ hath the keys of heaven, and he locks him in there unto all eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ, he hath the keys of hell, and of heaven; he hath the keys of all men's eternity hanging at his girdle. Oh! what an infinite trust is here, that God the Father hath put upon him! Then let us conclude, if that trust do argue favour; and the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, hath such a great trust as this put into his hands by the Father; what infinite acceptance must he needs have with God the Father.

In the third place: Suppose that he have all this favour and acceptance in heaven, doth he improve this his favour, and acceptance, for our acceptance, and for our favour?

Yes, he improves all this his favour and acceptance, for our acceptance, and does plant all our prayers, and duties, upon his own acceptance. Lord, (saith he unto his Father concerning believers) "I will, that where I am, they may be also: I will, O Lord, that they may be one, even as thou Father and I am one." He doth not count himself full, and happy, but in the happiness, and fulness of the church. And therefore, as Christ is called, The fulness of God the Father: so the church is called, The fulness of Jesus Christ: in the 1st of the Ephesians, and the last verse; "Which is
his body the fulness of him that filleth all in all." When our Lord and Saviour Christ came to die, and the heart and love of God the Father was let out unto him: ye shall find, if ye look upon that xviith of John, and read it all over, that he spends his time, not so much in praying for himself: the time was but short, and his prayer short, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass: if not, yet not my will, but thine be done." But he spends most of the time, in praying and interceding for those that did believe, or should afterward believe. The favour and acceptance which the high priest had, in the time of Moses, was not for himself: he had a mitre upon his head, and a golden girdle upon his loins — priestly garments; and he had great acceptance when he went into the holy of holiest; but it was not for himself, he did improve it all for the people: he was to lay it out all for the people, and not for himself. Our High Priest, goes beyond all other high priests in this particular also: for now, as for other high priests, though they went in with their incense, and covered the mercy-seat with a cloud; yet it was but once in the year: but our High Priest, is always in the holy of holiest, and never goes out of it, ever covering the mercy-seat with his intercessions. Take their high priest, and though he were very holy as Aaron was; yet sometimes he made the people naked unacceptable: but our great High Priest, never makes his people naked, but always clothes them with his own righteousness.

Take their high priest, and though he did go into the holy of holiest for the people, yet he never led the people into the holy of holiest, they stood without: but our great High Priest, is not only gone into the the holy of holiest himself, but doth also lead every poor believer into the holy of holiest; as we read in the xth of the Hebrews, and the 19th verse: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus Christ." The people might not enter into the holiest, in the time of the Jews: but our great High Priest, hath improved his favour for us thus far, that every man may come into the holy of holiest.

Now, if our great High Priest in this respect go beyond all the high priests that ever were before him, and they did improve their interest, and their favour, and their acceptance for the people, much more doth the Lord Jesus Christ our
High Priest, improve the favour, interest, and acceptance that he hath in heaven, for our acceptance, and the acceptance of all our duties. And that is a third particular.

But, if that be so; then surely we have great acceptance in all our duties: but have we so?

Yes, very great; in, and through the Lord Jesus Christ our High Priest. And therefore, if we look into the xivth of John, our Lord and Saviour saith, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name (at the 13th verse) that will I do." Aye, but may we be sure of this? He repeats it again (in the 14th verse) "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Yea, that ye may see what great acceptance we have now through him, in all those duties that we offer up to God the Father: saith he in the xvith chapter and the 26th verse. "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loves you." It is a mighty high speech. I do not say, that I will pray for you: ye shall have so much favour and love in heaven, from the Father immediately, that he will hear you presently. Aye, but is not all upon Christ’s account? Yes, and therefore saith he, at the 13th verse of the xivth chapter, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." So that all is upon Christ’s account. Great was the testimony of Christ’s acceptance which he had from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now if we look in the Scripture, we shall find, that the same words are given unto the saints. Is the Lord Jesus Christ called the Son of God? My beloved Son: so are believers too; "As many as receive him, have power to be called the sons of God." Is he called, the beloved Son of God? "This is my beloved Son:" so are the saints also; in the xxxist chapter of Jeremy, at the 20th verse. "Ephraim my dear son, a pleasant child." Ephraim; that is Israel, my dear son, a pleasant child. Well, is it said, "In whom I am well pleased:" my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: the same word also is given to men. When our Lord and Saviour Christ was born into the world, the angels they came and sung at his birth, and they sung "Good-will towards men:" so we read it; but it is the same word that is used concerning Christ himself, "My beloved Son, in
whom I am well pleased." So that whatsoever word there is in all this speech, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; whatsoever word there is in that sentence concerning Christ, it is given also unto the saints, unto believers; so greatly does he improve his own favour and acceptance for our acceptance, and so great acceptance have we through Christ.

Yea, as the Lord Jesus Christ is said to be made sin for us, in the abstract; so are we said to be made righteousness by him; in the abstract too: as we have it in the ist of the Canticles, and the 3rd verse. "Therefore do the virgins love thee:" so we read it in our English translation; but in the Hebrew it is, "Therefore do the righteousnesses love thee." The saints and believers through Christ, are called, righteousnesses, in the abstract. So that here is the great acceptance, that the saints, and believers do find through this acceptation of Jesus Christ our High Priest.

But, suppose a man be very poor, and lives in some mean cottage; which hath but one room to lie, dine, and sup in; and that a smoky, dark room too: and this poor creature comes and prays unto God: will the great and glorious God of heaven and earth take notice of such a prayer, from such a worm as this? and shall he find acceptance with God the Father?

For answer to that, look into the iind of the Canticles, and the 14th verse. "O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance," (they are the words of Christ) "let me hear thy voice:" why? "for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." But I pray, where now is the church? In the clefts of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs: in a hole under the stairs (as it were) in a poor distressed place, an hidden place; now (says he) here thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance comely.

Well, but suppose that a duty, or service be performed by one that is weak; weak in grace, or weak in parts and gifts: for that is my case, (will some say) I am one of very weak parts and gifts, and I have little memory, or ability of speech; there are some men indeed, that are of great parts, and graces, and when they pray, I make no question but their prayers do find acceptance; but as for me, I am one of very
mean abilities; Oh! can there be any acceptance of such prayers as mine are through Jesus Christ? Will God answer such stammerings, lisings, half words, broken imperfect petitions?

Yes, we know that the pair of turtles were accepted in the time of the law, by those that could offer no more. Surely much more now, will a poor turtle be accepted in the time of the gospel, and those that could but bring goats-hair towards the making of the tabernacle, they were welcome: and shall it not be so now, much more in the times of the gospel? That which is little in regard of quantity, it may be great in regard of proportion; as the widow's mite was. The sun falls (we know) with a common influence upon all the herbs, and plants: but there is a several sweetness, and flowers that are of a several, and different growth: there is the rose, and there is the violet: the violet is not so tall as the rose, the violet lies on the ground; but though the violet be not so tall as the rose, the violet hath its sweetness: and it may say to the rose, though I be not so tall, yet I have my sweetness as well as thou hast. So now, there is a common influence from Jesus Christ upon all the saints, and they have their several sweetness: one as the rose, and the other as the violet: it may be, here lies a poor Christian upon the ground like the violet, and is not so tall in gifts and parts as the other is; but yet notwithstanding, he hath his sweetness. Christ takes that lovingly that comes from love, whatever it be, though it be never so weak.

Well, but suppose that a man's duty, or service be performed with many failings, infirmities, hardness of heart, straitness of spirit, distracting thoughts; this is my case: Oh! is there any acceptance for such a duty as this is? will the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, take such a duty as this is, and carry it in unto God the Father, and is there any acceptance for such a duty as this?

We know how it was with Nicodemus, and the woman that came trembling, and touched the hem of Christ's garment. And we must know that in every duty, that we do perform, there are two things: there is the sacrifice; and there is the obedience in offering the sacrifice. Though the sacrifice may be imperfect, yet your obedience in offering the sacrifice, may be perfect, with gospel-perfection. It is in re-
gard of our duties, as in regard of our persons; never think that God will deal otherwise with our duties, than he deals with our persons. The Lord came and justified the ungodly, when he justified you: he comes, and he finds a poor soul in a sinful condition, and he imputes his righteousness unto that soul, and justifies an ungodly one, not justifying him so as to go on in sin; it is the word of the apostle, "He justifies the ungodly." So the Lord comes and finds a great deal of ungodliness in your duty, and he imputes his righteousness unto that duty: and he justifies the duty, which in your eyes is an ungodly duty. This indeed is the wonder of all, that he should deal thus by us: for, did we ever hear of any garment, that would make the crooked straight? If a man have a crooked back; come and put velvet upon him, silk, scarlet upon him, it may make him handsomer, but it will not change his back, and make him straight. But when the Lord Christ comes, he finds all our souls crook-backed, as it were, and he puts on his righteousness, and this garment makes that which was crooked to become straight: it makes the very crook-backed duty, to become a straight duty. Did we ever hear, or read, of any seal, that when it was set upon the wax, would change the wax into gold, or into silver like the seal? it may leave its impression, but it does not change the wax into its own metal. If there be a stamp set upon silver or gold, the metal remains as it was before: but if a stamp be set upon brass, it does not make it silver; or if it be set upon silver, it does not make it gold. Aye, but when the Lord Jesus Christ comes unto a duty, and sets his own stamp, and his own righteousness upon a duty, that which was brass before; full of failings, and much unrighteousness before; changes it into gold, into silver. He only hath the philosopher's stone (as I may so speak): all that Christ touches turns into gold; turns all our duties into gold: and when he hath done so, he presents them unto God the Father. This our great High Priest doth. And this is the fourth thing.

But how doth all this make for our comfort, or for our grace?

Surely, we cannot but see already how it doth make for our comfort.

Is it not a comfortable thing, for a man to know, that his
duties are not lost? that his prayer is not lost? that his hearing the word is not lost? that his searching the Scriptures is not lost? that his conference and communion is not lost? A man is unwilling to lose any thing: and the more precious it is, the more unwilling to lose it. If we have a venture at sea: we are unwilling to lose our venture: and the greater our venture is, the more unwilling to lose it. If a man have but a quarter of his estate in a vessel, he is unwilling to lose it; more unwilling if he have half his estate; most if he have all, and his children there in the vessel too. Now as men are unwilling to lose their wordly venture: so a man that is sensible of his soul, is very unwilling to lose his soul’s venture; to lose his prayers, and to lose all his duties. Friends, here is an insuring office; the Lord Jesus Christ is our great insurer in this respect: and he doth as he is our High Priest, offering up our gifts unto God the Father, assure us that none is lost, not any lost. Indeed, if we had such an high priest, as were not able to take notice of the circumstances of our duties, much might be lost: but this our Lord Christ, our great High Priest, doth not only take notice of our duty whatever it be; but of all the circumstances of our duties, and so presents them unto God the Father, in the full latitude, in all the gracious circumstances of them. Therefore saith he, unto the angel of the church of Pergamos in the iind of the Revelation, and the 13th verse; “I know thy works.” Why, but Lord, though thou dost know our works, yet it may be thou dost not take notice where our work is done: Lord, it may be thou dost take notice of my prayer, but Lord, thou dost not take notice where I dwell, and live, and in what family I do pray unto thee; Lord, I am in a wicked, and a wretched family, that does oppose prayer: Lord, may be thou dost take notice of my prayer, but thou dost not take notice of this circumstance: yes, (says he) “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is.” Well, “and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” It is remarkable, the Lord Jesus Christ takes notice, not only of our duty; but of every circumstance of the duty, and so he presents it unto God the Father, not only the duty, but the circumstance of the duty; and there-
fore there is not a hair of your duty lost, not one grain of your duty lost: is not this an unspeakable comfort unto a poor soul, that knows that nothing is lost of all the prayers it hath made unto God, that there is no loss at all? The very pantings of our hearts at the throne of grace, are received into the bosom of our heavenly Father.

Further, is it not a comfort for a man to have liberty to go unto the mercy-seat, and there for to meet with God? It is said of wicked men, "That they sit in the seat of the scornful." There is (it seems then) the seat of the scornful; and there is a mercy-seat: a drunkard, when he is with his drunken company, and sits upon the ale bench (it may be) scorning, and jeering at some of the godly, making songs on them, he is set upon the seat of the scornful; that is a cursed seat. Aye, but there is another seat, there is a mercy-seat; and there is never a poor saint and child of God, but he may go in to the mercy-seat of the Lord Jesus Christ that hath all the favour and acceptance in heaven; he carries him in to the mercy-seat, and God the Father will never put him by: what comfort is here!

Besides, is it not a great comfort to a man; for to know how it shall go with him at the great day of judgment? When there shall be hundred thousands at the right hand of Christ; and hundred thousands at the left hand of Christ; when all faces shall gather paleness? Oh! (says one) that I did but know, how it shall go with me at that day! This doctrine tells us, That the Lord Jesus Christ is our judge at that day, and he that shall judge us then, he takes our prayers and all our duties now, and carries them in unto the presence of God the Father, and by him we have acceptance, and according to these we shall be judged. Surely then, if he takes our duties and carries them in for acceptance, unto God the Father, he will never judge you for them, and condemn you for them at that day. Here is comfort!

Once more; is it not a comfort, for a poor beggar to be relieved at a rich man's door? We are all beggars in regard of heaven; and the Lord Jesus Christ, he does not only come forth and serve us, but he takes us (poor beggars) by the hand, and leads us in to his Father. Oh! what comfort is here! what comfort is here!

Indeed if I were able to say, that the Lord did accept my
duty, this were comfort indeed: if I were able to conclude, that the Lord Jesus Christ did take my prayers, and my duties, and carry them in unto God the Father; this were sweet consolation: but how shall I know that?

If the Lord Jesus Christ be our High Priest, then we may say also, that he takes our duties, and carries them in for acceptance unto God the Father: if we may say that Jesus Christ hath satisfied for us, and doth intercede for us, then we may say also, that he takes our duties, and carries them for acceptance unto God the Father.

But yet a little further, to bring this comfort nearer to your hearts; give me leave to appeal to you:

First. Whosoever thou art that makes this objection: Didst thou ever find a spiritual fire come down from heaven (as it were) upon thy heart in duty, or after duty? In the times of the Old Testament, if they offered up a sacrifice, and a material fire came down from heaven and burnt up the sacrifice to ashes, it was a certain testimony that the sacrifice was accepted. Now in the times of the gospel we must not expect material fire to come down upon our duties: but hath the Lord at any time caused an inward, and spiritual fire to fall down upon thy heart, warming thy spirit in duty? there the Lord speaks thus much to thee; thy sacrifice is turned into ashes, and it is accepted by Jesus Christ.

Again, did you never find in your heart (you that make this objection) to pray, and cry, and intercede for others, for the godly especially? Look what disposition there is in your hearts towards the members of Christ, there is the same disposition in Christ's heart towards you. Ah! do you think that there is love in your bosom towards the saints; and that there is none in Christ's heart towards you? Do you think that your bowels are more large than Christ's? Canst thou find in thine heart to go unto God, when thou seest a saint in misery, to go to God, and pray, and cry, and intercede for him? and do not you think that the Lord Jesus hath as much bowels towards you, to go and intercede for you, and present your prayers unto God the Father.

Further, do not you look upon your own duties, as coming from yourselves, most unworthy? Beloved! it is in regard of duties, as it is in regard of persons: when a man
does judge himself to be most unworthy, then Christ counts him worthy. God counts him worthy in Christ. As you read in the ist of the Canticles, says the spouse there, verse 5. "I am black (O ye daughters of Jerusalem) as the tents of Kedar: Look not upon me because I am black," verse 6. Now would you see Christ's opinion of her, that counts herself black, saith she, black and black again: but Christ saith concerning her; verse 8. "O thou fairest among women." She calls herself black, and Christ calls her fair, and "the fairest among women." Now, when a man doth count himself most unworthy, God counts him most worthy: and when a man looks upon his own duties, and sacrifices, as most unworthy, they are looked upon by Jesus Christ as most worthy; poor prayers in our eyes, are precious in God's eye.

A word more: do not ye think, that grace is larger now, in the times of the gospel, than it was in the times of the law? If ye doubt it, as unto this particular; look upon the xxxth chapter of Exodus, compared with the xlist of Ezekiel. In the xxxth chapter of Exodus, the Lord commands an altar to be made to burn incense upon; "Of shittim wood shalt thou make it:" verse the 1st. "A cubit shall be the length thereof," verse the 2nd. The altar is for incense; it is the matter that now we are upon: "A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and two cubits shall be the height thereof." Now in the xlist chapter of Ezekiel, he speaks of the altar in the times of the gospel: and (saith he) at the 22nd verse, (it is the altar of incense that there is prescribed to be made, the altar of wood, of shittim wood.) "The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits." And yet again, this altar of incense in the times of the gospel, is to be as large again, as that in the times of the law; as high, and as long, and as large again. In the times of the law, times of the Old Testament; a poor soul might go unto the high priest, and might challenge a right in him, and might say, That his service, and his duty, and his sacrifice was accepted by the high priest. If in the times of the Old Testament a man might say so; much more may a poor soul now go unto Jesus Christ our great High Priest, and say, that his service and his duty, and sacrifice, is accepted through him. Here
is abundance of comfort unto the saints: be of good comfort, all you that do believe.

But, how doth this make unto our holiness, unto holiness of life? We confess indeed, that there is abundance of comfort in this, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, takes all our gifts, and all our prayers, and presents them to God the Father, and that in his acceptance, we have acceptance: but I pray, how doth all this conduce to our holiness of life?

Much every way:

First, in case I be ungodly, a wicked man: here is that that may for ever keep me, from opposition to the good ways of God. I have said sometimes (may a wicked man say) concerning godly men’s duties, That it was their hypocrisy: and I have said concerning such and such professors, this is your pride, and this is your singularity; and I have opposed, with all bitterness, and earnestness, the prayerings, and wrestlings of some of God’s people; but is this true, that the Lord Jesus Christ, takes every prayer, of the meanest of God’s children, and carries it into the bosom of God the Father? and shall I spit upon that that Christ owns? shall I dare to oppose that that the Lord Jesus Christ presents unto his Father? The Lord in mercy pardon me: I have sinned and done foolishly, and for aught I know, I may have spoken evil of that duty, that Christ hath carried into the presence of God the Father: Oh! through the Lord’s grace then, for ever will I leave to make any opposition, against any of the good ways of God again, and I will never speak one word against the persons, meetings, or supplications of the godly again.

Again, In case a man be ungodly, a wicked man: here is mighty encouragement, for to come unto Jesus Christ; aye, and to come presently. For is Jesus Christ the ladder that Jacob saw, by whom we go up to heaven? doth he take all our duties, and prayers, and present them to God the Father for acceptance? Then, till I do come to Christ, all is nothing, all is lost: if I be a drunkard, and will not come to Christ, prayer is all lost; If I be a swearer, and will not come to Christ, an unclean wretch, and will not come to Christ; all my prayers, and all my duties are lost: Oh! the Lord pity me (may many a poor soul say) I have lost too many prayers already; through the Lord’s grace, now
I will lose no more: Oh! I come to Christ, Lord I come, I come. This is a mighty encouragement, to make every man now for to come unto Jesus Christ; because the Lord Jesus our High Priest, takes every duty, and carries it into the bosom of God the Father for acceptance. Thus for ungodly.

Secondly, in case a man be godly; this truth doth conduce to our further holiness, and growth in grace.

If I be godly; then here I see infinite reason, why I should be much in duty; not only pray, but be much in prayer. Why? for the Lord Christ taketh all, and carries all into the bosom of the Father, mingles his own odours, intercessions with it, although it be but a sigh, and a groan. The apostle upon this account, makes this use of it? having spoken of Christ our High Priest? Therefore (saith he) "let us come with boldness unto the throne of grace." The word signifies, to speak all one's mind? let us come speaking all. Having such an High Priest indeed, as will carry all into the presence of God the Father, for acceptance, every sigh, and every groan? then who would not be much in prayer? speak all to Christ, be free with Christ, "come with boldness?" There is many a poor soul, that is much discouraged, and he dares not go to prayer, many times, afraid to go to the throne of grace. The reason is because he looks upon his prayer, or duty, as it lies upon his own heart, or as it comes from himself. Whereas, my beloved, it is with your prayers, and duties, as it is with fire: your kitchen fire is troubled with abundance of smoke, and there is filth about it; fire upon the hearth hath much smoke: but fire above, in the element of fire, there is no smoke. So, your prayer, when it lies upon your own hearth (as I may say) there is a great deal of smoke; but when it gets once into the hands of Jesus Christ, there is its element, and it is freed from all its smoke. Or as it is with a man's body: so long as he lives here upon the earth, he is feeble, and weak, and many times sickly: as soon as he is come into heaven, all his weakness is taken away, and his body being in heaven, it is presently glorified, and strength put upon it, and all his diseases are gone. So it is with our prayers: so long as they are here below, in our own bosoms, they are full of weakness; but as soon as our prayer is out of our mouth, it is in the hand of Christ, it is in heaven, it is glorified, the weak-
ness is now done away; Oh! it is a glorified prayer; when once it is gone from you, it is in the hand of Christ. And therefore, this is a mighty encouragement unto all those that are godly, to be, not only in prayer, but to be much in prayer, come with boldness unto the throne of grace.

Again, If ye be godly; yea, if ye be ungodly: here I see infinite reason, why I should receive every truth that comes from Christ, though accompanied with many failings in him that speaks it. The Lord Jesus Christ, he accepts of every prayer, and duty that comes from me; though it have many weaknesses: yea, he takes my prayer, and carries it into the presence of God the Father for acceptance, my poor prayer, labouring with many weaknesses: then when a truth comes from Christ, shall not I accept of it? what though the minister, or preacher that speaks it, labour with this or that weakness? There is pride, or there is some miscarriage in the delivery, or the like: shall the Lord Christ take my prayer, labouring under infirmity, and accept thereof, and carry it into the presence of God the Father for acceptance, notwithstanding all the failings of my duty? and shall not I accept of truth that comes from Christ, notwithstanding all the failings of the poor messenger that brings it?

Further, the more evangelical you are in your obedience, the more holy ye are in your lives. This truth that is now before ye, well studied and considered, will make you more obedient in an evangelical way. And ye shall find therefore, that the Lord himself from heaven does make this use of it: pray consult with the xviith of Matthew, and the 5th verse, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." Those words follow, "Hear him." Hearing notes faith, and obedience; not bare hearing with the ear. Compare this, and the same speech together, which ye have in the iiird of Matthew and the 17th verse. "Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Hear ye him, is not there in the iiird of Matthew; but here in the xviith of Matthew, these words are added, Hear ye him: what should the reason be, that hear ye him, should be added here in the xviith of Matthew, and not in the iiird of Matthew? Give me leave to give you some reason for it, so far as may make to our present purpose: not to say any thing of that which Moses said, In his days a prophet will
the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me, hear ye him. And now here, in the xviith of Matthew, at the transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared, which they did not in the iiird of Matthew.

First, consider that the emphasis may lie upon the word hear, and not upon the word him, only: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him;" his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And Christ appeared in great glory, and they stood looking upon him; nay (says the Lord from heaven) do not make it a gazing matter, but hear him: do not stand looking upon him, but hear him. He does not appear in such a glory in the iiird of Matthew, when he was baptized; and therefore those words are not added there.

But again, here now in the xviith chapter of Matthew, at the transfiguration, appear Moses, and Elias. Behold (at the iiird verse) "There appeared unto them, Moses and Elias talking with him." Moses that gave the law; Elias that restored it. "Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus; Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Peter and so the rest of the disciples, began for to equalize Moses to Jesus Christ: one for Moses, and one for Elias, and one for Jesus Christ; no more for Christ than for Moses. Now the Lord takes Peter off from all his mistakings: Your eye is upon Moses (saith he) but I (saith the Lord God Almighty) am well pleased in my Son: this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. I am well pleased with you, and with your duties, through this my Son, and not through Moses; and therefore hear Christ, and not Moses. He lays this in upon it, that therefore they should be evangelical, and hear Jesus Christ, because the Lord Christ gives acceptance unto all, and by him God is well pleased with them.

Again further, the more glory Christ does appear in, the greater reason there is why we should hear him. Now here the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in glory; his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light. In the iiird of Matthew, he was there baptized, and he did not appear in glory: but now here he appears in glory; and therefore says the Lord, now hear him; this is your glorious
Saviour, hear him. Beloved! what greater glory can Jesus Christ appear to your souls in, than this, the glory of his love? he takes every one of your duties, and your prayers, and he carries them into the bosom of God the Father, and by him you have acceptance. Oh! what a glorious Saviour have ye! therefore hear him: this is that, if anything, will make ye very obedient to Christ, more than to Moses, to be evangelical in all your duties.

Yet further, the more a man can rejoice in spiritual privileges with humility; and the more humble a man is, and yet can rejoice in his spiritual privileges, the more holy he is: there goes a great deal of holiness to it, to join these two together: for a man to rejoice in his spiritual privileges and yet to be humble: and to walk very humbly. Some there are, that look upon their spiritual privileges, and rejoice much; but they do not walk humbly: some labour to walk humbly, and are much troubled in the consideration of their own evil; but they do not rejoice in their spiritual privileges. Give me a christian that doth both, and he is a blessed man. The study of this truth that is now before you, will teach you to do both, to do both together: for, what a great privilege is this, not a sigh, not a groan, not a duty, but the Lord Christ takes it, and carries it in, and presents it to God the Father for me, whereby I have acceptance? Considering this; here is matter of much joy and rejoicing. Aye but, it is Christ that does it; there is no such worthiness in mine own duty; it were lost, and cast away, if Jesus Christ did not take it in his hand, and carry it into the bosom of God the Father, and therefore, why should I not walk humbly.

I conclude all with this, if that the Lord Jesus Christ our great High Priest, offers up all our gifts unto God the Father, whereby we have acceptance: what infinite cause have we all to be thankful to God for Christ, and to love Jesus Christ for ever!

Suppose one of you had been among the disciples, when the Lord Christ washed his disciples' feet; and he should have come, and washed your feet, and have done it; would not your heart have glowed with love to Jesus Christ? Yet when the Lord Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet, it was in the days of his flesh, when he was here on the earth: but
now he is in glory, and yet for all this, he takes your dirty prayers, and does (as it were) wash the feet of your prayers, that he may present them to God the Father: he washes your tears over again in his blood, and presents them to God the Father: he takes all your duties, and perfumes them with his intercessions, and so presents them unto God the Father. Oh! what cause have we to love Jesus Christ! Oh! you that never loved Christ, love him now; and you that loved him before, love him much more: you that fear the Lord, love the Lord: and let us all, even go away with our hearts warmed with this love, blessing and praising the name of the Lord.

And thus I have led you into a third work of our great High Priest, which is this, to offer up the gifts of the people unto God the Father: A fourth follows, &c.

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SERMON IV.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to godliness, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 17, 18.

It hath been opened and applied, that the work of the high priest, was, and is, to satisfy for the sins of the people; to make intercession for them; and to offer up their gifts unto God the Father; all which Christ doth for us.

I shall speak of one work more of our great High Priest, and that is, to bless the people. We read in the Old Testament, of two sorts of high priests: one according to the order of Aaron the Levitical high priest, as I may so speak, and his work was, for to bless the people; as we may read in the vith chapter of Numbers, and the 23rd verse: "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them," &c. There was another high priest; not according to this order of Aaron; and that was Melchisedec: and he also did bless Abraham. And the apostle speaking of him as a great type of, and in relation to Jesus Christ our great High Priest, in
the viith chapter of this book of the Hebrews, and the 6th verse, saith, that he blessed Abraham: "But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tythes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises." So then this blessing of the people, being the work of both the high priests; and both Aaron and Melchisedec being great types of Jesus Christ our High Priest; surely it must needs be one of the great works of our High Priest, for to bless the people.

For the opening and clearing up of this truth, I shall endeavour to discover:

First, What the blessing of Christ our High Priest is, wherein it consists, and what Christ doth, when he doth bless the people.

Secondly, That it belongs unto Jesus Christ especially, for to bless the people.

Thirdly, That our Lord and Saviour Christ, our great High Priest is exceeding willing for to bless poor sinners; and that this blessing of the people, is a work whereunto he is much inclined, and wherein he is much delighted.

Fourthly, That he doth this, and doth it fully.

Fifthly, According to our method: how all this doth conduce unto our comfort, and unto our holiness.

First, If ye ask me, what the blessing of Christ, and of the gospel is; and wherein it consists?

I answer first in the general, That the blessing of the gospel, and of Christ, consisteth in spiritual things especially, and not in temporal. And therefore saith the apostle in that ist of the Ephesians, and the 3rd verse: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us, with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." The curse, and judgments of God, that do befall men now under the gospel, are not in outward afflictions, and bodily troubles so much; as in spiritual miseries, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart: and so also on the contrary, the blessing of the gospel, doth not consist so much in outward things, as in spiritual; "Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings." Indeed, if we look into the Old Testament we shall find, that when Moses did bless the people, he blessed them much in temporal blessings. In the xxviiith of Deuteronomy, and the 2nd verse. "All these things shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken to the
voice of the Lord thy God." What blessings are those? "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kind, and the flocks of thy sheep: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." Thus he goes on in outward blessings. But now if we look into the gospel, and consider the blessings of Jesus Christ, and lay them together with Moses, we shall find them to be spiritual blessings. In the vth of Matthew, and the 3rd verse &c. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: blessed are those that mourn for they shall be comforted." Indeed the promise of the earth comes in at the 5th verse; but he returns again to spiritual blessings: "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the poor in heart; for they shall see God." Here are spiritual blessings; this is the stream of the gospel, it runs this way. When the Lord blesseth a man, he gives him that which is suitable to him. In the times of the gospel, men are more spiritual than they were in the times of the law; therefore gospel-blessings, they are spiritual blessings. Every thing gives, and communicates to another, according to what it hath itself: the sun communicates light unto the world, because it hath light itself: and man communicates the nature of man unto his child, because he hath the nature of man himself. So our Lord Christ, when he blesses, he communicates according unto what he hath himself; and his blessings especially consisting in spiritual things, so he doth bless. Indeed, as in the times of the Old Testament there were spiritual blessings, that were mixed with temporal, by virtue of the covenant that was made with Abraham: so now, outward blessings are thrown in as an overplus: but yet notwithstanding, though they be not spiritual in their nature, they are spiritual in their end, and so it is true to say that the blessing of the gospel, and of Christ is a spiritual blessing.

But more particularly, if ye ask me wherein this consisteth? I shall name but two things:

First, This blessing of the gospel, or of Christ, it consists in a supernatural, and spiritual enjoyment of God in Christ: the love and favour of God in Christ. When the priests
blessed in the times of the Old Testament, in that vith of Numbers they said, "The Lord cause his face for to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace: the Lord bless thee, and keep thee." Verses 24, 25, 26. Which the apostle Paul expounding, in the 2nd Cor. the xiiiith chapter and the 14th verse, renders it thus: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." The Lord bless thee, the Lord cause his face to shine upon you; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you: three times; the Lord, the Lord, the Lord; noting the Trinity; which the apostle here explains by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Seeing of God, is a blessing out of the mouth of Christ, a gospel blessing. And what is it for a man to see God? In the phrase of the Old Testament, the Hebrew, to see, is ordinarily used for to enjoy. In the ivth Psalm. "Who will shew us any good?" The word in the Hebrew is, Who will make us to see any good? that is to enjoy good. So then, to see God, it is to enjoy him. When Jacob enjoyed God, he saw him; and the place it was called, Peniel; for he had seen the Lord, and there the Lord blessed him. There is no seeing of God but in Christ. And therefore I say, that herein consists the blessing of the gospel, in a supernatural, and spiritual enjoyment of God in Christ, the favour and love of God in Christ.

Again, it consists also, in the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in our hearts: the giving out of the Holy Ghost unto the hearts of men. And therefore it is added in that place of the Corinthians; "And the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." That must needs be the great blessing of the gospel, and so of Christ; that is the thing promised in the gospel. What is that? If we look into the 1st chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the 4th verse, it is said there of the disciples, "That they should wait for the promise of the Father." Christ commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father. What is that? We know what it was, and is, that which befel afterward; it was the giving out of the Holy Ghost: the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and this
is called "The promise of the Father." That as in the times of the Old Testament, the promise was, the giving of the Son, and coming of the second person: so after Christ came, the great promise was, the coming of the third person, and the giving of the Holy Ghost. "When I am gone (saith Christ) I will send ye another Comforter. He that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This he spake concerning the Spirit, which was not yet given, in those extraordinary emanations of gifts and graces, because he was not yet glorified. So then, the great blessing that was to be given unto the children of men, the great gospel blessing, was the giving out of the Holy Ghost: this is a gospel blessing indeed.

Well, but what doth Christ do, when he doth bless?

It is observable, that when any superior did bless; a father did bless his child, or the like; he did observe what was the choice mercy, and good in those times, and he did wish that unto his child, or unto his inferior. And so in Isaac, and Jacob's time; the choice good was the dew of heaven: and when they did bless their children, they wished unto them the dew of heaven. So now, when our Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, doth bless any man; observing that the choice mercy of the gospel is the enjoyment of God in Christ, the favour and love of God, and the giving out of the Holy Ghost into a man's heart; he doth wish all this good unto him, and he says unto God the Father: Lord, let this poor soul have thy favour; Oh! cause thy face to shine upon this poor soul, and give out the Holy Ghost unto it that it may walk after the Spirit.

In the second place, it is observable, that when the priests did bless the people, they did not barely wish good unto them, but they did authoritatively pronounce them blessed. "They shall put my name upon them, saith the Lord, when they bless," Num. vi. 27. So when the Lord Christ, our great High Priest, doth bless a man, he does not barely wish him good, the Lord cause his face for to shine upon that soul in a way of wishing: but the Lord Christ being a High Priest when he blesseth, he doth authoritatively pronounce such a soul to be blessed.

Thirdly, When the priest blessed, he did not only pronounce the people blessed: but in the blessing of the priest
there was a kind of binding power; it had the power, force, and efficacy of an absolution. And, therefore, as Christ says unto his disciples, "Go, and whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted:" I will stand by you in it. So saith the Lord in that same place, the vth of Numbers, "On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee." And at the 27th verse, "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." I will stand by them in this. So when the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest doth bless, he doth not only pronounce a man to be blessed, but he doth absolve him from all his sins: and, saith he, by authority that is given to me from my Father, the keys that are put into my hand, I do bind this blessing upon this poor soul.

Further, The priest when he blessed, indeed he could wish well, and he could pronounce a man blessed, and he might absolve, but he could go no further, he could not confer the blessing, he could not bestow the blessing: but our Lord Christ, being an High Priest beyond all the high priests that ever were before him in this respect too, where he doth bless, he bestoweth the blessing, being God and man, he bestoweth the blessing.

In the fifth place, This our great High Priest, being God and man; look how God blesseth, so doth he bless. In the Scripture ye shall find, that when God the Father blessed, he said unto those things that he blessed, Increase and multiply: still when he blessed, Increase and multiply. So the Lord Jesus Christ our High Priest, when he comes to bless, he doth not barely wish good unto a poor soul, or pronounce him blessed, or bestow a good thing upon him; but saith he, O soul, multiply in this good; the Lord increase thy graces, and thy gifts, and thy comforts; poor soul, increase and multiply herein. This the Lord Christ our great High Priest doth. Thus it is clear what the blessing of the gospel is, wherein it consists, and what our High Priest doth when he doth bless the people.

But, secondly, Does this blessing properly or specially belong unto Jesus Christ?

Yes, for he was made a curse for sin, he and none else made a curse for sin; and, therefore, it belongs unto him above all the world for to bless. For look what evil Jesus
Christ endured, the contrary good he merited for the children of men, a power to bestow that good. Now he above all was cursed, hung upon the cross, and died a cursed death, he was made a curse; therefore it belongs unto him above all for to give the blessing, for to bless poor sinners. *Primum in quolibet genere, &c.* The first in every kind is the cause of the rest. The sun is the cause of all the light we have here below, and it is the first light body. And the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the first blessing: therefore hath thy God blessed thee for ever. There are three that we read of in Scripture especially that did bless: the father, the king, and the priest: the father did bless his children, the king blessed his subjects, and the priest blessed the people. Now the Lord Jesus Christ he is our Father, "The everlasting Father:" he is our King, "I will set my King upon my holy hill:" and he is our great High Priest; and therefore all these relations meeting in him, it belongs unto him above all for to bless the people.

But, thirdly, is the Lord Jesus Christ willing for to bless poor sinners and inclined unto it?

Yes, he is very willing: this blessing of the people, it is a work whereunto he is much inclined, and wherein he is most delighted. Ye shall observe therefore, what abundance of blessings Christ scattered among the people when he was here upon the earth. Ye do not read that ever he cursed any man, formally cursed him. Once, indeed, he pronounced a curse, but it fell upon a barren fig-tree, not upon a man. But take your Bibles and turn over from leaf to leaf, and see how frequent he was in blessing; and consider whether you do read in all the Bible of any preacher or prophet that ever in the way of their preaching pronounced so many blessings as Christ did? He begins blessing, "Blessed are the poor;" and "Blessed are those that mourn;" and "Blessed are those that hunger and thirst;" and "Blessed are those that are persecuted for my name’s sake. Blessed are those that hear the word of God and keep it. He took little children into his arms and blessed them." Do but mark in all the gospel, how frequent Christ was in blessing, never in cursing; more frequent in blessing, than ever any preacher was in all his sermons. What is the reason of this? Because this work of blessing the people is a work wherein the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is much delighted, a work whereunto he is most inclined.
Well, fourthly, but doth he do it?
Yes, he doth do it, and doth it fully. The same place that I named will prove it, the 3rd verse, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Not only meritoriously, but by the hand of Christ. And, saith he, he hath done it, with all spiritual blessings, and he hath done it by Jesus Christ.
You will say, We do not see that men are thus blessed by Christ; for where Christ blesseth, he doth not only wish well and good unto a man, but he bestoweth it; yea, he doth not only bestow good, but he doth increase and multiply: but upon this account, how few are there in the world that are blessed by Christ!
For answer, It is a hard thing, sometimes, unto a Christian for to discern this blessing of Christ. Ye can see the boughs, fruit, body, bark of a tree; but if ye will see the root, ye must dig and take pains for to see it: it is an easy thing to see the leaves, &c., but if you would see the root, ye must dig and take pains for it. This blessing of Jesus Christ it is the root of all; and if you will see this, you must dig and take pains to see it, it does not lie open to every one's view. The Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, does not bless as man blesses, and so his blessing is very much hidden from our eyes; he does not bless as we do, he does not bless as the world does: if the world sees a rich man, it pronounces him blessed: O! there is a blessed man, and there is a happy man! what an excellent dwelling hath he, how healthful! his table is spread, &c. The world blesses rich men, pronounces them happy and blessed. But our Lord Jesus Christ, he does as Jacob did when Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob to be blessed by him; he set Ephraim the younger at the left hand of Jacob, and he set Manasseh the elder at the right hand of Jacob, that Jacob might give the right hand blessing to the elder, and the left hand blessing to the younger: but when Joseph had set them thus before Jacob, Jacob crosses hands, and he turns the right hand blessing to the younger. So two men are brought before Christ, a rich man, it may be, and a poor man, and in the eye of the world, the rich man must carry the blessing: O! but our Lord Christ, he crosses hands, and he lays the blessing upon the younger brother
many times. And so in regard of ordinances: two sorts of ordinances are brought before Christ, God's ordinance and man's ordinance; and man's ordinance, in the eye of the world, is the elder brother, and God's ordinance the younger brother; and both these are brought before Christ for a blessing, and the ordinance of man is set at the right hand of Christ by the world; but the Lord Christ, he crosses hands, and he lays the blessing upon the younger brother in this respect. And so two men are brought before him, a proud Pharisee and a poor broken-hearted sinner; the Pharisee comes unto the right hand of Christ, and thinks for to carry the blessing; but the Lord Christ crosses hands, and lays the right hand blessing upon the poor broken-hearted sinner, and passes by the proud Pharisee. The Lord Christ doth not bless as the world blesseth.

Again, as he doth not bless as the world blesseth, so he doth not bless always as professors bless. Professors, they do ordinarily bless men according unto their outward privileges, gospel and church privileges: O! says the woman unto Christ, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and blessed are the paps that gave thee suck." Christ crosses hands. Nay, but, says Christ, "Blessed are those that hear the word of God, and keep it, and do my commandments." You bless according to outward privileges; I do not go that way of blessing, says Christ: he does not bless as professors bless always.

Thirdly, He does not bless as godly men bless always; as gracious men bless, not always. For, you that are godly, you pronounce such a man blessed, as hath much grace, and hath assurance of the love of God in Christ; and one that hath strong and great parts, and able to carry away whole sermons word for word, and of strong memory and large gifts, that are head and shoulders above their fellows. But the Lord Jesus Christ does not always bless thus: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," says he. "Blessed are those that mourn." He does not say, Blessed are those that rejoice; or, Blessed are those that have the assurance of God's love; or, Blessed are those that are strong in grace: No, but dost thou know a poor weak Christian, a mourning soul like a dove of the valleys, says the Lord, I bless him.

Thus I say, the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest,
he does not bless as we bless, he does not bless as the world blesses, he does not bless always as professors bless, he does not bless always as godly men bless, and therefore no wonder that his blessing is hidden. Children when they are very young are often blessed by their parents, and they do not mind it or take notice of it; children of two or three years old: and so it is with many a gracious soul blessed by Jesus Christ, they do not take notice of their Father's blessing. But the Lord Christ doth always bless his people; only, there are several times special seasons that he gives out his blessing: let me tell ye of those times a little, that so ye may come for his blessing while his hand is in as it were; so that you may be crowned with spiritual blessings in and from Jesus Christ.

First, When Christ our High Priest doth see that a man is weak in grace or weak in gifts, and hath some work or service for him to do, some employment to call him forth unto; then the Lord Christ doth bless him. There are two times especially, as I remember, that the Lord speaks those words concerning man, "Increase and multiply." Once in the beginning, when he had made man and woman; and once in the ixth of Genesis, when he had brought Noah out of the ark. Why does he rather choose for to speak those words, Increase and multiply, at these two times especially, rather than at any other time? In the beginning there was but a little stock of mankind, and the Lord had a design upon man to make use of him in the world, and therefore in the beginning, says he, Increase and multiply: but afterward that the flood had swept away man, Noah and his family being preserved, when he came out of the ark, the Lord having yet a further design upon man to use him, he reneweth those words again, Increase and multiply. So when the Lord Christ sees that a man's heart is upright and sincere with him, and he hath some work and service for him to do, then the Lord comes forth and blesses him: O soul, increase and multiply, increase in thy gifts and graces, and multiply. That is one.

Again, As the Lord doth bless weak gifts and graces when he intends to use them; so also when as he hath made use of a man, when a man hath done the work of God, and done it to purpose, then the Lord blesses that man. Melchisedec, a great type of Christ, here when Abraham had been upon a great service, slaying kings, and rescued Lot, then Melchi-
Sedec the high priest comes forth and blesses him. So when the Lord Jesus Christ our great High Priest, sees that a poor soul hath been upon his work, upon his service, and hath done his work faithfully, then he comes forth and blesses that soul: O soul, live for ever.

Again, As he does bless at this time, when a man hath done his work; so also when a man is willing for to leave all his relations and natural engagements for to follow him to cleave close unto him, and to his ways, and ordinances. The Lord blessed Abraham, "Thou shalt be blessed; in blessing I will bless thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Upon what occasion? "Abraham," says he, "get thee out of thy country, and go to a land and place that I will shew thee." And Abraham did so, Abraham pulled up his tent, and went after the Lord, and left his own relations; and thereupon the Lord fell upon him and blessed him. So when the Lord Christ our High Priest sees a soul willing even to trample upon his relations for to follow him, willing to leave all natural engagements for to be his servant; then the Lord Christ comes out, and says he, This soul do I bless: In blessing I will bless thee, and I will bless thee exceedingly. That is a third time.

Fourthly, The Lord Christ, our High Priest, does bless when the world curses, a special time of Christ's blessing is when the world curses. When Rabshekah reviled, blasphemed, and cursed, then God blessed. When Balak hired Balaam for to curse the people of Israel, then the Lord blessed them by the mouth of Balaam himself. And ye see what Christ says to this purpose in that same vth chapter of Matthew, at the 10th verse, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." But when are they blessed? "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you." Aye but, suppose it does not come to a bodily persecution, men may not be thrown in prison, or brought to the stake. Says he, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile," persecute you with the tongue, "and say all manner of evil against you for my sake." When the world says of such a poor soul, that he is an hypocrite, a dissembler; and speaks all manner of evil that can be devised against a poor soul for the name of
Christ, that is the very time, that Christ comes for to bless that soul, then doth Christ bless; it is a blessed season.

In the fifth place, The Lord Christ does also bless, when his people do graciously enjoy the ordinances purely and evangelically administered. It is said concerning Zion, there commanded he his blessing for ever, "Blessed are the people that hear the joyful sound; they shall walk in the light of his countenance," Ps. lxxxix. 15. It is written of the priests in the times of the old testament, that when the people, the congregation were come together, they blessed them; when the people were come together for the enjoyment of ordinances according to God's own appointment, then the priests blessed them. And did their high priest bless them then? and shall not our High Priest do it now? Did their high priest bless them when they sat under Mosaical ordinances? and shall not our High Priest bless the people that sit under evangelical and gospel ordinances, purely and evangelically administered? The people then might make account of the greatest blessing; and so you may do also of the blessing of Jesus Christ when thus you do enjoy ordinances. Only there is this difference: (other differences there are, but this only I shall speak of;) Then the priest did bless the people when the congregation was dismissed; but now, the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, he is blessing of the congregation all the while; he is going up and down in the congregation all the while that the word is preached and ordinances administered, and he is blessing poor souls as they sit longing after him, and sighing towards him; he is blessing of them all the while. Thus he does bless, and though you do not always perceive it, yet he doth bless his people. And that is the fourth thing.

But yet you will say, fifthly, How does all this conduce unto our comfort and unto our holiness?

Much every way.

First for comfort, beloved, Is it not a comfortable thing to be blessed by Jesus Christ? Children counted it a great matter to be blessed by their parents. When as Jacob had gotten the blessing from Esau; Esau goes and sits down and mourns, he could not be comforted because the blessing was gone: and Jacob, though he were thrust out of doors, yet because he had gotten the blessing, he went away cheerful;
and it was but an Isaac's blessing. But behold a greater
than Isaac is here! Oh! was it such a matter to have an
Isaac's blessing? what is it then to be blessed by Jesus
Christ? Beloved! when as Christ doth bless, he turns all
our curses into blessings, and our miseries into mercies.
When God curses, he turns our table into a snare: and when
Christ blesseth, he turns our snare into a table, quite con-
trary. Jacob pronounced a curse upon his two sons, Simeon
and Levi (you know upon what occasion) they should be
divided and scattered in Israel: afterward the tribe of Levi
stands up at the commandment of God to execute justice
and judgment, and the Lord blessed them: and how did he
bless them? they were to be the preachers unto all the
tribes; and so that they might be preachers unto all the
tribes, they were to be scattered into all the tribes, and so
Jacob's curse was turned into a blessing to them.

Is it not a comfortable thing, for a man to have all his
cursers, to be blessers? It is a comfortable thing, for all a
man's curses to become blessings: but now I say, it is a com-
fortable thing, for all a man's cursers, to be blessers to him. When
the Lord Christ blesses, he will make men's cursers whether
they will or no, (in the day of their visitation at least) for to
bless. Ye know that Balaam would have cursed Israel, but
the Lord had blessed them. Balaam got upon a high moun-
tain, and from thence he would have cursed Israel, but it
would not be. Then he gets upon another high mountain,
and from thence he would have cursed Israel, but it would not
be. Then he gets upon another high mountain: thinking
that would have done it, and from thence he would have
cursed Israel, but that would not do it. Oh! says he, "The
Lord hath seen no iniquity in Israel," and therefore he blesses
them: the curse is turned into a blessing; so there are
many that deal thus by the people of God in these days:
they get upon such an high mountain, such a great and high
means, and they think to curse the people of God from thence,
but it will not be. Then they get upon another mountain, another
means, thinking from thence to curse the people of God, but it
will not be. Then they get upon another high mountain
or hill, and think then to curse the people of God, and do
them mischief, but it will not do it. Why? for the Lord
Christ sees no iniquity, the Lord Christ hath blessed them:
and so at last, in the day of wicked men's visitation, they are forced to say, These are the people of God, and these are blessed and shall be blessed. We know what is said in the Scripture, "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich: and he addeth no sorrow therewithal." Is it not a good thing then to be blessed by Christ? If a man be blessed by Jesus Christ he may bless himself in the Lord, and he may comfort himself in every condition, and he may say thus, Well, though I be a poor man, yet I am blessed by Christ: and though my estate be sunk, and decayed, yet I am blessed by Christ: and though I be reproached, and hated by men, yet I am blessed by Jesus Christ: a man may comfort himself in every condition.

But you will say, indeed if a man be assured that Christ hath blessed him, he may do thus; but I am afraid that Christ hath not blessed me, or that he is not willing to bless me: if I could be assured that this great High Priest, had once laid his hand, his blessing-hand upon me, I should have comfort in all conditions.

Give me leave to lay two or three things before you concerning this.

First, When the Lord blessed Abraham, he said unto him, "In thee and thy seed shall all nations be blessed. It is a sign unto Abraham, that he was blessed, because others were blessed by him. So now, when a man's parts, gifts, graces, and comforts are blessings to others, it is an argument that that man is blessed himself.

Further, when a man is blessed by God, or Christ; he is drawn nearer to God by all outward things, by all things; "Come ye blessed, go ye cursed." Blessing hath an attractive nature, "Come ye blessed:" when the Lord Christ does bless a man, he does draw him, "Come ye blessed." When a man is brought nearer to God by affliction, he is blessed: when a man is brought nearer to God by his estate, by any comfort, by any sorrow, here is blessing, "Come ye blessed." Blessings draw one nearer to God with a cord of love.

Thirdly where the Lord does bless, he does cause a man to increase and multiply, in that thing wherein he is blessed. Increasing and multiplying, is so natural unto blessing, that in the original tongues of the Old and New Testament,
plenty is put for blessing. I will give you but one clear place for it in the New Testament, the 2 Corinthians ixth chapter, 5th verse. "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto ye, and make up before-hand your bounty." The word is your blessing. Whereof you had notice before; that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty. The word is, a matter of blessing. But especially in the next verse. But this I say, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully." And he which soweth with blessing (as it is in the original) shall reap with blessing: and here it is opposed to sparingly, and translated bountifully. Where the Lord does bless, he does always cause a man to increase and multiply.

Now, beloved in the Lord, I appeal unto all your souls, you that make this objection, that are afraid the Lord Christ hath not blessed you as your High Priest, hath not laid his hand upon you, and blessed you: yet do not ye know more of Christ than ye have known before? hath not the hidden truths of the gospel been increased and multiplied upon your hearts? hath not your hearts been brought nearer to God by affliction? hath not your souls been drawn nearer to God by his outward dealings with you? And as Abraham was therefore blessed, because he was made a blessing to others: so I appeal to ye, have not your parts, gifts, and graces, in some measure been blessings unto others, even unto your poor family, and unto others also? Then be of good comfort (man or woman) wherever thou standest, the Lord Christ hath blessed thee, and thou shalt be blessed, hold up thy head poor blessed soul, the Lord Jesus hath blessed thee: when the Lord did lay this blessing upon thee, I cannot tell thee, but I find thee a blessed man, stay thyself upon the Lord, cheer up thy drooping heart, thou art a blessed soul.

But you will say, How does this make unto our holiness? I confess this is a very comfortable cordial, that the Lord Jesus Christ is in office to bless poor sinners; but how does this conduce unto our holiness?

Very much: this holds forth great encouragement, unto all poor sinners for to come to Christ, and to come without delay. Why? once come to Christ and blessed; but without
Christ and cursed: an enemy to Jesus Christ and a cursed man: cursed in thy store-house: cursed in thy basket; and cursed in all things that thou puttest thine hand unto. Oh! then, will you not come to Christ that you may be blessed: that day that a poor soul comes unto Christ, whatever he hath been he is blessed: that day may be called Gilgal, for then the curse is rolled away from him. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is pardoned." The first day, the first minute, that he comes to Christ, his sin is pardoned, and he is blessed. Who would not then come unto Christ presently, that he may be blessed for ever? When as Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, the Lord looked upon him as a profane man, and he stands upon record in Scripture for a profane man unto this day, because he sold his birthright. And says the text, Though he sought the blessing (it was a blessing) with tears, he never recovered it. The Lord Jesus Christ, he is now among us, and offering to bless us; and if I will rather keep my sins than come unto Jesus Christ, the Lord will look upon me as a profane man; and I may go and seek the blessing with tears, and never recover it again. Oh! here is that, methinks, that should make every wicked man; if there be ever a drunkard, swearer, or unclean wanton that reads this book, mind what is said for your everlasting peace: I say, here is that, methinks, that should make every wicked man, to look upon the godly, as David did upon the sparrows, and upon the swallows: says David, "These birds full nigh thine altar, may have place to sit and sing:" as ye have it in your singing psalms. These birds can come and make their nests; but as for me I am kept at a distance: he was provoked by the sparrows and swallows making their nests near the altar. So may a wicked man say, There is a godly man indeed, he may go to Jesus Christ he may go to prayer, and he may offer up his gift to God the Father by the hands of Christ, he can come near to God by Christ: but as for me, I am yet without Christ, I am not yet gone to Jesus Christ; I am such a cursed swearer, I am such a profane drunkard, I am such a vile, wretched wanton, such a notorious, scandalous sinner! Oh! these people are blessed, but I am cursed, but now through the Lord's grace I will go unto the Lord Christ that I may be blessed.
Yea, my beloved, here is, methinks, a strong invitation, unto all those that are young people for to come unto Jesus Christ: even those that are very young. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children. The Lord Jesus Christ received children into his arms and he blessed them. You that are nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen years old; you can be solicitous for your father’s blessing, and have gone down upon your knees often unto your father, and you have said, Pray father, pray to God to bless me. Oh! will ye go to your outward father for his blessing? and will ye not go unto Jesus Christ? He is an everlasting Father, this your earthly father will be dead ere long; he is an everlasting Father, children, and he is able to bless ye, and willing to bless ye. Have ye gone down upon your knees to your outward father? Oh! children, down, down upon your knees before the Lord Jesus Christ, and go to him for his blessing. Some of you, it may be, never went yet to Christ for his blessing; ye have lived so many years, ten, eleven or twelve years, and never went to Christ as High Priest, for his blessing all this while. Oh! what a mighty encouragement is here unto all men to come to Christ, that they may be blessed by him.

But yet further, As there is an encouragement for to come unto Christ: so this argument does also encourage us to go on in the good ways of Christ, notwithstanding all opposition that we meet withal: I say, it does speak encouragement to go on in the face of all opposition. For when Abraham had been at battle, then came Melchisedec the high priest to bless him: and when a poor soul goes out to battle for Christ, then comes our great Melchisedec, our High Priest, and blesses that soul. The time of opposition, it is the time of Christ’s blessing. Therefore, why should I be discouraged, or beaten out of the way of Christ, by reason of any opposition, though it be never so great? Times of opposition are Christ’s blessing time.

Again, This argument does not only speak encouragement against all opposition: but it does also encourage us to go on in the good ways of God when we are called unto it, though we have but little strength and weak parts. Though there be but little oil in the cruse, though there be but little meal in the barrel, if Christ call to the work, he will bless a
man in it: and when Christ blesses, he does multiply and increase a man's parts in the using of them. As when he commanded them to sit down and eat, he did multiply and increase the bread in their eating: so now, does Christ call me to any work or service? well then, though I am weak, though I have not oil enough, though I have not meal enough, though I have not strength enough; yet the Lord Christ will bless, and when he blesses, he does increase and multiply: and therefore, why should not I go on upon his work, if he do call me thereunto, though I have never so little strength.

And yet further, If all this be true: why should not a man be contented with his condition, though he be never so mean? Beloved in the Lord! is there not enough in Christ's blessing? Truly, he is too covetous, whom the blessing of Christ will not satisfy. Well, whatever my condition be, yet I may be blessed by Jesus Christ; and hath the Lord blessed me? then will I be contented with my condition, though it be never so mean, I have all, as Jacob once said, I have all.

Yea, in the fifth and last place: Here is that, which if well studied and considered; will provoke us all for to bless the Lord, and continually to bless the Lord! What is the life of a Christian here, but continual blessing of God? it is heaven begun: and in heaven, they do nothing else but bless and praise the Lord; and I say our life here is heaven begun and therefore a christian should be always blessing and praising the Lord.

Well, But what will make a man to be always blessing, and praising of God in Christ?

The knowledge that a man is blessed by Christ, will make a man bless God for Christ. And therefore consider how the apostle reasons, in the Ist of Ephesians, and the 3rd verse, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Why? "who hath blessed us." When once a man can come to this, for to say, That the Lord Christ hath blessed him; then he will break forth into blessing and praising of the Lord; O! Blessed be the Lord: bless the Lord, O my soul; and bless the Lord all that is within me: for the Lord hath blessed me with spiritual blessings. Do you therefore desire to be always in this work of blessing the Lord? think much of this.

To conclude all; give me leave to call upon you to remem-
ber what ye have read. Ye have read, That it is the work of our great High Priest, to satisfy for the sins of the people: to answer unto all accusations that are brought against them: to offer up all our prayers and gifts unto God the Father: and to bless poor souls. Now then, beloved, according to all your wants, and according to all your temptations: I do beseech you in the Lord, go to Jesus Christ, unto this High Priest; try and see if you do not find it true, that the Lord does make good all this unto you. In case that you be under any spiritual want or temptation; put your souls under this disjunction: Come, O my soul, either the Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, or else he is not: if he be not, what means this and that Scripture? And if the Lord Jesus Christ be our great High Priest; then surely he being faithful, will do all the work of the high priest for my soul. Indeed I have sinned, and sinned greatly; but O Lord, it is the work of our High Priest to satisfy: now, Lord Jesus, I come to thee as mine High Priest, O! satisfy for me. Indeed, I confess, mine own conscience does accuse me, Satan does accuse me, Moses does accuse me: but it is the work of our great High Priest, to take off all accusations brought against poor believers: now Lord, I do come unto thee, as to my great High Priest, Oh! take off this accusation that any poor soul does labour under. Indeed, when I look upon mine own duties; there is so much deadness, so much hardness of heart, and so many distractions that do accompany them, that I am afraid they will never be accepted: but, O Lord, it is the work of our great High Priest, to take away the weeds of the duty, and to present the duty; now, O Lord, I come unto thee as mine High Priest, Oh! carry my prayers into the bosom of God the Father. Yea, when I look upon my former life, Lord, I cannot but conclude myself, a poor cursed sinner: but yet notwithstanding, it is the work of our great High Priest, for to bless the people: O Lord, I do therefore now come unto thee as mine High Priest, Oh! bless me, and say unto all my graces, Increase and multiply.