

CHRIST AND THE COVENANT,
THE
WORK AND WAY OF MEDITATION,
GOD'S RETURN TO THE SOUL OR NATION,
TOGETHER WITH HIS
PREVENTING MERCY.

DELIVERED
IN TEN SERMONS.

1667.

TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER,—These Ten Sermons, lately taken by an expert hand, as they fell from the mouth of the sweet preacher of them, contain so great a variety of heavenly matter, so much of the very marrow and quintessence of the gospel, that thou wilt no sooner begin to read them, but wilt presently find that the heart of the reverend author of them hath lain long asoke in the blood of Jesus, and that he hath been no stranger to his very bosom love. Buy them therefore with what speed thou canst, and read them over diligently, it will be a good bargain for thy soul, and one of the richest commodities that ever thou meetedst with at so cheap a rate. It is put into so small a letter and bulk, purposely for thy better accommodation, and that not only in the ease of thy purse, but principally that thou mayest make it as well thy pocket as thy heart's companion, wherever thou goest. Farewell.

CHRIST AND THE COVENANT.

SERMON I.

CHRIST'S PERSONAL EXCELLENCIES THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE.

"If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I."—JOHN XIV. 28.

THESE words are part of the last sweet sermon which our Saviour preached unto his disciples before his death and departure from them; wherein he labours to allay their sorrow and grief upon the occasion of his departure: therefore he tells them at the 2nd verse, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" and at the 3rd verse, "I go to prepare a place for you."

Then he tells them at the 16th, 17th and 18th verses, that "he would send them another Comforter;" and "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."

Then he labours to persuade them unto comfort by their protestation of their own love unto him. "Ye say you love me (saith he), if ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I."

"If ye loved me;" that is, if you loved me so much as you should. It is usual with Scripture to speak of things absolutely when they are meant comparatively. If you loved me so much as you profess, and so much as you should; for they did love him.

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto my Father."

Joy is the top of comfort as comfort is the top of peace. Joy is the cream of comfort. If ye loved me, ye would be so far from being troubled at my going, that you would be very much comforted, for I go unto my Father who "is greater than I;" than I am as Mediator: who upon my coming to him will exalt me: and therefore if ye loved me ye would rather rejoice, "because I go unto my Father who is greater than I." From whence then I take up this doctrine:

That true love unto the person of Christ will make us rejoice in his personal exaltment, though it may be in some respects unto our debasement or present loss.

For the opening and prosecuting whereof,

First, We must inquire what there is in Christ's going to the Father that is matter of our rejoicing.

Secondly, I shall labour to shew you that it is our duty to rejoice in the personal exaltment of Christ, though in some respects it may be to our own loss and debasement.

Thirdly, That true love to the person of Christ will enable us to do this.

Fourthly, That it is possible that Christ's own and best disciples may be wanting in their love to Christ's person.

Fifthly, What an excellent thing it is to love the person of Christ rather than the benefits of Christ; to have our hearts drawn out in love to his person, more excellent than to have a love to him upon the account of benefits. And,

Sixthly, What we should do that our hearts may be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, so as we may be able to rejoice in his exaltment though to our own debasement.

First, If you ask what there is in Christ's going to the Father that is matter of rejoicing, of a disciple's rejoicing.

I answer, Much every way. Much in reference to our own concernments; much in reference to the concernments of Christ; much in reference to the concernments of God the Father.

As for our own concernments.

If Christ had not gone unto the Father, his satisfaction for our sins had not been accepted, nor our redemption perfected. "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," Heb. ix. 12. It doth relate and allude unto the manner of the old testament: when the blood of goats and calves was poured out, the priest "took the blood and carried it into the holy of holiest, and sprinkled the mercy seat." But though the blood of bulls or calves had been poured out, yet if the priest had not carried it into the holy of holiest, the typical satisfaction and redemption had not been obtained. And so here, though the blood of Jesus had been shed, and poured out upon the cross, if he had not gone unto the Father, and carried his blood into

heaven, into the holy of holiest, his satisfaction for our sin had not been accepted, and our redemption had not been perfected.

If Christ had not gone unto the Father, he had not made the application of his death and blood and merits unto our souls. He came into the world that we should have repentance and remission. Both were purchased by his death. But now if he had not gone unto the Father there had not been an application. Both were purchased by his death on earth. But was the business so left at a loose? No, but by his going to the Father, what he purchased by his death, he doth apply. In Acts v. it is said, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins." So that had he not gone unto the Father, there had not been an application of his blood and death and merit unto our souls.

If Christ had not gone unto the Father, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, had not come. "If I go not away the Comforter will not come." But why might not the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, come, though Christ had been here on earth, if he had not gone unto the Father?

I answer, the gifts, graces and comforts of the Holy Ghost were the *dona regia* which were given out upon the coronation of Christ; for by this going to the Father he was "crowned with glory and honour," as in Heb. ii. When the Holy Ghost comes, he doth bear witness to our spirits that we are the children of God, and God reconciled to us. But how should God give such a testimony of his reconciliation unto us, if Christ had not first gone into heaven and given up his accounts of what he had done here on earth. It is said expressly in John vii. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And if Jesus Christ had not gone unto the Father, and so sent the Spirit, how should we have known that he had so much care for us and love to us when he was in heaven as by the sending of the Holy Ghost. We are never more fit for the Holy Ghost than when we are weaned from the carnal presence of Christ. And therefore if Christ had not gone unto the Father, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost had not come.

If our Lord and Saviour Christ had not gone unto the

Father, we should have had no advocate in heaven to plead our cause in heaven upon all occasions. It is a great matter, we say, to have a friend at court, an agent there that may plead for us. What a mercy is it to have an agent in heaven to negotiate our business there! Why now, saith the apostle, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." If Christ had not gone unto the Father, we had not had this Advocate in heaven to plead for us upon all occasions. And,

If Christ had not gone unto the Father, we should have no entrance into heaven. Heaven was locked up, the gates of paradise were shut, and kept by an angel with a flaming sword. This paradise was opened upon the cross: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And we enter into it by Christ's going into heaven, by his going into the holy of holiest. "I go to prepare a place for you;" not as sent before to take up your lodgings, but as one friend goes before another, to make a great entertainment for his friends. But, I say, if Christ had not gone unto the Father, we had had no entrance into heaven. Why now, is it not a matter of joy and of great comfort, that we have entrance into heaven; that the Comforter is come; that we have always one in heaven to plead our cause upon all occasions? These and many other things we obtain by Christ's going to the Father. This for our own concernment. And,

As for the concernment of Christ: by his going to the Father he was exalted and glorified (as Mediator I speak).

And if you ask what was the glory and greatness that was put upon Christ, as Mediator, by his going to the Father? It consists in two things: the royalty of his entertainment when he came unto his Father; and the greatness of his advancement.

And if you ask yet, what was the entertainment that he had when he came unto the Father?

Why, it was an entertainment suitable to such a Father, and to such a Son. When that great sinner, the prodigal, returned unto his father, "his father fell upon his neck and kissed him." Bring out the robes, kill the fatted calf, bring out the ring. And if such an entertainment for a prodigal son, what entertainment then for the natural Son of God, the obedient Son of God, that had been upon his

Father's great concernment in the world? Great was this entertainment surely, beyond all my expression. But now more particularly,

1. No sooner did he come into heaven unto his Father, but he was justified in all that which he did and suffered for us ; as you have it in the 1 Tim. iii. 16, " God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

2. No sooner did he come unto the Father, but he was mightily declared to be the Son of God, as you have it in Rom. i. " Thou art my Son, this day (that is, upon the resurrection) this day have I begotten thee." The apostle explains it concerning the resurrection in Acts xiii.

3. No sooner did he come unto the Father, but he was anointed with a new and fresh anointing, with the oil of gladness above all his fellows. For as David, the type, had a double anointing, one by the hand of Samuel, after which he was thrust out into the wilderness, and another at the day of his coronation ; so Christ typified had a double anointing, one upon his incarnation, in which respects he saith, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me to preach," and another upon his coronation, when he was crowned with glory and honour. And therefore in Heb. i., " He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," comes in upon his exaltation. And,

4. No sooner did he come into the presence of his Father, but his Father said unto him, " Sit thou down at my right-hand ;" the most honourable place in heaven : Sit thou at my right-hand, my Son. Why now is it not a matter of great rejoicing to us, that Christ going to heaven with our names upon his shoulder and heart, should have such an entertainment as this, such a welcome as this unto God the Father ?

But, what advancement had he upon his going to the Father ?

Why, great was his advancement as Mediator.

For, 1. No sooner did he come unto the Father, but he was invested with all that glory that he had with God the Father from all eternity, which he had laid by and vailed, when he took our nature upon him ; and therefore in John xvii, saith he, " And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the

world was." No sooner did he come into heaven unto his Father, but he was invested with that glory again, that he had vailed to take our nature upon him.

2. No sooner did he come into the presence of his Father into heaven, but God commanded all the angels to worship him : " Worship him all ye angels."

3. No sooner did he come into the presence of his Father, to heaven, but he was made executor and administrator to his own will, to see that performed. We die and leave legacies, but cannot administer ourselves, nor be the executors of our own wills ; but Christ lives for ever. " I was dead, but am alive." And when he came into heaven, God the Father made him executor to his own will ; and therefore saith he, " Ask the Father in my name, and whatever ye ask, that will I give you." " Him hath God the Father exalted to give remission and repentance." Executor of his own will and testament.

4. No sooner did he come into heaven, into the presence of his Father, but he was made the great governor of all the world, and Head of the church. In Acts v., " Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour ;" lord over all the world, and Saviour of the church. Agreeable to that in Eph. i. 20, " which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body ;" Prince and Saviour, Lord over all the world, and Saviour and Head unto the church.

5. And to say no more in it : No sooner did he come into the presence of God his Father, (that is, greater than he, as Mediator,) but God the Father did take him into fellowship in the matter of divine worship. Whether aye or no, Christ *qua* Mediator, or *quia* Mediator, be to be adored with divine worship, I will not now debate ; but whatsoever worship was due to God the Father, was given to Christ. " Confounded be all they that worship graven images ; worship him all ye gods." All divine worship due to God the Father, is given to him. Here is an advancement. Now is it not a matter

of great rejoicing, that Christ our Head should be thus advanced? Saith the emperor's wife, If thou be Caius, I am Caia; and, if Christ be king, the church is queen, Ps. xlv. Is it not, I say, a matter of great rejoicing, that Christ our Head should be thus advanced? Now thus he is advanced by his going to God the Father. Thus for the Son's concernment. But

What matter is there of rejoicing by Christ's going to the Father, in reference to the Father's concernment?

Much; saith Christ in John xiv. 13, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." That will I do; I am now going from you, and if ye ask the Father in my name, that will I do. Why? not that the Son may be glorified only, but that the Father may be glorified.

Look when the great promise of the Father is fulfilled, then is the Father glorified. What is the great promise of the Father? Acts i. The coming of the Holy Ghost. By Christ's going to the Father comes the Holy Ghost: therein was the Father glorified then.

And look, when "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of the Father," then is the Father glorified. Now by Christ's going to the Father, being exalted, every tongue doth confess, that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of the Father, as in Phil. ii.

And to say no more in it but this: look, when the great design of God upon the world is accomplished, and Christ the Son glorified, then is the Father glorified. Now by Christ's going to the Father, the great design of God is accomplished, and the Son glorified. Thus we have cause of rejoicing in reference to the concernment of God the Father: look where you will. Will you look into your own concernment; will you look into the concernment of Christ; will you look upon the concernment of God the Father? there is matter of our rejoicing in Christ's going to the Father. And so I have done with the first thing. But then,

Secondly, How may it appear that it is our work and duty, to rejoice in the personal exaltment of Christ, though in some respect it should be to our own debasement, or present loss?

Why you see what our Saviour saith here, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father who is

greater than I." You lose by my going you think ; and indeed in some respects you do. But however, it is your duty to rejoice, because it is for my personal exaltment : and you know what Paul saith in another case. Some preach Christ out of envy, and out of contention, and to add affliction to my bonds ; but however, saith he, Christ is preached, " Christ is exalted, and therein I will rejoice : " I will rejoice though I be debased, so Christ may be exalted, I rejoice.

If that we are to praise God for the exaltment of Christ, then we are to rejoice therein ; for praise and rejoicing go together in scripture. Now though I cannot praise God and be thankful that God loves me, I may praise God for this, that the Father loves Christ, and be thankful for his love and his goodness to Christ. Christ praised God for our glory and happiness, though to his own debasement, why should not we praise God for his exaltment, though it be to our debasement.

If I am to mourn for sin, because it is a dishonour to God, though the sin be to my own profit, then I am to praise God and Christ for his glory, though it may be in some respects to my prejudice.

But besides this, the more communicative any good is, the more we may and should rejoice therein. There is abundance of light in the sun, but if the sun be not up and ascended, it cannot give light unto all the world : so now, though there be light in Christ, able to enlighten all the world, yet if this sun be not up, he cannot give light to all the world : but being now ascended, he is able to give forth his beams of light unto all the world.

But you will say ; how may it appear, that Christ will be as gracious and communicative in his love unto us now in heaven, as he would have been had he been here on earth ?

You know what he said when he was here on earth, " And let him that is athirst come," John vii. 37. " In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying ; If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Now he is in heaven, look into the book of the Revelation, which he speaks from heaven, he speaks more than that, " And let him that is athirst come," there is that, " And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," here is more now he is in heaven.

And I pray, when did our Lord and Saviour Christ, wash his disciples' feet; give the glorious testimony of his condescending love unto his disciples, than when he was going to the Father? "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: he arose from supper, and laid aside his garments, and tok a towel and girded himself." Knowing that all power was given into his hand, he gives that reason: he did thus condescend in this way of love, knowing that all power was given into his hand.

Now that he is in heaven, all power is given into his hand, and therefore now certainly he will be as gracious, and communicative in his love and goodness, as if he had been here on earth; and rather over and above. Surely therefore it is our work and our duty to rejoice in this exaltment of Christ, though in some respects it may be to our debasement, or present loss. But then

Thirdly, How shall we do this?

Why, true love to the person of Christ will enable us to do this: it will enable us to rejoice in the personal exaltment of Christ, though it may be to our own present loss and abasement. It is a sweet thing to the lover, to suffer for the person loved: that is, where love is fixed upon the person, and not upon the benefits, if love be fixed upon the benefit, it is not so, but if upon the person it is so: so if our love be fixed upon the person of Christ, this love will enable us to rejoice in the exaltment of Christ, though it be in our own debasement: Christ rejoiced in our exaltment, though it was to his own debasement. Why? Because he loved our persons, "who loved us, and gave himself for us," so that true love unto the person of Christ, will make us rejoice in his exaltment, though it may be to our own present debasement.

You will say then, How few are there that do love Christ indeed: Christ is hardly loved for Christ: Christ himself is hardly loved for himself: to love the person of Christ, how few are there that do that. And so I come unto the fourth thing.

Fourthly, It is possible that Christ's own disciples may be wanting in their love to Christ's person. It is somewhat strange this: If a prince or nobleman should take a poor woman, a beggar off the dunghill, and marry her, it would be

somewhat strange, that she should not love his person. If he should not love her, you would think it so strange: if Boaz should not love Ruth, you would not have thought it so strange, but that Ruth should not love the person of Boaz, this may seem strange: so now, such beggars were we, when the Lord came and took us off the dunghill, and said, Now is a time of love. If the Lord Jesus should not love our persons, it would not seem so strange; but that we should be wanting in our love to the person of Christ, this is strange: yea friends, it is possible that Christ's own disciples may be wanting in their love to the person of Christ.

They may be wanting in the *manner* of their love to Christ's person.

They may be wanting in the *measure* of their love to Christ's person.

"If ye loved me," saith he, and yet they left all to follow him: possibly then, the best disciples of Christ, the best men may be wanting in their love to the person of Christ. To make this out a little to you.

The more we love the person of Christ, the more diligent and observant we shall be in keeping Christ's commandments, that are properly his. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Why now, how many are there of God's own people, that are too negligent in keeping Christ's commandments; the commandment of love, the institutions of Christ: and why so, but because they are wanting in their love to the person of Christ, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

If a good man may be wanting in his zeal for Christ, possibly he may be wanting in his love to Christ's person: what is zeal, but fired love, inflamed love, angered love? Now possibly a man that loves Christ in truth, may be wanting in his zeal. Old Eli loved God, without all doubt, and yet he was wanting in his love to God. Peter loved Christ, "Thou knowest that I love thee," and yet wanting in his love by denying of Christ. Good men may be wanting in their zeal for Christ. Why? But because they are wanting in their love to the person of Christ.

The more a man loves the person of Christ, the more he doth love the servants, the people of Christ. It was a good speech of Jerom, when there was a difference between Austin

and him : I love Christ dwelling in Austin : even at that very time when there was a difference between them. And certainly if we love the person of Christ, we shall love Christ dwelling in the saints. But now do not we find by woeful experience, that even in good people, their love to the saints is wanting? Why? But because their love to the person of Christ is wanting.

The more a man doth love the person of Christ, the more he will be speaking and thinking of him : love is busied and exercised in thoughtfulness about the person loved ; and in speech. If a man love a person or thing, he will be thinking much on it, and speaking much on it. But now by our experience, cannot we go a whole day together and have no thought of Christ? Do not we sit down at our meals frequently and not one word of Christ? Good conference, where art thou? Good and holy conference, where art thou? Come to professors' tables, one dish after another, one cup of wine after another, but nothing of Christ. It is gone, it is gone : what is the reason, but because we are wanting in our love to the person of Christ? Certainly, if we were not wanting in our love to the person of Christ, we should be thinking more of him and speaking more of him.

The more we love the person of Christ, the more we shall desire to be dissolved, that we may be with him in the enjoyments of himself and those heavenly embracements. "I desire to be dissolved," (saith St. Paul) why? "And to be with Christ," to have the person of Christ. But how many good people are there that cannot desire to be dissolved; why? Because there is a want in their love to the person of Christ. Possibly then you see by all these things, it is possible that a good man, Christ's own and best disciples, may be wanting in their love to the person of Christ. But

Fifthly, You will say, Suppose that my heart be not drawn out in love to the person of Christ, but my love is rather fixed on Christ's benefits, spiritual benefits, is not that good? Is it not good that I should have love for Christ in reference unto the benefits that I have from him.

Good? Yes. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight," saith the spouse, "and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." Fruit; that is the fruit of justification, the fruit of sanctification, of consolation, "and his fruit was sweet unto

my taste. It is good without all doubt, that our hearts should be drawn out to Christ, by occasion even of his benefits.

But I pray do not mistake me ; I grant therefore,

1. It is good, and a lawful thing to love Christ in reference to his benefits. But

2. It is our duty to love Christ's person, to have our hearts drawn out with love to the very person of Christ. But

3. The excellency of Christ's person is not the object of my faith, but Christ crucified. And

4. Though Christ crucified be the object of my faith, yet the personal excellencies of Christ are the object of my love. Yea, it is a more excellent thing yet to love the person of Christ, than the benefits of Christ. A more excellent thing to have my heart drawn out in love to the person of Christ, than to have my heart drawn out in love to him for his benefits.

But you will say, Wherein doth our love to the very person of Christ exceed or excel our love upon the account of benefits, though spiritual ? Many ways.

First of all, If your hearts be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, "by your loving him you make him your own." It is not so in other loves. By my loving gold I do not make it my own ; by my loving silver I do not make it my own ; but by loving his person I make him my own. It is not so in regard of benefits. By my loving the benefits of Christ, the comforts from Christ, I do not make Christ my own, but by my love unto the person of Christ I make Christ my own.

2. The less of self in your love to Christ, the more pure and clean it is and so the better. Now if your heart be drawn out in love to the benefits of Christ, your love is more selfish, you love him in reference unto yourselves ; because you have such enjoyments and such benefits. But if your hearts be drawn out in love to the person of Christ, your love is less selfish ; so the more pure, the more holy and clean.

3. If your heart be drawn out unto Christ himself and the person of Christ, you will more readily accept of "anything from Christ, though it be never so small ;" yea, though it be afflictive. If that your love be placed and founded upon the benefits of Christ, then you will not so easily and readily

accept of anything from Christ, especially if afflictive. True love interprets all things in the best sense ; that is, love to the person, but love to the benefit does not. Love the person of Christ and you will interpret every dispensation in a good sense, for you love his person, but love to the benefit will not do so.

4. If your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, then you will sympathize with Christ in all his concernments of the gospel, whether matter of joy or matter of grief. If your love be founded upon Christ's benefits you will not sympathise with him so, but love his person and you will sympathize with him in all his concernments.

5. If your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, then you will abound therein. "The only measure of love, is to know no measure," that is, where the *person* is loved. But if love be placed upon the benefit, it knows stints, and limits, and measures. But if your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, you will be abundant therein, and you will never think you can love enough.

6. If your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, then you will "long after the presence of Christ, and you will be afflicted for his absence." Love Christ upon the account of benefits and it will not be so ; but love Christ upon the account of his person and then it will be so. You will long after his presence and you will be afflicted for his absence.

7. The more your heart is drawn out in love to Christ and the person of Christ, the more you will love the seed of Christ, the posterity of Christ, the children, and the people of Christ. David loved Jonathan's seed, why ? for he loved his person, not his benefits. So, love but the person of Christ, and then you will shew kindness to the seed of Christ, and be more loving to the seed of Christ.

8, The more your heart is drawn out to the very person of Christ, the more will your love continue. That is perpetual that hath a perpetuating cause. The personal excellency of Christ is a perpetual cause of love, but the benefit that doth come from Christ is not so. Let the benefit be never so great, if your love be founded upon the benefit that doth come from Christ, as the benefit dies your love will die ; but if your love be founded upon the very person of Christ,

and drawn out to the person of Christ, then will your love continue and never die.

9. Lastly as to this: If your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, to Christ himself, then you have "gained the heart of God the Father for ever." Look into John xvi., saith Christ at the 27th verse: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." Not because ye have loved my benefits, but because ye have loved me; ye have gotten the heart of my Father, saith he. Therefore doth my Father love you, because ye have loved me, because ye love my person. Now is it not a blessed thing, friends, "to have the heart of God the Father?" Why, if your heart be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, you have gained the heart of the Father for ever. Aye, and the Father loves you, and the Son loves you, and "they will come and make their abode with you." Oh, what a blessed thing is it then, for to have one's heart drawn out in love to the very person of Christ! Certainly it is infinitely better to have one's heart drawn out in love to the person of Christ, than to have a love to Christ upon the account of benefits, although the benefits be spiritual benefits.

And if these things be so, why should we not all labour for this love to the person of Christ? To love Christ not upon the account of benefits, but for himself. Oh, that I could persuade people to fix upon the person of Christ in their love. Oh, that this day I could persuade you to this divine fixation of your love upon the person of Christ. I fear our love is not rightly placed; I fear we have love for Christ beneath Christ himself. It is the great work of a minister to woo for Christ. A minister's work is to come a wooing for Christ; can a soul be wooed over unto Christ, and won over unto Christ, and not love the person of Christ? Now then, as ever you do desire that you may be espoused to Jesus Christ, that you may be married to Jesus Christ, set not your affections upon benefits, set not your affections upon your own concerns in your love to Christ; be more raised christians. Oh, that your love were rightly placed, fixed upon Christ himself, not on the benefits, but on the person of Christ himself. But

Sixthly, You will say, What shall we do? we have heard

what an excellent thing it is to have love to the person of Christ, beyond all love to his benefits, though they be spiritual benefits, what shall we do that our hearts may be drawn out to the person of Christ, that so we may be able to rejoice in the personal exaltment of Christ, though to our own debasement?

What shall we do? It is a great and a good question. What shall we do that our hearts may be drawn out in love to the very person of Christ?

Be sure that you be really, conjugally united unto Christ. There is a double union; there is a union by way of juxtaposition, laying one thing to another; so a man's arm is united unto bread, when the bread is bound to his arm. There is a union by way of intus-susception, by taking in; and so a man is united to his bread and his bread to him when he eats it, they are made one.

So there is a double union, as I may so speak, to Christ; one whereby men are united to Christ by the external ligaments of the gospel, concerning whom our Saviour may speak in John xv.: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, shall be cast out." And then there is another union with Christ, which is that he speaks of, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, shall live," that is another kind of union, a closer union. Now if you be really, conjugally united to Christ, you will love not only his benefits, but you will love his person. Rest not therefore, I pray you, in this external union with Christ by the ligaments of the gospel, but labour more and more to be conjugally united to Jesus Christ. But

If you would have your heart drawn out in love to Christ himself and the person of Christ, then study much the personal excellency and goodness that is in Christ's person. Good is the object of love. The more excellent the good is, the more suitable the good is, and universal and obtainable, the more lovely and commanding is that good. Christ is good, an excellent good, goodness itself; a suitable good, suitable unto all our wants. If you be poor, he is rich; if you be foolish, he is wise; if you be out of the way, "I am the way," saith he; if you want a director in the way, "I am the truth;" if you be in the dark, "I am the light;" a suitable good and an universal good he is. As all the

sweetnesses that are in the flowers of the field and in the garden, are brought in by the bee into the hive; and all the sweetnesses of the flowers are there embodied in one hive; so all the attributes of God and the sweetness of them all are hived in Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. And he is an obtainable good; called the Rose of Sharon, the rose of the field, not of the garden, but of the field, that every one may come at; called the desire of all nations. Do you then desire that your hearts may be drawn out in love to the person of Christ, study much the personal goodness and excellency of Christ.

If you do desire that your hearts may be drawn out in love to Christ himself, to the very person of Christ, why should you not now stand still a little with me, and behold how Christ hath loved you and your persons? Shall Christ love you and your persons and will not you love him and his person? Consider a little with me,

The more impediments that any love doth break through, the more it calls for love again. What impediments hath not Christ's love broke through to come to us? Broke through all our unworthiness; broke through the law; broke through the justice of God; broke through the wrath of God; broke through the grave; broke through hell; broke through all our unbelief.

And the more free any love is, the more it calls for love again. Three things there are that call for love—likeness, benefit, love; and where none of these are, the love is most free.

Now Christ hath loved you, but you were not like unto him when he loved you.

You could do him no kindness; you had no benefits to bestow upon him.

And you had no love for him. In the day when he said, "Now is the time of love;" there was no love in your hearts for him: and therefore his love must needs be most free.

But the more patient that love is, the more it calls for love again, the more taking it is. Now our Saviour Christ stands knocking at your door. Give me leave to say to you, had Christ come riding post through your city, and knocked only at your door, and said, Hasten after me or you are damned for ever; it had been much: but to stand at your door and

knock, day after day, and year after year, with the unwearied hand of his love ; oh, unspeakable patience, unexpressible love ! Yet thus hath Christ done for you, and thus hath Christ loved you, and loved your persons ; and shall Christ love you, and love your persons, and shall your love rest any where but in the person of Christ ? Do but consider how he hath loved you and your persons, and then your heart will be drawn out to love the person of Christ.

But if you do desire that your hearts may be drawn out in love unto Christ ; if you do desire, I say, that your hearts should be drawn out in love to Christ, the person of Christ, then use Christ much. In any good thing you have, the more you use it the more you prize it, and the more you prize it the more you love it. If you have a good friend, the more you use him the more you prize him, and the more you prize him the more you love him. If you have a good horse, the more you use him the more you prize him, and the more you prize him the more you love him. If you have but a good knife, the more you use it the more you prize it, and the more you prize it the more you will love it. Would you love Christ, use him much, and then the more you will prize him, and the more you will love him. Indeed we do not use Christ enough : and what is the reason we do not love him ? but because we do not use him. Either your sins be great, or else they be small. If your sins be great, you are afraid to use Christ for them ; if your sins be small, you think you need not use Christ for them. Either your wants be great, or else they be small. If they be great you dare not use Christ for them, and if your wants be small you will not, you think it not worth your time to use Christ for them. Indeed we do not use Christ enough. Use Christ much, and then you will prize him much ; and if you prize him much you love him much.

If you would have your hearts drawn out in love to the very person of Christ, go then to God, and beseech the Lord to circumcise your hearts for to love him. Mark how the promise runs : the Lord hath promised to unite our hearts to fear him, and he hath promised to circumcise our hearts to love him. Why, then, would you fear the Lord ? go to God to unite your hearts unto him to fear him. Would you love him ? go to God and beseech him to circumcise your hearts

to love the Lord and to love himself. And, oh, that the love that now I have been speaking of, unto the very person of Christ, might this day be begotten in any one heart, or increased where it is wanting. I fear we are wanting in our love to Christ's person; wherefore think on these things, and the Lord bless them to you.

SERMON II.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH.

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”—1 COR. II. 2.

HAVING spoken of the personal excellencies of Christ, the object of your love, there is a necessity upon me of speaking something concerning Christ crucified, the object of your faith, that your love and faith may go together; and therefore have made choice of these words only for this time.

Wherein the apostle Paul doth give an account of the reason of the plainness of his preaching: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom;” for, saith he, I am to preach Christ crucified. A gallant, eloquent speech, excellency of words, and plaited sentences do not become a crucified Christ. If I should speak at that rate, my speech would not be suited unto the subject that I have in hand, for I preach Christ crucified: saith he, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Some books read it, “I desire not to know any thing among you;” but rather, “I judge it; I decreed, I determined not to know any thing among you.”

“Not to know any thing among you.” Not to make any thing known unto you. I would preach as if I knew nothing else but Christ and him crucified. Christ and him crucified is the great thing I desire to make known and that ye should know. So that plainly then the observation is this:

The knowledge of Christ crucified is the most desirable thing in the world. The knowledge of Christ crucified is the

most desirable knowledge and the most desirable thing in the world.

That which the apostles taught and the churches learned, must needs be the most desirable. Now this is that the apostles taught, and this is that the churches learned, and therefore this knowledge of Christ crucified is the most desirable. But for the opening and prosecuting hereof,

First, We must a little inquire what it is to know Christ crucified, and when a man may be said to know Christ crucified.

Secondly, That it is our great work and business in the world to know Christ crucified.

Thirdly, What there is in Christ crucified that is so desirable to be known.

Fourthly, Whether a man may live under the gospel and not know Christ crucified.

Fifthly, What are the benefits that we do get or gain by the knowledge of Christ crucified. And then,

Sixthly, What we should do that we may know Christ crucified in a right manner. And,

Seventhly, In case we do know him, what is our duty that flows from hence.

First of all, If you ask what it is to know Christ crucified, or when a man may be said to know Christ crucified,

I answer shortly, A man is said to know a thing nakedly and barely, or else effectually and truly. Barely and nakedly a man knows God and Christ, when he doth understand that there is a God, and Christ a Saviour of the world. So the devil said: "I know thee whom thou art, the Holy One of Israel."

But truly and effectually a man is said to know Christ crucified, when he doth know the mind and will of God the Father in Christ crucified, having a disposition and affections suitable thereunto. Words of knowledge note an affection, and words of affection in Scripture note an effect; accordingly therefore in Scripture phrase, a man is said to know, when he doth go round about a business, doth consider of it and look well into it; and so Christ saith, "Behold me! behold me!" and saith the apostle, "Consider the High Priest of your profession."

This knowledge of Christ crucified is not a bare knowledge

of Christ crucified in the history, but it is a serious looking into the mystery thereof. In Scripture phrase a man is said to know when he doth approve; approbation is put for knowledge: so at the last, Christ shall say, "Depart from me, for I never knew you;" that is, I never approved of you; knowledge being put for approbation. And so a man is said to know Christ crucified when he doth understand and know the mind and will of God the Father in that great mystery, and doth approve thereof.

In Scripture phrase, again, a man is said to know God, or know Christ, when he doth believe or repose in Christ: so, "This is life eternal, to know thee, and him whom thou hast sent;" that is, to believe, knowing being put for believing.

And in Scripture phrase a man is said to know, and to know Christ, when the power and the efficacy of the death of Christ is shed abroad into his heart, and upon his life; and so Paul speaking to the Philippians saith, "I count all things dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that I may be conformed to his sufferings." So that I say, look when a man doth not only understand, but seriously look into, and consider this great mystery of Christ crucified, approve thereof, rest and repose upon this crucified Christ, having the power and efficacy of his death shed abroad into his heart and life, then he is said for to know Christ crucified truly and effectually. But then

Secondly, How may it appear, that it is our work, our great work, to know Christ crucified?

Why, if it be the work, and great work of preachers of the gospel, to preach Christ crucified; then it is our work, our great work, to know Christ crucified. Now, saith the apostle, in 1 Cor. i., "We preach Christ crucified, (that is our work, saith he,) the power of God, and the wisdom of God." When our Saviour Christ wrought any miracle, he said unto them, "Go, and see thou tellest no man;" but when he died and rose again, "Go, preach the gospel," saith he. And what doth the gospel hold forth but Christ crucified? What is the gospel but a dead Christ? and what is Christ but a living gospel? Now I say, that if it be the work of the preachers, their great work, to preach Christ crucified, then it is our work, and our great work, to know Christ crucified.

Look what that is, that all the ceremonies, sacrifices, and

types of the Old Testament, and all the ordinances of the New Testament do hold forth, that are we to know especially. Now what do all the sacrifices, all the types of the Old Testament hold forth, but Christ crucified; and what do all the ordinances of the New; what doth baptism; what doth preaching; what doth the Lord's Supper hold forth, but Christ crucified? Surely therefore this is our great work to know. But

If Christ crucified be the great and proper, and next object of our faith, then certainly it must needs be our special work and duty for to know Christ, and him crucified. Now Christ crucified is the proper object of our faith, and being opened and preached, will both beget and increase our faith. It is the object of our faith, and therefore, saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood:" the blood and death and sufferings of Christ, is the next and immediate object of our faith. Four things there are that do bid for our faith, which men do ordinarily think we are to trust unto: the power of God, the promise of God, the personal excellencies and fulness of Christ, and their own graces. But though we do rest upon the power and all sufficiency of God, yet if you look into Scripture, you shall find that the immediate object of our faith is Christ crucified? God is the *ultimate*, Christ the *immediate* object, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," John. xiv. 1., in me nextly and immediately, and in God ultimately: and though we may and do rest on the promise or word of God, yet we do so far rest on it, as we do close with Christ therein: the promises are but the veins of Christ, whereby his blood is carried into all his body: it is with the promises as it is with the seals, or sacraments; for what are the sacraments, but so many real promises made to the eye? Now you do not rest on the sacrament itself, but you rest on Christ which the sacrament doth exhibit: so for the promise, though it stay up your heart, as it is the word of God; and though it be *objectum quo*, the object by which you do it, yet Christ, and a crucified Christ is the *objectum quod*, the object which you do rest upon. And as for the personal excellencies, and fulness of Christ, though those excellencies do draw out your love unto Christ, yet it is a crucified Christ that doth draw out your faith. The personal

excellency of Christ makes him a fit subject for you to rest on, but it is Christ crucified that you build and lay the weight of your soul upon. The brazen serpent did not cure the Israelites by virtue of its excellent metal, but as lifted up; so, saith Christ, shall the Son of man be lifted up on the cross, and as lifted up on the cross he is the object of our faith: and though our graces are, and may be a good help to confirm our faith of assurance, yet they are not the object of our faith of reliance: for God doth therefore sometimes put the sentence of death upon our graces, that we may not trust to or rest on them: Christ and Christ alone, and that as dying and crucified, is the object of our faith. And it is not with this object as it is with other objects: take another object, and though it be never so clearly spread before the organ or faculty, yet it cannot cause or beget the act. Suppose the most excellent colour be laid before the eye, will that cause the blind eye to see? No. Or suppose the most excellent sound, or noise of music be laid before the ear, can that cause the deaf ear to hear? No. Yet sound is the object of the ear hearing; and colour the object of the eye seeing; but if the true object of faith, Christ crucified, be opened and laid before an unbelieving heart, it will cause it to believe: yea, and it will increase faith; and therefore if you look into the book of the Hebrews, you shall find, that the great design of that book, is to raise and increase faith, as appears by the therefores that are in that book, "Wherefore let us draw near with full assurance of faith," &c. But how doth the apostle labour to raise and increase our faith? He doth it by opening the priesthood and sufferings of Christ; and without doubt there is no such way to raise, beget and increase our faith, as to open and spread Christ crucified before the soul. Now it is the great work of a minister to be serviceable to the faith of God's people; surely therefore it is his work, and great work to make known Christ crucified: and accordingly Paul saith here, "I determined to know nothing among you, but Christ, and him crucified."

But the apostle saith, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh, no, not Christ himself: and though we have known him after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more," 2 Cor. v. 16, and if we are not to know Christ after

the flesh, how is this true, that it is our great work to know, and make known Christ crucified.

Yes, very well ; for the apostle doth not there speak of the knowledge of Christ crucified, neither doth he say, that we should not know the body and flesh of Christ still : there have been indeed a generation of men, and still are, who thought, that when Christ died, rose, and ascended, his body was swallowed up of his Deity, and that he hath now no body, but is all spirit : but the apostle speaks the contrary ; for, says he to the Philippians, “ Who shall change our vile body, that it shall be like to his glorious body ; ” Christ then, though in heaven, hath a body still, and this we are still to know. And in this verse he saith, “ Henceforth know we no man after the flesh,” are we therefore to think, that men have no bodies of flesh here on earth ? The same is said of Christ, that therefore cannot be the meaning of these words : but we are not to know Christ after the flesh, that is, say some, upon any fleshly or carnal account, or in any fleshly or carnal manner ; but I rather think, that the apostle here speaketh in reference to the Jews : times where when we thought, that the Messiah, and salvation were by him, did belong to the Jews only ; but now, saith he, we know that “ God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,” not the Jews only, but the gentiles also, verse 19, and that Christ did not die only for the Jews, but for the gentiles ; and “ he died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again ; wherefore (see how it comes in) henceforth know we no man after the flesh ; though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more, therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature,” whether he be a Jew or a gentile, it is all one to us whatsoever he be, if he be in Christ he is a new creature, “ wherefore now know we no man after the flesh, no not Christ himself,” upon any such Jewish and restrained account, for “ he died for all,” one as well as another, “ wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, no, not Christ himself,” upon any such Jewish and restrained account, for “ he died for all,” one as well as another, “ wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, no not Christ himself.” And thus this Scripture being opened, the one place is not contrary, but a light to

the other. And so much in answer to that objection, and for the second thing, namely, that it is our great work and business, to know Christ crucified.

The third thing is, What is there in Christ crucified that is so desirable to be known ?

I answer, 1. There is the conjunction of all the attributes of God. The power, the wisdom, the justice, the mercy, and righteousness of God. In the day that you know Christ crucified, that day do all the attributes of God pass before you, which is the glory of God.

2. There also, in Christ crucified, you may see the wealth and riches, not only of the saints, but of the world. Christ's sepulchre is our treasury ; "And have made his grave with the rich," Isa. liii. Glassius reads it, He hath placed riches in his grave. For the wealth and riches of the saints lie in the grave and sufferings of Christ.

3. There, in Christ crucified, you see the condescending love of God in the height thereof ; the greatest condescension of divine love. There are two travails of Christ that we read of : Christ once "travailing in the greatness of his strength," Isa. lxiii., and that is for the destruction of his enemies and the deliverance of the churches. Another travail which you read of in Isa. liii., "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied," and that is, Christ travailing in the "greatness of his affections," in the day of his sufferings. So that when you know Christ crucified, then you see him and know the greatest condescension of divine love that ever was.

4. There also you may see the greatness, and the vileness, and the misery of sin ; for which Christ the Lord of life and glory died.

5. There you may see the greatest sacrifice for sin that ever the world did see. Four things, saith Austin, concur to a sacrifice : the thing sacrificed, the sacrificer, the person sacrificed unto, and those that he sacrifices for ; I will add a fifth, the altar. And all these meet in one in Christ upon the cross. He himself the sacrifice, the sacrificer, the person sacrificed to, as God ; and as man, the person for whom was the sacrifice, and the altar. So that here is the greatest sacrifice that ever the world saw.

6. There you may see our great High Priest in all his robes and garments rolled in blood.

7. There, in Christ crucified, you may behold and see the covenant sealed, and all the promises confirmed, all the promises being yea and amen in Christ.

8. There you may see your reconciliation with God begun, and the day-break of your eternal happiness. "This is ethrnal life to know thee, and him whom thou hast sent."

9. There you may see your right and title unto all your privileges, and the root of all your enjoyments. As the man being shewn a table full of silver, still had his eye under the table to see the root of it; and being led to another table of gold, still he looked under the table to see the root of it. So here, see but Christ crucified, and you see your title to all the ordinances and the root of all your enjoyments.

10. There you may see all your afflictions sanctified, all your curses turned into blessings upon the cross of Christ.

11. There you may see the gates of Paradise opened afresh. "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," said Christ upon the cross.

12. There you may see the ladder that the angels ascend and descend upon for your ministry, as in the first of John and the last.

13. There you may see your desire upon all your spiritual enemies, law, sin, and Satan. It is not only a promise that you shall have your desire upon your enemies, but you shall *see* your desire upon your enemies; look upon Christ crucified, and you see your desire upon all these enemies.

14. There you may see the foundation of your union and communion with God the Father.

15. There you may see again, the accomplishment of that great contrivance between God the Father and Christ, in reference to our salvation.

What shall I say, there, in Christ crucified, you may see a full answer to all your wants, to all your fears, to all your doubts. What do you want, but you may see it in Christ crucified? Do you complain of your own unworthiness? Oh, I am a poor unworthy creature; do but look on Christ crucified, you see him suffering without the gates; Why, saith Austin, did he suffer without the gates? not only to fulfil the scripture, "He was numbered among transgressors:" but he suffered without the gates, not in the holy city, because he suffered for the gentiles as well as the Jews;

he suffered for the ungodly, for the unworthy. Now look upon Christ crucified, and there you see him suffering without the gates for the most unworthy.

Or will you instance in your own sin and guilt? why, do but look upon Christ crucified, and you see that sacrifice for sin that the world never saw the like, and that before your sin was committed.

Will you instance in the dominion of sin and your bondage under it? Look but upon Christ crucified and there you see your ransom: "Who gave himself a ransom for many," in whom we have redemption through his blood.

Will you instance still in your own misery and ruins? Oh, we lie like the ruins of London at this day, in regard of our state by nature: yet do but look upon Christ crucified, and there you shall see the repairer of the breaches, and the restorer of paths to dwell in. Oh, what a blessed thing is it then to have the knowledge of this Christ crucified? Who would not know Christ crucified.

Fourthly, But you will say whether may a man live under the gospel, and not know Christ crucified. We all know Christ crucified we hope, for, is it possible that a man should live under the gospel, and not know Christ crucified?

Surely it is possible a man may live under the gospel, and not know Christ crucified, as he ought to know; for as in times of the law, some that were in the highest forms did not know God. It is said of the sons of Eli, they were children of Belial, that knew not God, yet priests, men of the highest form, and yet they knew not God. So now in the times of the gospel, men may sit upon the highest form of profession, and yet not know Christ crucified aright as they ought to know. You know how ignorant Nicodemus was, "Art thou a doctor in Israel, and knowest not these things?" How unacquainted was he with Christ crucified? yea, Christ's own disciples before Christ's death, how ignorant were they of a crucified Christ? when he said, "Destroy this temple," in John ii., they understood it not. So that possibly men may live under the gospel, and be in a very high form of profession, and yet not know Christ crucified as they ought to know.

And to clear it to you. If we did know Christ crucified as

we ought to know, why are we not more sensible of our ignorance of Christ crucified. It is both recorded and reported of Bishop Usher, a learned and holy man, that in the midst of all his learning, still he would cry out of his ignorance of Christ. And that we know by experience, grace will make one sensible of the sin that is contrary unto that grace. Faith will make one sensible of one's unbelief, humility will make one sensible of one's pride, sincerity will make one sensible of one's hypocrisy, the knowledge of Christ crucified, will make one sensible of one's ignorance of Christ; yet how many are there that were never sensible of their ignorance of Christ crucified; Why? But because they do not know this crucified Christ, as they ought to know.

If we did indeed know Christ crucified as we ought to know, why are we not more crucified to the world, and the things thereof? Gal. vi. You know what Paul saith, "God forbid that I should glory in any thing save in the cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Did we know Christ crucified as we ought to know, certainly we should be more crucified to the world and the things thereof; but how few even among professors, are crucified to the fashions, ways and manners of the world? And why so? But because few there be that do know Christ crucified in a right manner.

If we did know Christ crucified as we ought to know, then why do we prefer other things before Christ, when they come in competition with Christ? In the general we do choose for Christ, but in time of competition how often do men prefer other things before Christ, and the knowledge of other things before the knowledge of Christ? Truly, saith Paul, "I account all things but loss;" I *did* account and I *do* account all things loss and dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; not only loss and dross, but I account them dung, unsavoury. Time was when I gloried in my parts and in my privileges, but now how unsavoury are all these things unto me, in regard of the knowledge of Christ. So Moses chose affliction with the people of God in time of competition. Why? Because he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

And if we did know Christ crucified as we ought to know,

why do we boggle, startle at, and go back so often from the cross and persecution for the name of Christ, and not rather glory in the excellencies of Christ when they lie under the greatest reproach? The wise men worshipped Christ in a manger. The disciples and children cried Hosannah, to Christ riding upon an ass. Many will honour Christ in a coach, but will not honour Christ upon an ass. Many cry up the kingdom and the government of Christ when he is upon the throne, but not when a crown of thorns is upon his head. Friends, it is one thing to glory in the kingdom and government of Christ when it is under glory, and another thing when it is under reproach. Many there are that glory in the kingdom and government of Christ when it lies under excellency and glory, few that do glory in the government of Christ lying under reproach; and why, but because they do not know this crucified Christ in a right manner.

If we did know Christ crucified as we ought to know, why are we not willing to take and receive all our mercies and blessings in the way that this crucified Christ hath purchased and bought for us? What way is that? Why Christ hath bought them for us in a way of contraries: heaven by the way of hell, mercy by the way of misery; glory and honour by the way of reproach, victory over enemies by being overcome by enemies; Christ overcame the world by being overcome by the world. This is the way that the crucified Christ went; and if in truth we were acquainted with Christ crucified, and did know Christ crucified as we ought to know him, why should we not be contented to take our mercies and blessings in the way that this crucified Christ hath bought them for us? Joy by grief, hope by fear, mercy by misery, and overcoming by being overcome. But oh, how many are there that are unwilling to take these things thus: why? because few there are that do know Christ crucified as they ought to know. But, O friends, shall we live thus long under the gospel, and not know Christ crucified as we ought to know?

But, fifthly, you will say Suppose yet that we do know Christ crucified as we ought to know, what shall we gain or what shall we get thereby? What are the great benefits that we shall obtain or get by knowing Christ crucified in a right manner? Those are many.

Thereby you shall know God, you shall know yourselves, and you shall know men.

You shall know God. God is best known in Christ; the sun is not seen but by the light of the sun. Christ (as one speaks) came from heaven with a Bible under his arm, to make known the will of God the Father to the children of men; and, without Christ, there is no knowledge of God the Father; he doth reveal the Father, thereby you know the Father.

And thereby also you know yourselves: for three things are required to the knowledge of ourselves; we must know our sins, our misery thereby, and our inability for to help ourselves. Know but Christ crucified, you know your sins, you know your misery thereby, and you know your inability to help yourselves.

And thereby you shall know men: for the more I know the worth of a man, the more I know him; and the more I know the difference between man and man, the more I know men: know but Christ crucified, and you know the worth of a man; and you never know the worth of a soul, or of a man, but by knowing Christ crucified. Thereby you know, I say, God, and you know yourselves, and you know men.

Thereby you shall have your hearts drawn out and engaged to Jesus Christ: "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me." One would think that the scandal of the cross should drive men from Christ, but there is wisdom and power in Christ crucified which draws men unto Christ. Wisdom draws; it drew the queen of Sheba to behold Solomon: a greater than Solomon is here. Love draws; it drew Rebecca unto Isaac. Here is love indeed in Christ crucified. Christ crucified is the most drawing thing in the world; where love and wisdom and power and strength and all meet; thereby, I say, your hearts shall be drawn out and engaged to Jesus Christ.

Thereby also your lusts and temptations shall be fully mortified and subdued. There are three sorts of lusts, "the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life," that John speaks of. The devil tempted Adam and Eve by all these, by the lust of the eye they saw the apple that it was fair to look on; by the lust of the flesh that the apple was good to eat; and by the pride of life the devil

told them, that if they ate, they should be "like unto God," and he prevailed with Adam and with Eve. And accordingly he sets upon the second Adam, and thought to have carried him too, he tempted him by all these. He tempted him by the lusts of the flesh, "Turn these stones into bread;" By the lusts of the eye, "He shewed him all the glory of the world;" he tempted him by the pride of life, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" but here he missed his prize, and so shall he do when he comes and tempts you, if you do but keep close to a crucified Christ in the time of your temptations, "for by faith we quench all the fiery darts of the devil;" and where are they quenched but in the blood of Jesus? You blow out a candle and it is easily lighted again; but if you quench it in blood, it is not so easily lighted again; if you blow out a temptation or a sin by a resolution, it is easily lighted again, but quench it in the blood of Jesus, and it is not so easily lighted again.

Thereby also you shall die unto all your own righteousness. There is no such way in the world to die unto our own righteousness as by the knowledge of a crucified Christ, as in that place of the Philippians, "I account all things loss. &c."

Thereby also you shall be able to deny yourselves in all things, in one thing as well as another. Possibly a man may deny himself in one thing, that he may seek himself in another. I may deny myself in meats and drinks, that I may have the more money; deny myself in prodigality, that I may seek myself in covetousness. It is possible that a man may deny himself in one thing, that he may seek himself in another; a man may deny his pride in one thing, that he may be proud in another. But now the sight of a crucified Christ will teach us to deny ourselves in everything. And therefore the apostle Paul, pressing the Philippians unto humility and self-denial, he opens before them the sufferings of Christ.

By your knowledge of Christ crucified, you shall grow in grace, in one grace as well as in another, grow in assurance and yet in repentance; grow in repentance, and yet in assurance. The sight of Christ crucified is a friend unto your repentance, and a friend unto your assurance. Saith the apostle, "Grow in grace," not in this or that grace, but grace

in the general; "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ:" so that the knowledge of Christ crucified is that whereby you shall grow in one grace as well as in another.

Thereby also your hearts shall be established in opposition to all sufferings and afflictions. It will encourage you to suffer, and it will enable you to suffer. Nicodemus came by night when he first came to Christ; but after he had seen Christ upon the cross, and seen the sufferings of Christ, how boldly did he own Christ then. The sight of a suffering Christ will both encourage to suffer and enable to suffer. All our sufferings are either outward or inward: if my sufferings and afflictions be outward, the sight of a suffering Christ will make me suffer; if my afflictions be inward and spiritual, what is there that will quiet the conscience of a poor trembling soul but Christ crucified? Thereby, I say, you shall be established in opposition unto all your sufferings and afflictions, inward and outward.

Thereby also you shall have boldness in all your addresses unto God the Father. "Wherefore (saith the apostle) let us come with boldness to the throne of grace." Why? "For we have an High Priest." An High Priest, there is the sufferings of Christ. Thereby you have boldness in all your addresses to God the Father.

Thereby, even by the knowledge of Christ crucified, you shall be possessed of Christ. You know many things, and yet you do not possess them by your knowledge of them: but know Christ crucified, and you are possessed of Christ. Saith the apostle, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Christ formed in you; that is, till the knowledge of Christ be formed in you. The knowledge of Christ brings one into the possession of Christ.

Yea, thereby you shall be furnished and prepared for every good word and work. For what is the death and suffering of Christ, but *officina virtutum*, the shop of virtues? Do you want faith? Christ crucified is the object of your faith, and the cause of it, as you have heard. Are you full of fears; are you afraid because of the law and the avenger of blood that is following you at the heels? Do but look upon Christ crucified, and there you see the city of refuge. So many wounds in Christ, so many cities of refuge. Are you impa-

tient and froward? Why the sight of a patient Christ will make you patient. Are you proud? The sight of a humble Christ, a crucified Christ, will make you humble. If I have gallant and brave clothes on, and go abroad and swagger with them, and a man comes and tells me, Sir, you owe for these clothes; it is enough to take down my plumes. So now, though a man be proud of this or that good thing, yet if he do but see Christ crucified, he shall there be told that Christ hath paid for all; and this will take down his pride. Do you complain of a hard heart? The sight of a broken Christ will break your heart, or nothing will. So that the knowledge of Christ crucified is that that will furnish you and prepare you to every good word and work. And therefore, O friends, who would not labour to know Christ crucified! Let me speak a little more.

This is the knowledge that is the soul humbling knowledge. Other knowledge puffs up; but if you know Christ crucified, you may glory in your knowledge without pride. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the learned man glory in his learning." If I glory in my wisdom, I am proud; if I glory in my strength, I am proud; but if I glory in that I know Christ crucified, the more I glory in Christ crucified, the more humble I am. That is a soul-humbling knowledge.

This is that knowledge which is the highest experimental knowledge in the world. A man may have the experience of his own sins, yet be a wicked man. Oh, I have such a proud heart, such a vain heart, may he say. Why? For his sins are within him; and he may easily, though a wicked man, have experience of what is within him by nature: but to have experience of a crucified Christ is not by nature. This is the highest experience in the world—Christ in me the hope of glory; this is the most true experimental knowledge.

This is that knowledge that will make a man wise indeed. Other knowledge may make a man wise, *quo ad hoc*, to this or that thing, but the knowledge of Christ crucified doth make a man wise at large.

And therefore, I say, oh, what a blessed thing is it to know Christ crucified; and who would not labour to know Christ crucified in a right manner?

Sixthly. You will say then, in the sixth place, What shall

we do to know Christ crucified in a right manner; for we have heard men may live under the gospel, sit upon the highest form of profession, and yet not know Christ crucified in a right manner: what shall we do then that we may know Christ crucified in a right manner? Something I shall speak to the manner, and something to the means.

As to the manner. If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, you must look upon him as the great institution and appointment of the Father. When God doth deal with us in a way of institutions, he hath not respect unto the strength of the means or the worth of the persons. When God deals with us in a way of nature there is respect had to the strength of the means or the worth of the person. As in physic God deals in a way of nature, there respect is had to the strength of the means. But when God deals with us in a way of institution, there he hath neither respect to the strength of means nor to the worth of persons. Now Jesus Christ is the great institution of God the Father, and so if we would know him rightly we must look upon him. For though the stung Israelite was cured by the brazen serpent, yet he was not cured by the brazen serpent in regard of the metal of the serpent, but as it was an appointment, and as an institution. So if a man would know Christ to purpose, he must know him and look upon him as the great institution and appointment of the Father; Him hath God the Father sealed. And what is the reason that many go to and get no good by a crucified Christ, but because they never did to this day look upon Christ crucified as the great institution of the Father.

If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, you must then look upon him as sent, you must look upon this crucified Christ under the mission of the Father. There are three great missions that you read of in the New Testament. There is the mission of ministers: they are sent out to preach. There is the mission of the Highest: "I will send the Comforter." There is the mission of the Son sent from the Father. Now the mission of Christ from the Father is the original of all the other missions; and you cannot know the other missions rightly, if you do not know this original mission. If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, you must know him as sent. In the xviith of John, saith

Christ in his prayer to the Father, "But I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." So that if you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, you must know him and look upon him as under a mission from the Father.

If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, you must look well unto the design, drift and scope of the Father in the sufferings of Christ. Then you know Christ when you know the Father, and you know the Father when you know the Father's design. What is the great design of the Father in sending Christ to die, but to magnify his love, to save poor sinners, to justify the ungodly? Would you know Christ crucified aright? be sure you have an eye to the design of the Father in the matter of a crucified Christ.

Be sure of this, That you look as well upon the testamentalness of Christ's sufferings, as the greatness of his sufferings. Some look much at the greatness of the sufferings of Christ, as the friars and monks, and never look at the testamentalness of Christ's sufferings. Oh, say they, Christ's death was a painful, reproachful, and a lingering death, and thus they aggravate, as truly they may, the sufferings of Christ; but not one word of the testamentalness of his sufferings. But Christ's death was to seal the covenant; therefore if you would know Christ crucified rightly, you must as well look upon the testamentalness of his sufferings, as the greatness of his sufferings. Thus in regard of the manner, if you would know Christ rightly.

And for the means, I shall speak two or three things.

If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner for means, then go unto God the Father to create this knowledge of Christ crucified in you. All light was at the first by a word of creation, "Let there be light." And as in the old creation, the creation of the world, so in the new creation, Let there be light, let there be knowledge: "God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." This light comes into the soul in a way of creation; go then to God to create this light.

And be sure that you set open all your windows that the light may come in. There are some sickly and weak who

would fain have the light to come into their chambers, but they are afraid of the cold air, and so dare not open their windows. So here, some would fain have more light and knowledge of Christ, but they are afraid of the cold, and so dare not open their windows to receive the light. But pray, friends, why should we be afraid of new lights? for why should there not be new lights found out in the firmament of the scripture, as well as the astrologers find out new stars in heaven? Be not afraid to set open your windows for any light that God shall make known unto you.

If you would know Christ crucified in a right way and manner, then study much, think much upon this crucified Christ: meditate much, insist and dwell much upon Christ crucified. It is not slight and superficial thinking of Christ crucified that will bring in this knowledge. If I would know a man, I must be conversant with him. So if you would know Christ crucified, you must be conversant with him, you must sit down and consider and dwell upon Christ crucified in your thoughts and meditations. Now there are four times wherein it will be good for you especially to think of Christ crucified much. Four cases: In case of some revelation or vision that you may be under. When Christ was transfigured, and Peter said, "It is good to be here," Christ turns him off and reads a lecture to him about his sufferings; why, but to shew that in such times of raptures and revelations is a fit season to think of Christ crucified. Another time or season is, The time and case of spiritual pride. In case your heart be lifted up within you in reference unto any privilege, gift, or performance, then is a fit time to think on a crucified Christ. The disciples were speaking who should be greatest, "that one might sit on Christ's right hand, and the other at his left hand;" then said Christ, "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, and to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" "The son of man must suffer," saith he. He turns them about from those thoughts to a crucified Christ; why? but to shew thus much, that when at any time our hearts are lifted up upon any account, then is a fit time and season to think on a Christ crucified. The time of dissension and difference among professors and brethren is a fit time and season to think on a crucified Christ. When one

disciple desired to sit at Christ's right hand and the other at his left, the rest of the disciples took it ill, and all quarrelled one with another. Christ now tells them of his sufferings; Is this a fit time for you to have differences among you? think of my sufferings. Never more seasonable time to think of a crucified Christ than when professors are at variance. Times of dissension call for thoughts of a crucified Christ. Again, In case that a man be in any great affliction, or danger, or fear thereof, then is a good time to think of the sufferings of Christ. Nicodemus comes by night unto Christ out of fear, and Christ first preaches to him the doctrine of regeneration, and when he had done so, saith he in John iii. 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Nicodemus was afraid to suffer for Christ, now Christ turns him over to his sufferings. The Son of man must be lifted up; why? but to shew thus much, that when we are afraid of sufferings, when we meet with afflictions and troubles, and are in fear thereof, then is a fit time for us to think of Christ's sufferings. It is a good thing to think of Christ crucified at all times; but when you have revelations and visions, when your hearts are lifted up, when you are in any dissension, when you are under any any affliction, trouble, or in fear thereof, then is a good time, especially when you are under spiritual temptations. And thus now you see the second thing; if you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, study and meditate much on him, and insist much thereon. But then,

If you would know Christ crucified in a right manner, make it your work and your business to know Christ crucified. Solomon gives you a promise in Prov. ii. 3, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God," verse 5. How do men seek for hidden treasure; how do men seek for gold and silver? They dig into the bowels of the earth and spare for no pains. So, saith the Lord, If you dig and search for it, you shall have this knowledge. And you know how it is with those that do dig for gold and silver; though they do not meet with a mine presently, possibly they may

meet with several springs of water that may stand them in more stead than the mine. So digging in the Scripture, though a man do not presently reach the mine, yet he may meet with such springs of comfort in the way, as may be a refreshment to him all his days. Now therefore, friends, do you desire to know Christ and him crucified? then remember these three things: Go unto God the Father to create this light in you. Dwell and insist much upon Christ crucified in your thoughts and at some times especially. And then make it your work and business to know Christ crucified. Dig in the mines for this knowledge.

But suppose I do know Christ crucified, what is my duty then?

Why then if you do know Christ crucified, certainly it doth not become you to conform unto the world, and to be uncrucified in your affections to the world?

It doth not become you to be the servants of men, especially in the worship of God. Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the servants of men.

Certainly it doth not become you to walk proudly. What, shall Christ humble himself, and shall we be proud? Certainly it doth not become you to walk proudly.

But what shall I do then?

Go and resign and give up yourselves to Christ. Shall Christ give down himself unto us, and shall not we give up ourselves unto him? Resign and give up yourselves unto him.

And then if indeed you do know Christ crucified, take heed that you do not doubt of your interest in God, or salvation by Christ. What, know Christ crucified and yet doubt? Why, saith the apostle, "If when we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. And, viii. 32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If God the Father did give his Son to death for you, will he deny you other things?

Go away and look no more sorrowful, let it appear that you know Christ, and that you know Christ crucified.

In case at any time any temptation doth arise upon you, presently turn and look wisely upon Christ crucified, and

there fix. If a man be in a great temptation, possibly the temptation may be put by way of divertisement, turning to another object ; but if that other object be engaging, then he is helped thereby, not only by way of divertancy, but by way of assistance. Now if a temptation do arise at any time upon any of you, presently turn your eye, fix it upon Christ crucified, there stand and there look, and thus shall you be helped, not only in a way of divertancy, but in a way of assistance.

If you do indeed know Christ crucified, then why should you not hold forth the virtues of this Christ, the death of Christ, in your dying unto all things below, and say with Paul upon all occasions, “ Henceforth let no man trouble me, I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” You come to tempt me to such a sin, do not trouble me, I know Christ crucified. Henceforth let no man trouble me, I know Christ crucified. Answer all your temptations thus, and be peremptory and resolute, Let no man trouble me, do not trouble me, I know Christ crucified.

Go away and communicate that knowledge of a crucified Christ unto others ; your knowledge is nothing unless you make others to know what you know. There is a twofold revelation of Christ ; Christ revealed *to* men, and Christ revealed *in* men, as Paul speaks, “ When it pleased the Lord to reveal Christ *in* me.” When a man hath a revelation of Christ within him, he will communicate that knowledge. Ye see how it is with the sun shining upon the wall, and with a candle in a lanthorn ; the sun shines upon the wall, and the wall enlightens nobody, why, because the sun is not in it : but there is a candle in a lanthorn, and that enlightens others, why ? because the candle is within it. So when a man hath a revelation of Christ upon him, it falls dead, as upon a mud wall, and he communicates not that light unto others ; aye, but if Christ be in me the hope of glory, then certainly I shall communicate this knowledge of Christ unto others also.

And to end all, if you do know Christ and him crucified, then go and place yourselves before the Lord, as David did, when the Lord had made known his mind unto him : “ Then went king David in and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou

hast brought me hitherto?" &c. "And what can David say more unto thee, for thou Lord God knowest thy servant; for thy word sake, and according to thine own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them." So I say, go you and place yourselves before the Lord and say, What am I, Lord, oh what am I, poor ignorant creature as well as others, that Christ crucified should be made known to me? Oh the riches and the greatness of the grace of God; according to thine own heart, Lord, hast thou done this, to make these things known unto thy poor servant: wherefore glory and honour unto God the Father, and unto the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne for ever.

And thus now I have spoken something concerning a crucified Christ, as the object of your faith; the former time concerning the excellency of Christ to draw out your love: now then let your faith and love meet together; and may your love be quickened and your faith strengthened, I have enough.

SERMON III.

THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE OPENED.

"And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—HEB. xii. 24.

IN this scripture you have the difference between the law and the gospel; the excellency of the state of the church under the new testament, above the state of the church under the old testament: for, saith the apostle at the 18th verse, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words: but ye are come unto Mount Sion, (verse 22,) and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," &c.

So that first, look how much mount Sion doth excel mount Sinai; the city of the living God doth excel the wilderness; and the heavenly Jerusalem doth excel the mountain that

might be touched, from whence the law was given: so much doth our state now exceed and excel that of the Jews.

And, saith he, ye are also come "to an innumerable company of angels." The law was given at mount Sinai by the ministration of angels. Look therefore, how much our communion now with an innumerable company of angels, doth exceed that ministration which was by the ministration of angels then, so much doth our gospel state now exceed their's.

And, ye are also come "to the general assembly and church of the first-born." Look how much the catholic church, drawn out of all nations, doth exceed the Jewish synagogue; so much doth our gospel church state now exceed their's.

And, "Ye are come unto God the Judge of all." Look, therefore, how much the manifestation of God, as the Judge of all the world, doth exceed the manifestation of God as a Lawgiver upon mount Sinai unto the nation of the Jews only; so much doth our gospel state and church exceed their's.

And, "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." It is true in regard of the saints in heaven, for we are fellow citizens with the saints there. Or if you understand it of the spirits of just men made perfect with gospel perfection, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, it is true. So that look as the state of heaven doth exceed the state of earth, and as gospel perfection doth exceed the imperfect state of the law, so doth the state of the church and gospel now exceed that of the Jews.

And "ye are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Look therefore as Jesus Christ the Mediator of the new covenant exceeds Moses the mediator of the old; and as the blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, doth excel and exceed the blood of all sacrifices in the time of the old testament, so doth our gospel church state now exceed that of theirs.

I shall not run through all these differences, or privileges, only fall in with this verse 24.

"And to Jesus," that is, ye are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and "to the blood of sprinkling,"

that is, ye are come “to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” From which two privileges with their connection, I take up these observations.

Observation I. That there is a new covenant stricken with the children of men.

II. That Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant.

III. That now in these gospel times, we are not come to Moses the mediator of the old, but unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. And

IV. That thus coming unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, we are also come unto the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

I shall begin with the first; there is a new covenant stricken with the children of men.

It was always God’s way to deal with man in the way of a covenant; that is the most suitable to man, the most honourable for man, and the most amicable and friendly: from the beginning therefore so it was; no sooner was man made, but God entered into covenant with him, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death;” and then a covenant he made with the world by Noah; and then a covenant he made with Abraham; and then a covenant he made with the Jews at mount Sinai. It hath always been God’s way to deal with man in the way of a covenant, but now in these latter days he hath stricken a new covenant with the children of men: “A new covenant will I make with the house of Israel, saith the Lord,” by way of promise, Jer. xxxi. A new covenant hath the Lord made with the house of Israel by way of fulfilment and accomplishment, Heb. viii. So that there is a new covenant stricken with the children of men.

For the opening of which argument:

First, We must inquire what this covenant is.

Secondly, Why, and upon what account it is called a new covenant. And

Thirdly, What are the ways and properties of this new covenant.

Fourthly, Who are the subjects of this covenant, and persons that God doth strike this covenant with.

Fifthly, We will a little inquire into the benefits thereof.

Sixthly, Labour to show you, what a man should do to get into covenant with God: and in case he be in covenant with

God, how he should walk as becometh one that is in covenant with the great God. Here is matter enough to discourse on many exercises ; but, though with difficulty, I shall dispatch all in this one.

And First of all, if you ask me what this covenant is, take this description of the covenant that now we are in.

It is that mutual agreement between God and man, whereby God the Father doth engage himself to shew mercy, love and kindness, to Christ and to his seed ; Christ engaging both for himself and for his seed, to be obedient unto God the Father.

I say, it is a mutual agreement, and herein a covenant differs from a law. A law properly is a commandment with penalty. No sooner was man made, but he was under a law, to be obedient unto God his Maker : and in case he broke it, God by the law of nature might punish him : but then when God said unto him, “ In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death,” then God entered into covenant, man accepting thereof. The child is obliged by the law of nature to obey his parents ; yet this is no covenant, but a law of nature, for here is no agreement. But the wife is obliged to obey her husband, and this is a covenant ; Why ? Because it is a mutual agreement ; so that I say, this covenant, first, is a mutual agreement between God and man. But

It is that agreement whereby God the Father doth engage himself to shew kindness, grace and mercy, to Christ and to his seed.

Unto Christ himself he doth engage, Isa. xlii., “ I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles.” If thou wilt undertake the work of the Mediator, I do engage and promise to thee, “ I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and I will hold thine hand, and I will keep thee.”

And the Father doth engage unto Christ, and his seed too ; for saith he unto Christ, “ If thy children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes : nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take

away:" which is plainly spoken unto Christ, as you read in Psalm lxxxix. 26—30. So that I say, it is that agreement whereby God the Father doth engage himself to shew kindness, grace and mercy, unto Christ and his seed.

On the other side, Christ engages both for himself and for his seed, to be obedient unto God the Father.

Christ engages for himself, and therefore, saith he in Psalm xl. 6. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, &c. Then said I, Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart." They are the words of Christ; "then said I," that is, then promised I. Paulus Fagius observes, that the Hebrew hath no one proper word for promise; but where God is said to promise, the word in the Hebrew is only so, God said, God spake; and indeed if any man will take the pains to consult the Hebrew, and our English translation together, he shall find it true. I will give you some instances, and so pass over, Deut. i. 11., "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath promised you," (Hebrew, as he hath said). So in Kings viii. 56., "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he hath promised," (Hebrew, according to all that he hath said). So in 2 Chron. vi. 10., "The Lord therefore hath performed his word, that he hath spoken, for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the Lord hath promised," (Hebrew, as the Lord hath said). So at verse 16, "Now therefore O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him," (Hebrew, that which thou hast said to him). So here in Psalm xl., "Then said I," that is, then promised I, then engaged I unto the Father, saying, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book, it is written of me;" here Christ engages for himself.

And he engaged also for his seed; therefore Psalm xvi., "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, (said, by way of promise,) O my Lord, my goodness is not for thee, but for the saints that are in the earth, and in the excellent in whom is all my delight." And so our Saviour Christ promises to the Father in John xvii., "Therefore do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified." And if you look into the

Hebrews, you shall find that Christ is called the “Surety of the covenant;” Why? Because he doth engage for God the Father to perform to us, and he doth engage for us, that we shall perform to God: so that, do you ask what the covenant is, plainly then it is, That mutual agreement between God and man, whereby God the Father doth engage himself to shew kindness, love and mercy to Christ and his seed, Christ engaging both for himself, and for his seed to be obedient unto God the Father.

Secondly, But then why is this covenant called a new covenant?

Not only because it is an excellent covenant, as in Scripture phrase, excellent things are called new; a new song &c.

Nor only because it brings a new heart, which is promised in the covenant.

Nor only because it is always fresh and green and new, upon which account Austin thinks, that the commandment of love is called a new commandment.

Nor is it called *new* only because there is no other covenant to succeed and follow, which is the reason in Heb. viii.

But it is called a new covenant in opposition to the covenant that was made with Adam, and with us in the state of innocency; and in opposition to the covenant which was made with the Jews in the time of the Old Testament.

New in opposition to the covenant that was made with Adam in the state of innocency; for then, though God out of free love and grace was pleased to condescend to enter into covenant with man, yet then God did deal with us in a way of supremacy and of righteousness: and therefore there is mention made only of the threatening, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death.” But now God deals with us in this covenant in a way of grace, and of great compassion; and therefore in this covenant there is mention made only of the promise.

Though God did enter into covenant with Adam, and so with us, and promised eternal life in heaven; not eternal life in this world only, as some would. For hell was threatened in these words, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death,” and therefore heaven and salvation was promised on the contrary; yet I say (although God when he entered into covenant with us then, did promise

heaven and salvation) it was upon condition of our personal and perfect obedience, and therefore called a covenant of works. But now our covenant runs upon no such terms.

Then in that covenant, acceptation began in the work, and so to the person, and therefore saith the Lord to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" speaking to him as belonging to the covenant of works. But in the covenant now made, the acceptation begins in the person, and so to the work, and therefore, saith the Lord concerning Abel, the Lord accepted Abel (his person) and then his sacrifice.

Then also the Lord gave Adam and us an ability to stand, but he did not give a promise of perseverance in standing. But now the Lord doth, "I will put my fear into your hearts, that you shall not depart from me," saith the Lord.

Then in that covenant there was no room for repentance, no room for remission. But as in a court of mere justice the question is not whether a man doth repent of his fact or no, but whether, aye or no, hath such a fact been done? So by the covenant of works, the first covenant, there is no question whether a man doth repent or no, but whether the work were done, whether the sin were done. But now in this covenant there is room both for repentance and for remission, as by and by you shall hear. And then,

Though when God made that covenant with Adam and with us, "the tree of Life" might be some shadow of Christ, yet "then there was no Mediator, for there was no need," God and man was not at variance, and so no need of a Mediator. But in this covenant that is now stricken there is a Mediator, a Mediator of the new covenant. So that thus you see this covenant is new, in opposition to the covenant that was made with Adam and us in the state of innocency.

And as it is new in opposition to the covenant that was made with Adam, the covenant of works; so it is new also in opposition to the covenant that was made with the Jews in the time of the Old Testament. For the clearing of this,

First of all, we must inquire whether there be any difference between the covenant made with the Jews in the day of the Old Testament, and the covenant made with us now. And in case there be, what is the difference and wherein it lies.

And if you ask whether there be any difference ?

If I should answer, with divines ordinarily (wherein they speak the truth), I must say, that the covenant which God made with the Jews, was for substance the same, though different in administration ; but give me leave to express my own sense in my own terms thus,

It is plain and clear that the Jews that were saved in the time of the Old Testament, were saved by the same covenant that we now are saved by ; for they were saved by the covenant that God made with Abraham, so are we, Luke xi., Rom. iv., Gal. 3. Circumcision then was the seal of the covenant : and what was circumcision but a seal of the righteousness of faith ? The ceremonies, types, and sacrifices, did not belong to the covenant of works, they were types of Christ, and therefore it must needs be the same covenant, if it was a covenant of works that was made with the Jews, God should have brought them from better to worse, for the covenant of grace was made with Abraham ; “but though the law was added after the promise, it could not disannul the promise,” saith the apostle, Gal. iii. So that it is plain and clear, the Jews that were then saved were saved by the same covenant that we now are. But,

Though those Jews that were saved were saved by the same covenant that we now are saved by, yet notwithstanding the covenant of works was declared and promulgated among the Jews ; “Wherefore then was the law added ?” saith the apostle. Added then it was. As Sarah and Hagar, made types of the two testaments by the apostle, were at once in Abraham’s house ; so the old covenant of works, and the new covenant of grace were at once in the Jewish church. But

Though both these covenants were at once in the Jewish church, the one declared and the other made with them ; though Hagar was in the same house, yet it was in subserviency unto Sarah ; and though the covenant of works was declared and was there at the same time, yet it was in subserviency unto the covenant of grace ; “It was added, wherefore ?” saith the apostle, because of transgression, to be a school master to bring to Christ. It was there in subserviency, and upon a gospel design. But then,

Though both these covenants were thus joined together,

the covenant of works and the covenant of grace both joined together in one state, yet both together did not make a third and distinct covenant ; I am no ways of Camero's mind, that there were three covenants, but of the apostle's mind clearly, Gal. iv., where he speaks expressly that there are two Testaments and no more ; so that though both were upon the ground together (one declared then to make them sensible of their sins, and to bring them to the other covenant) yet both did not make up a third and distinct covenant. But

Because the commandment lay uppermost the whole dispensation was called law, although the promise and the gospel lay at the bottom ; as now, because the promise lies uppermost the whole of the covenant is called the promise, though the commandment lies at the bottom.

Well then, if these things be so, wherein lies the difference between that of the Jews and ours ?

Thus, although the Jews that were saved, were saved by the same covenant that we now are saved by : yet then the covenant had a special eye unto the commandment, and therefore it is called the law. Now the covenant hath a special eye to the promise, and therefore it is called the promise.

Then, though the covenant of grace was made with the Jews that were saved, yet it was given more darkly and obscurely ; there was a veil upon Moses that he could not see to the end of things. " But now we all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord," saith the apostle, as speaking of the difference between the one and the other, Cor. ii. 3.

Then also the ministration of that covenant was very burthensome, now more easy ; " Take my yoke upon you," saith Christ ; it is spoken in opposition to Moses too, " for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Matt. xi.

Then also the covenant was made with that nation of the Jews only, but now it takes in all the world, Jew and gentile. That scripture, Isa. lvi., is spoken in regard of gospel times, " Let not the eunuch say, &c., nor the son of a stranger, that I am separated from the Lord, only let him take hold of my covenant." The *stranger* now may do it, it belongs to the gentile as well as the Jew. And

Then the dispensation was more terrible and brought forth

fear and bondage; but now we are not come unto mount Sinai, where was fear and trembling, but we are come unto mount Sion, which brings forth love and faith and sweetness and thankfulness.

Then also the covenant was confirmed by promise, and by the blood of bulls and goats; now it is confirmed by oath, and by the blood of Jesus.

Then also the mediator was Moses, that stood between God and them; now Jesus the Mediator.

Then the law was a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, the covenant of works was upon the ground, and the law was a schoolmaster, it is not so now.

Then Christ was in the hand of Moses, now Moses is in the hand of Christ. Now the bond-woman is cast out of doors; there was a time when the bond-woman and Sarah were in the house together, but now the bond-woman is gone.

Then the commandments were more carnal, as the apostle speaks, and the promises worser, but now the commandment is spiritual and the covenant founded upon better promises, saith the apostle, Heb. vii.

And, to say no more, look what difference there is between the letter and the Spirit in regard of efficacy, for that is the meaning of it, such a difference there is between that and this. "We are not ministers of the letter," as in the days of Moses, "but we are ministers of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. So that thus you see why this covenant is called a new covenant. New in opposition to the covenant that was made with man in the state of innocency, and new in opposition to the covenant that was made with the Jews in the times of the Old Testament.

Thirdly, But then what kind of covenant is this? And what are the properties of it?

To name but three,

It is a covenant of grace in opposition to works, or to all our own worth or worthiness.

A covenant of grace, for it is made with sinners. The covenant that was made with Adam in the state of innocency was made with a saint, having the image of God upon him, and therefore a covenant of friendship. The covenant that God makes now, he makes with sinners, and it is a covenant

of reconciliation, and therefore a covenant of grace. Then by that covenant that God made with Adam, there was no room for repentance, or for remission, now room for both.

For repentance, "I will take away the heart of stone, and I will give an heart of flesh," saith God.

For remission, "I will remember your sins no more," saith the covenant; yea, the covenant of grace doth so deeply engage for remission of sins; that whereas the covenant of works would own no such things, the covenant of grace doth so deeply engage for remission of sins, that it is made the chief, and the reason of all the other, "I will write my law in your hearts, and ye shall all know me;" why? "for I will remember your sins no more," Heb. viii. By that covenant, if we had sinned, we should have provoked God thereby to damn us and to destroy us. By this covenant, when a man that is in covenant sins, he doth thereby provoke God to pity him and to have compassion on him. In the covenant of works the Lord gave a man strength to stand, and left him to himself; But now the Lord hath promised in this covenant to cause us to walk in his ways. When the Israelites had to do with the Egyptians, the Egyptians enjoined them their tale of brick, and gave them no straw. Now we have to deal with so good a Lord in this covenant, that our tale of brick is lessened; we have straw and strength, and not only strength but God himself a co-worker with us. Yea, what grace is there that you want, or do complain for the want of, but it is promised in this covenant?

Do you complain that you are not converted? "I will write my law in your hearts," saith God now.

Do you complain that you are ignorant? "They shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them," saith the covenant.

Do you complain that your heart is hard? "I will (saith God) take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh." Grace, grace, this covenant then is a covenant of grace, it is a gracious covenant.

As it is a gracious covenant, so it is a free and unconditionate covenant. Free in opposition to all conditions to be performed by us; pray do not mistake me, I do not say there is no condition in the new covenant; but the condition is performed by Christ our second Adam.

Nor do I say, that faith, obedience and repentance are not required, but I say, faith, obedience and repentance are required in the new covenant as duties, but not as conditions.

This I say then, it is a free covenant, in opposition to all conditions to be performed by us; for when the covenant of grace is mentioned in Scripture, where do you find any condition annexed to any thing that is there promised. Saith the Lord, "I will remember your sins no more:" upon what condition? None mentioned; "I will write my law in your hearts;" upon what condition? None mentioned; "You shall all know me from the greatest to the least," &c., upon what condition? None mentioned. Where do you ever find the covenant mentioned with a condition?

And plainly thus; if there were a condition, the condition must be a distinct thing from the thing promised. If I promise to go a journey with a man upon condition that he shall bear my charges; his bearing my charges and my going the journey are distinct things. Now what condition then can there be? What faith repentance or obedience? Why? these are all promised in the covenant, therefore they cannot be the condition; for the thing promised in the covenant, and the condition that we are to perform, must be distinct. I say, if there be a condition, it must be distinct from the thing promised; but there is nothing that we can perform but is promised in the covenant, therefore there can be no condition. The prophet Isaiah tells us, that this covenant is after the nature of that covenant that God made with Noah, that the world should be drowned no more; and that is absolute, and upon no condition. Junius thinks, that upon this account, this covenant of grace is called a testament, for, saith he, a testament is without condition. A man makes his last will and testament; and though now and then a man may hang a condition upon a rebellious child, yet ordinarily, a man then gives, and he gives freely, without all conditions; and so this covenant is called a testament: Why? Because no condition is to be performed by us. That is the second thing, it is a free covenant in opposition to all conditions to be performed by ourselves.

As it is a free covenant, in opposition to all conditions to be performed by us, so it is an everlasting covenant, a covenant of salt that cannot be broken, "which my covenant

they brake," saith God, speaking of the former covenant ; and, saith he, in that place of Zechariah, " I took my staff of beauty, the covenant, and brake it." God brake it, that is the former covenant. But now this covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things and sure," an everlasting covenant that cannot be broken. And thus you see what kind of covenant it is ; it is a covenant of grace, in opposition to all works and worth in us ; a free covenant in opposition to all conditions to be performed by us : and an everlasting covenant. Lo, this is the covenant that is stricken with the children of men.

Fourthly, But then, who are the subjects of this covenant, and who are the persons that God doth strike or make this covenant with ?

This covenant of grace is not made or stricken with all the particular men in the world ; a new covenant will I make with the house of Israel, not with all the particular men in the world. If this new covenant of grace were made with all the particular men in the world, then all the particular men in the world should have the law of God written in their hearts, and should all know God, and all have their sins pardoned, for so saith the covenant, by an absolute promise which must be fulfilled.

And upon this account it follows, that Christ did not die for every particular man in the world, for Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant ; therefore if the new covenant be not made with every particular man, Christ did not die for every particular man ; but the new covenant is not made with all the particular men in the world as you have heard.

As this new covenant is not made with all the particular men in the world, so neither is it made with all that live under the gospel. Though Ishmael lived in Abraham's house, and so the skirt of the covenant might be thrown over him, yet, " in Isaac shall thy seed be called," saith God. A man may be in a church, yet not of the church ; as a man may be in a house and yet not of the house. This covenant is not made with all particular men that live under the gospel.

But who is it stricken with ?

Plainly thus ; if the law of the gospel be written in your hearts, so that it is natural for you to do the work of the gospel ; as it is natural to an heathen to do the work of nature,

because the law of nature is written in his heart; then is this covenant made with you: for thus runs the covenant, I will write my law in your hearts.

If that you are taught of God, having an holy instinct unto what is good As the bee being taught of God finds the way home to the hive by an instinct; and the lamb being taught of God finds out his dam amongst a thousand sheep. So I say, If you be taught of God, having an holy instinct unto what is good, then are you in covenant with God; for thus runs the covenant, "You shall all know me, and every one shall be taught of God."

If an heart of stone be taken away and a yielding heart be given unto you, whereby you yield to God's impressions, to God's instructions, and to God's corrections, then are you in covenant with God; for thus runs the covenant, "I will take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh;" a heart of flesh is a yielding heart.

If you are begotten again to God by the promise, especially the absolute promise, then are you in covenant with God. There were two sons of Abraham, the child of the bond-woman, and the child of the free-woman, saith the apostle these were types, and wherein did they differ? Why, the child of the bond woman was born after the flesh, but the child of the free-woman was born by the promise, only by the promise, an absolute promise; and therefore I say, if you be born again by the promise, the absolute promise, then are you in covenant with God.

And to say no more in it but this, if you be the seed of Christ, then is this covenant made with you, for it is made with Christ and his seed; and if you be Abraham's seed, then are you the seed of Christ; for you may see how they go together, in Galatians iii., "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: he saith not, unto seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to seed, which is Christ." And if you do believe as Abraham did, then are you Abraham's seed. So that thus briefly you see, who this covenant is stricken with, and who are the subjects of it.

Fifthly, But then suppose I be in covenant with the Lord, or suppose I be not; if I be not, is there any great hurt? suppose I be, is there any great good?

Much every way ; give me leave to give you a little taste of it.

If you be not in covenant with God, how can you expect any blessing, mercy, or deliverance from God ? For do but look into the Scripture, and you shall find, that all blessings, mercies and deliverances come to the people of God by virtue of the covenant, and according to the covenant. Will you instance in outward deliverances, the world is not drowned again ? Why but because of the covenant. Will you instance in spiritual deliverances ? Saith the Psalmist, “ He commandeth redemption, he remembereth the covenant.” He maketh redemption effectual by remembering the covenant. Or will you instance in both together ? see what is said in Zech. ix. 11., “ As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.” It includes both outward and spiritual deliverances : so that now if you be not in covenant with God, what deliverance can you expect, or what mercy, seeing they all come by virtue of the covenant, and according to the covenant.

But on the other side, if you be in covenant with the Lord, then are you exalted and honoured, yea greatly honoured. For if it be an honour to be in a league and covenant with a great prince, what an honour is it to be in covenant with the great God ? When God did speak to Abraham of striking a covenant with him, he falls down upon his face ; as if he should say, Who am I, that the great God should be in covenant with me.

Again, if God be in covenant with you, look whatever excellency there is in God, that is made over to you for your use. And as that king said to him that was in a league with him, My horse is thine, and my men are thine, and my money is thine ; so when God enters into a covenant with a poor soul, he saith, My wisdom is thine, and my power is thine, and my love and mercy is thine : whatever excellency there is in God is made over to you, being in covenant with him.

And if that you be in covenant with the Lord, then all his retinue, his creatures, and his servants also are in covenant with you, Hos. ii. 21., “ It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they

shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Why? verse 19., "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies; and then it shall come to pass, that I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth," &c. So that if you be in covenant with God, then all his retinue, all his creatures and all his servants are in covenant with you too.

And if you be in covenant with the Lord, then he is in covenant with you and your soul and your body both; not only with your body but with your soul, and not only with your soul, but with your body, with your whole man; and therefore if you die, the covenant is not dissolved between God and you. The covenant may be dissolved between a man and his wife at death, but this covenant can never be dissolved, and though you sin, and break with God, God will not break with you; I hate putting away, saith he.

And then, you may go to God as upon a throne of grace, and look upon God as sitting in a rainbow. Oh what a mercy, what a blessing is it to be in covenant with the Lord?

Sixthly, But in case I be not in covenant with God, what shall I do to get into covenant with him? And in case I be in covenant with God, how shall I walk so as becometh one that is in covenant with the great God? Here are two questions, I shall speak briefly to them and conclude.

Do you ask what you shall do to get into covenant? Are you afraid any of you, that you are not yet in covenant with the Lord, and would you be in covenant with the Lord?

Why then be sure of this, that upon a right and good understanding of the nature of this covenant, you go to God, and make your choice of this covenant of grace, to stand and fall by. The word Berith in the Hebrew for covenant, some think comes from a root that signifies to choose; a man is in the covenant that he chooses, and every man is indeed as his choice is.

But then go and renounce the other covenant of works, &c. As the way to have a part in Christ's righteousness is to renounce all your own righteousness; so the way to have

a share in this covenant of grace, is to renounce the covenant of works.

Then go to Christ as the Mediator of the covenant, and desire him to put you into this covenant; he struck the covenant with God the Father at the first, and he must put you into this covenant, for he is the Mediator of the covenant; go then to him, as to the Mediator of the covenant, to put you into covenant.

Then leave the weight and stress of your guilty soul upon this covenant of grace, bear upon this stream of grace, here lay the weight of all, for the promise is made ours by resting on it; and what is this covenant, but an absolute promise? there then rest, and leave the weight of your souls.

And to say no more but this; then go unto the Lord, and give your hand unto God, and yourself up to God, as one willing to be led by him into all the things that the covenant shall require. In the times of the old testament when they made a covenant, they struck hands together. In Ezra x. 19., it is said they "gave their hands" to put away their wives; and in the former verse, they made a covenant to do it, "They rose and made a covenant to put away their wives:" and we find in 1 Chronicles, that when David was dead, that all the people came together, (xxiv. 24.) "And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king;" the word in the Hebrew is, They gave the hand under king Solomon; they gave their hand by way of covenant, and they gave their hand under king Solomon in a way of submission. So when we enter into covenant with the Lord, we give our hand under God and therefore if you desire to get into covenant do these things.

Well, but suppose I be in covenant with God, as I hope I am, what should I do that I may walk as becometh one that is in covenant with the great God?

I answer, If you be in covenant indeed with the Lord, then God hath honoured you, he hath exalted you, and honoured you greatly; and if God have honoured you, why should not you honour God?

Now the more you fall down at the feet of the fulness of Christ, in the sense of your own unworthiness, inability and insufficiency, the more you honour God: "There is one

(saith John) who is mightier than I, whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

The more you cry up those ordinances and ways of God that are decried by the world, the more you honour God.

The more you keep close to God in decaying times, the more you honour God.

The more you trust God at a dead lift, when all means fail, and when a sentence of death is upon all the means, the more you honour God.

The more you serve God, contrary to your own disposition, and reach the services of God over the head of your own dispositions, the more you honour God.

And the more that you do prefer the things of God in time of competition above other things, the more you honour God.

And the more you part with your much for God's lesser, the more you honour God. What is honour? Honour is a testimony of another's excellency. Now when I can part with my much for God's little, his little truths and things, I do testify an excellency in God. I say, the more you can part with your much for God's little, the more you honour God.

And the more you do keep close to the name and faith of God in Christ, even where Satan's throne is, the more you honour God. Now then hath the Lord honoured you, and taken you into covenant with himself? then surely it is your duty for to honour God, and by these several particulars you may honour God.

If the Lord have made and stricken a covenant with you, then, friends, give me leave to say to you, Why should you be solicitous for your own things? If you be in covenant with the Lord, and God in covenant with you, God will take care of your things; therefore why should you be solicitous about your own things? God is in covenant with you, he will take care of yours.

And upon this account, in case there be any loss upon the things of God, why should you not be as much affected for that loss as for your own losses? For if you be in covenant with God, and God with you, God's things are your's, and your things are God's. God's things are your's: why then should you not be as much touched with the loss of any

thing that concerns God, as with any thing that concerns yourselves?

Yea, why should not God have the use of all your's? God is in covenant with you, and you have the use of God's things, his wisdom, his power, his mercy; why? because he is in covenant with you, and you are in covenant with him. Why then should not God have the use of your things also, your name and your estate and your body and your time? If you be in covenant with God, and God be in covenant with you, your's are God's and God's are your's; why should not God have the use of your's, as you think to have the use of God's.

If God be in covenant with you, and you be in covenant with God, then why should you not live at an higher rate than the best of the Jews did? You are in a better covenant than the Jews were, though for substance the same, as you heard, yet you are in a better covenant, and shall not your lives be better?

You have a better Mediator, and shall not your lives be better?

You have better promises, and shall not your lives be better?

Your state now is called *grace* to that! "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth comes by Christ," John i. Look therefore upon the Jews, look into the Old Testament, and look upon the best of them, and think with yourselves, Am I in a better covenant? oh then, how am I engaged to live better. Oh, that our lives were more exalted upon this account. Why should not our lives be better, and we live at a higher rate?

If you be in covenant with the Lord, and the Lord in covenant with you, then be sure of this, that you be true to God, be true to God in the matter of his worship. The covenant stricken between God and you is a conjugal covenant. A woman, though she will admit another man into the house with her husband, yet she will not admit him into the bed, that is a breach of covenant. Now the worship of God is the bed wherein Christ doth bed with a soul; and therefore if you look into the Old Testament, you shall find that idolatry is accounted adultery and harlotry: why? because they took idols and men into the bed with God.

Would you walk then as those that are in covenant with the Lord, away with every thing of man's out of Christ's bed. Remember it is a conjugal covenant. Whatsoever is of man's coming unto the worship of the Lord, which is the Lord's bed, is against your covenant. When God speaks of a covenant, he saith, "Thou shalt be for me, and I will be for thee," Hos. iii.

And to conclude all, if you be in covenant with the Lord, and the Lord with you indeed, go away and walk humbly and be very thankful. When the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, Abtaham, saith he, go throughout the land, and behold it in the breadth thereof, and in the length thereof: so say I, Hath the Lord entered into covenant with you, go into the land of the covenant, behold the length thereof and the breadth thereof; and what God hath promised in that covenant, behold it in the length thereof and the breadth thereof; and thus will your heart be affected and raised to thankfulness. Thus David's heart was raised, for, saith he, "Lord, though thou makest not my house to grow, this is my salvation;" I am in covenant with thee. And so you may say, Lord, thou makest not my family to grow, I have never a child; this is my salvation, I am in covenant with thee: though thou makest not my house to grow, but I am poor, and my house is pulled down or burnt down; this is my salvation, the Lord be praised, the Lord is in covenant with me. Thus do and you shall be thankful.

And this is the last thing, If you be in covenant with the Lord, go away, walk humbly, and be thankful that God should ever enter into this great covenant, this covenant of grace with you, even with you.

And so now I have done with the first argument, that there is a covenant stricken with the children of men: the second follows, Jesus is the Mediator of this covenant.

SERMON IV.

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT.

“ And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”—HEB. xii. 24.

I SHALL now come unto the second observation raised from the words, namely,

Observation II, That Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant.

For the opening and prosecuting whereof,

First, We must inquire what is the proper work of a mediator, that is, a mediator between God and us.

Secondly, I shall labour to shew you that Jesus was and is the fittest person in the world to mediate between God and us.

Thirdly, That Jesus hath undertaken this work of mediation, and will certainly carry it on unto due perfection.

Fourthly, How and in what respects Jesus is said to be the Mediator of the New Covenant.

Fifthly, What are the benefits that we do gain by Jesus his being Mediator of the new covenant.

Sixthly, Give you some doctrinal corollaries and practical duties that do flow from hence.

First. If you ask what is the proper work of a Mediator, that is, a Mediator between God and us,

I answer, It is to make peace and reconciliation between God and us. At the first, in the state of innocency, there was peace and friendship between God and man, there was no enmity in God's heart towards his creature, nor no enmity in man's heart towards his Creator; but upon the fall, a breach or separation was made between God and us, inso-much as we are all by nature the children of wrath, God is angry, and an enmity is in us towards God. “The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God,” saith the apostle. Now, therefore, the work of a Mediator is to reconcile God to us, and to reconcile us unto God, both which you have in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the

world unto himself." There is reconciliation on God's part, for it is said, "He was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself: not imputing their trespasses unto them." Then, at the 20th verse, you have reconciliation on our part, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." Here is both reconciliations.

Only you must know, that we do not find in express terms in Scripture, that God is said to be reconciled to us, but we are said to be reconciled to him, because we are the parties offending, and God the party offended. Now the Scripture always speak so, that the party offending is to reconcile himself, or to be reconciled, as in the vth of Matthew, "If thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thy gift, and first be reconciled to thy brother." Thou that hast offended go and be reconciled to thy brother. And so we say in ordinary speech, if a man hath justly provoked another, go and reconcile yourself unto him, that is, do that whereby he may be pacified and satisfied. And so God is reconciled unto us, when we do that whereby his anger may be turned away, and he pacified, which is the work of a Mediator.

But what need a Mediator for this work, say the Socinians, for God was always willing to be reconciled to us; "God so loved the world that he gave his Son:" he loved them first, before Christ; what need a Mediator then? say they.

And say the Arminians, to invalidate and enervate election, If we be elected, and so loved from all eternity, what need a Mediator to bring about actual reconciliation in time.

To all which I answer,

Yes, very much. For,

1. You must know that affections are given to God in Scripture according to effects and dispensations sometimes.

Sometimes God is said to love or hate in reference to his eternal decree. So Rom. ix., "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated," before they had done good or evil.

Sometimes God is said to love, or to be angry, or to hate in reference to his dispensations. And so the elect, that are loved from all eternity, are born the children of wrath, in regard of legal dispensation. Elect we are, and so loved, in regard of God's eternal good will, and yet under wrath when we are born, in regard of legal dispensation.

2. You must know that this reconciliation with God, or God being reconciled to us, doth not make a real change in the inward affection of God, but in the outward dispensation of God.

3. You must know this, that God may be willing to be reconciled unto us, in regard of his eternal good will, and yet not be actually reconciled in regard of his eternal good will. As David was willing to be reconciled to Absolom, but he was not actually reconciled, and therefore Joab comes as a mediator between them, to bring about the actual reconciliation. And if you look into the last of Job, you will find, as Macovius doth well observe to the purpose in hand, that when God was very angry with Eliphaz and his friends, insomuch as the Lord said to Eliphaz, at the 7th verse, "My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two friends;" that yet notwithstanding then God puts them upon a means of taking away his displeasure: "Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you," and mediate for you. So that God was angry, and his wrath kindled, yet he was willing to be reconciled, and finds out a mediator to bring about this actual reconciliation. And so here, although God be angry with his own elect, in regard of the dispensation, yet notwithstanding he may be willing to be reconciled in regard of his eternal good will. But,

4. You must know this also, that God may and doth will this for that sometimes, and yet not for this will that, as Aquinas speaks.

For example: God doth will rain for corn, and rain is the cause of corn willed; he doth will rain for corn, yet corn is not the cause of his will willing the corn. So here, God doth will Christ's mediation for reconciliation, and the mediation of Christ is the cause of reconciliation, but yet, notwithstanding, the mediation of Christ is not the cause of God's will willing reconciliation. So that thus now you see what the proper work of a Mediator is, that is, to mediate between God and us; it is to reconcile God to us, and to reconcile us unto God. That is the first.

Secondly, Jesus was and is the fittest person in the world to mediate between God and us. There was no creature fit to umpire the business between God and us; and therefore

Job saith well, "Neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both," chap. ix. 33. Man was not fit to mediate, because man is the persou offending; angels not fit to mediate, for the shoulder of an angel could not bear the weight of mediation work, neither could an angel satisfy; God the Father not fit for this work, the first person in the Trinity, for he was the person offended; the Holy Ghost not fit for this work, for it is his work to apply the blood of this mediation; so then there is none other fit, but Christ is fit, Jesus is fit, the fittest person.

For, first of all, he is the person appointed by the Father. If a man will undertake to mediate between two, and be not chosen thereunto, he is not fit for it; but if chosen, then he is fit. Why, Jesus is the person chosen; "Mine elect servant (saith the Father) whom I have chosen, I have given him for a covenant unto the people," Isa. xlii.

He was and is the fittest person to mediate between God and us, for he is a middle person, partaking of God's nature and of man's. Extremes are joined together by a middle. Who more fit to mediate between two, than he that is a middle between them?

He is the fittest person, for he is the fittest to make reconciliation between God and us, to reconcile God to us and us unto God.

He is the fittest to reconcile God to us; for that God might be reconciled he must be satisfied, his justice satisfied and his anger satisfied. Now Jesus Christ was God and Man; as man he ought to satisfy but could not, as God he could satisfy but he ought not, but as God-man he both could and ought, and so the fittest. And again,

Who more fit to reconcile God unto us, than he that was the most fit to intercede, that had credit and favour and love with the Father? Now Jesus lay in the bosom of the Father; "This is my beloved Son;" and, "I was the Father's delight," saith he, in the viiith of Proverbs. Therefore the most fit to intercede and so to reconcile God unto us.

Who more fit to reconcile God to us, than he that was fit to be a surety to undertake for us. If a man come to mediate with a person offended for another; saith the person offended, But will you undertake he shall do so no more? Yes. Why, then I am willing. Now Jesus is called our Surety in the

viiiith of Hebrews. He undertakes that though we have broken with God already we shall break no more; and therefore the fittest person to reconcile God to us.

But, again, the fittest person also to reconcile us to God.

Who more fit to reconcile us to God than he that can change our natures? Now Jesus is able to change our nature. "I find (saith Paul) a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my members: oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" then, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." And, Rom. viii. 2, "The law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And,

Who more fit to reconcile us to God than he that can beget good thoughts in us concerning God? So long as a man hath hard thoughts of God he will never be reconciled to God. Now Jesus Christ lay in the bosom of his Father, and can tell the soul what volumes of love there were and are in the bosom of the Father for it, from all eternity, and so can beget love in the soul towards God, and so able to reconcile the soul to God. You have it clearly in John i. 18, he lay in the bosom of the Father, &c.

And then, to say no more but this, who more fit to reconcile us to God than he that can give the Holy Ghost into our souls? For as God is reconciled to us by the blood of Christ, so we are reconciled to God by the Spirit of Christ. Now Jesus gives the Spirit: "I will send the Comforter," saith Christ. So that he, he is the fittest person in all the world to reconcile God to us, and to reconcile us to God, and so the fittest person in all the world to mediate between God and us. And so you have the second thing.

Thirdly. But then, as Jesus is the fittest person to mediate between God and us, so he hath undertaken this work of mediation, and he will certainly carry it on unto due perfection.

I say, he hath undertaken it, and therefore he is called the Mediator: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 5, and he alone is the Mediator. I confess, indeed, the word *μεσιτης* is given to Moses, and Moses in the iiird of Galatians is called a mediator: "The law was ordained by angels in the hand of

a mediator," verse 19; that is not Christ. But the law was ordained by angels in the hand, that is, by the ministry of a mediator. Christ was not the minister of angels, Moses was, and therefore Moses is to be understood here. The same word that is used concerning Christ is used here.

But now, although Moses was a mediator, a typical mediator, and did stand between God and the people, as in Deut. v., to deliver out the law unto them; "I stood between the Lord and you at that time to shew you the word of the Lord," verse 5; though, I say, Moses is called a mediator, because he stood between God and the people, to give and deliver out the law to them; yet you never find that Moses is called a mediator in a way of redemption, or satisfaction, or paying of any ransom. So Jesus only is. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. And so also in the ixth of Hebrews: "For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament." For what cause? Why, verse 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." And for this cause is he the Mediator. It is never said so of Moses; no, but Christ the Mediator, and he only the Mediator in a way of satisfaction, and redemption, and paying of a price. Well, thus he hath undertaken the work.

And certainly he will carry on his work of mediation unto due perfection; for, saith the apostle, he is faithful in all his house, as Moses was: Moses as a servant, he as a Son. Moses the mediator was faithful in all the house of God to a pin; surely Jesus the Son will be faithful in this work of mediation, and carry it on to the uttermost.

But then you will say, What assurance have we that Jesus will carry on this work of mediation unto the uttermost, unto due perfection.

First of all you have the assurance of the first great promise that was made, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head." Gen. iii. Saith the Lord to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." If there be enmity between Satan and us, there will be peace between God and us; where God

saith, he will put enmity between the devil and us, he doth there promise that there shall be peace and reconciliation between God and us. Now this here he saith, and how shall this be done? "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It shall be done by him whose heel in his sufferings is bruised by Satan and his instruments. It shall be done by Christ.

As you have the assurance of the first promise, so you have the assurance of what Christ hath done already; he will not lose what he hath done, he will not lose his work. If Jesus Christ did not boggle, nor start at, nor fly back from the hardest piece of mediation, which was to satisfy for our sins, surely he will not give in and start back from the easier part, which is, to intercede in heaven: "Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us."

As you have the assurance of what he hath done, so you have the assurance also of his delight in this work of mediation. If a man undertake a work, be able to carry it through, and take delight therein, he will certainly carry it on. Now our Lord Jesus Christ hath undertaken this work; he is able, God and man; and he hath a delight in this work: "I delight to do thy will," saith he, in the viiith of Proverbs. "I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Christ's heart was much in this work of mediation, insomuch as if you look into the iiird of Malachi, you shall find he sits by it; "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi." Why? "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, and as in former years." Who is this that sits thus at it? Why in the former verse it is said, "even the Messenger of the covenant," that is, Christ Jesus. "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me;" there is John the Baptist. "And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, (here is Christ) whom ye delight in." Behold he shall come. And what shall he do? Why he shall sit at this work; his heart is

much in this work, his delight is in it; and therefore you have the assurance of his delight, that he will carry it on.

As you have the assurance of his delight, so you have the assurance of his name and title—Jesus, Jesus the Mediator of the covenant. Why Jesus? Why not Christ? Why not Jesus Christ, as in other scriptures?

Look into the book of the Hebrews and you will find frequently that Christ is called Jesus, why? because this title was more suitable to the priestly office of Christ, which the apostle is opening in the book of the Hebrews. It notes also the Deity of Christ; *Jesus* signifies *Saviour*; they go here together, Jesus the Mediator, why? because as he is a Mediator in order to our salvation, so he is a Saviour in the way of mediation; therefore they go here together. And therefore as Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, so as Mediator he will perform this work of mediation to the uttermost. And thus now I have done with the third thing, namely, [that Jesus hath undertaken this work to mediate between God and us, and he will certainly carry it on unto due perfection.

Fourthly, How, and in what respects is Jesus said to be the Mediator of the new covenant.

Upon a threefold account.

Upon the account of stipulation. Upon the account of confirmation. Upon the account of suretiship.

He is the Mediator of the new covenant upon the account of stipulation, for he it was that did strike the covenant for us with God the Father. See what is said in 2 Tim. i., “Who hath saved us (saith the apostle) and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” So that there was a treatment between God the Father and Christ concerning us; and Christ received grace for us before the world began. And as the first Adam did strike the covenant of works with God the Father for his seed, so Jesus did strike the covenant of grace for his seed with God the Father, and so called the second Adam. A Mediator therefore of the new covenant he is, in regard of stipulation, he it was that struck up the covenant first with the Father.

As he is a Mediator of the new covenant upon the account

of stipulation, so upon the account of confirmation; for he hath confirmed the covenant. He confirmed the covenant by his active obedience while he lived, and by his passive obedience when he died.

By his active obedience while he lived, Dan. ix. 27, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." *Larabbin*, you read it *with many*, but rather he shall confirm the covenant *for many*; not for all, but he shall confirm the covenant for many for one week.

And he did confirm the covenant also by his passive obedience in his death, Heb. ix. "For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise. For (the apostle explains it by a similitude) where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth." So that plainly then, the Lord Jesus Christ did confirm the covenant by his death.

Only the question is, how Christ did confirm the covenant by his death?

The Socinians would make the world believe that Christ did confirm the covenant by his death, in the way of testimony and witness-bearing only; for say they, Christ preached the gospel while he lived, and when he died, he did by his death seal it and confirm the truth thereof. Thus they say, that Christ did confirm the covenant by his death only in a way of witness-bearing, in a way of testimony.

But surely this cannot be it, for if Christ did confirm the covenant by his death; he confirmed not the covenant only by witness-bearing to the truth, for so the apostles might be said to confirm the covenant, for in Heb. ii. 3: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

And if our Lord and Saviour should only confirm the covenant by his death in a way of witness-bearing, then the martyrs that died for the truth, should confirm the covenant by their death too, for they by their death did seal to the truth, and did bear witness to the truth, and so they should

be said to confirm the covenant; but far be it from us to think any such thing.

But Jesus Christ did confirm the covenant by his death thus, by performing the condition of the covenant, and by laying down his blood a price for the mercies and blessings promised in the covenant.

He did confirm the covenant by his death, I say, by performing the condition of the covenant. If a man be in captivity, and he that hath him in captivity promises upon the payment of so much money that he shall be delivered; when the money is paid down the condition is performed; why now Jesus when he died, he gave himself a ransom for many, *λυτρον* yea, *αντιλυτρον* and upon this account he is called a Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom," *αντιλυτρον*, a ransom in the room, a ransom for, or in the room of us.

As the first Adam should have confirmed the covenant and did not, so the second Adam did confirm the covenant. How should the first Adam have confirmed the covenant? Why, the first Adam should have confirmed the covenant by performing the condition thereof. So now our Lord and Saviour Christ, being the second Adam, did confirm the covenant. How? By performing the condition of the covenant. Thus he is the Mediator of the new covenant, upon the account of confirmation.

He is the Mediator of the new covenant upon the account of suretiship, by being bound unto God the Father that we shall perform to him, by being bound to us that God the Father shall perform to us. In Heb. vii. 22, you shall find he is called our Surety; by so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament. And why so? but to shew that where he is Mediator, he is Surety. You knew what a surety is? he is bound for the debtor to perform. Saith Judah unto his father Jacob, Gen. xliii. 9, when he would have Benjamin down with him to Egypt, "I will be surety for him, of my hand shalt thou require him." So Christ saith unto the Father, I will be Surety for these men and of my hand shalt thou require their performance; and saith he to them again, I will be Surety for God the Father, and of my hand shall you require his mercies. So that thus now he is a Mediator

of the new covenant upon an account of suretiship, upon a threefold account; upon the account of stipulation, upon the account of confirmation, upon the account of suretiship.

Fifthly, But what are the benefits that we do gain or get by Jesus being the Mediator of the new Covenant?

Much every way. First of all is it not a great matter that God the Father should be reconciled unto us? If God be reconciled, you are brought near unto him, into oneness with him. Union is the ground of communion, and communion is the ground of communication; surely therefore it is no small matter. Now I say, if Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant, God is reconciled to us.

If Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant, then you may go with boldness, and look the justice of God in the face. With boldness, for your debt is satisfied. So long as a man is in debt, he steals by the prison door in the dark; but if his Surety have paid the debt, he dares come, as you say, and whet his knife at the Compter door. Now Christ being your Mediator, the Mediator of the new covenant, he is your Surety, the debt is paid, and you may go with boldness and look justice in the face, and the devil, and all those sergeants of hell.

But is it not a great matter for Christ to be your King, Priest and Prophet? Consider it a little. If you observe it, you shall find that all the blessings that came to the Jews or Israelites in the time of the old testament, came through these three offices, king, priest, prophet; why? but as a type, to shew that all our spiritual mercies must come through the hand of these three offices in Christ. Now if Christ be the Mediator of the new covenant, then he is your King, your Priest, your Prophet, for all these three offices of Christ grow upon the mediation of Christ.

For if he be your Mediator, then he will be a Prophet; a Prophet to declare the mind and will of the Father to you.

If he be your Mediator, he will be your Priest, to satisfy the Father's anger for you.

If he be your Mediator, he will be a King to subdue all your enemies. for he is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, King of Salem. Now is it not a great matter to have Christ our King, our Priest, our Prophet? surely it is. But,

Is it not a great matter that all the blessings and mercies

of the new covenant should belong unto you? Friends, have you duly considered what are the blessings of the new covenant? I will tell you briefly:

They are all those spiritual blessings which you want, and complain for the want of. There are seven or eight spiritual blessings that a poor drooping soul doth complain for the want of.

Oh, saith he, I am afraid I am not the child of God; or I fear my sin is not pardoned; and I do not find an inward constant frame of soul to what is good; and I am a poor ignorant creature; and I have a hard heart; and I want the Spirit of the Lord within me; and I cannot walk with God as I ought to do; and I fear I shall fall away, and go to hell at last. Why now in the covenant of grace there is supply promised against all these fears.

Dost thou say, I am afraid I am not the child of God? Why, saith the Lord here in the covenant, "I will be a God unto you, and you shall be my people," There is adoption for you. Heb. viii.

Do you say, I am afraid my sin is not pardoned? Then saith the Lord in the covenant, "Your sin and your iniquity will I remember no more," Heb. viii.

Do you say, Oh, but I do not find that constant frame of heart unto what is good? Why, saith the Lord in the covenant, "I will write my law in your heart."

Do you say, Oh, but I am a poor ignorant creature? Why, saith the Lord in the covenant, "You shall all know me from the greatest to the least, and you shall be taught of God."

Do you say, Oh, but my heart is hard? Why, saith the Lord in the covenant, "I will take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh."

Do you say, Oh, but I want the Spirit of God within me? Why, saith the Lord, "I will put my Spirit within you."

Do you say, I cannot walk with God as I ought? Why, saith the Lord in the covenant, "I will cause you to walk in my ways."

Do you say, I fear I shall fall away, and go to hell at last? Why, saith the Lord in the covenant, "I will put my fear into your hearts, and you shall not depart from me." These, even these, besides heaven, and besides the blessings of this

earth, so all these blessings are promised in the covenant of grace; and if Christ be the Mediator of the new covenant, then do these blessings belong to you, for he is Surety as well as Mediator. But,

Is it not a great matter to have the Lord Jesus to interpose between God the Father and you, to take up all differences as they may arise? Why, if Jesus be the Mediator of the covenant, so it is: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins."

Is it not a great matter for you to enter into the holy of holiest, and to have all your duties carried in to God the Father by the hand of Jesus? If he be your Mediator, so it is, Rev. viii.

Is it not a great matter in case that you have to deal with enemies, either for soul or body to have one by, that can and will interpose and rebuke them? Why, if Jesus be the Mediator of the covenant, thus shall it be. He interposed between Laban and Jacob; when Laban followed Jacob, he rebuked Laban. He interposed in the case of Joshua, when "Satan stood up at his right hand: the Lord rebuke thee," as in Zechariah iii. The same word in the Hebrew, that Job useth for days-man, comes from a root that signifies to rebuke.

And then to say no more in it but this, Is it not a great matter for one that is in trouble, or affliction of spirit, to have Christ to interpose between God the Father and him, when he lies under the sense of God's wrath and displeasure? Why, if Christ be the Mediator of the new covenant, then thus it is; look into Job xxxiii., and see what a scheme and mould of conversion-work there is, verse 14, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not:" here is man in his natural state and condition, going on in the way of his sin, living under the means; and God speaking once and twice, and he perceives it not. Well then verse 15., "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Here comes a work of conviction and conversion, suddenly, unexpectedly, and what then? then trouble of conscience, at verse 19., "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of

his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; his flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out; his soul draweth nigh unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers:" what then? why then at verse 23., "If there be a messenger; (Christ is the messenger of the covenant,) if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, (an advocate) if there be a messenger with him, (or an advocate by him,) one of a thousand, (as Christ is,) to shew unto man his righteousness," where his righteousness lies; what then? why "then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." And then, "his flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth, he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy, for he will render unto man his righteousness." Thus now it shall be, if Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant. Oh, what a comfortable thing therefore it is, for Jesus to be this Mediator of the covenant. And thus you see in the fifth place what those benefits are that we do gain thereby.

Sixthly, But then what are those doctrinal corollaries, or practical duties, that do flow from hence?

If Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant, what an evil thing is it, and unreasonable, for men to think, or speak, or do any thing that may reflect upon this Mediator of the new covenant, or to sin against this new covenant? There are some opinions that do reflect and cast a black reflection upon Jesus the Mediator of the covenant.

The Socinian tells us, that Jesus is a Mediator such a one as Moses was to declare the mind of God unto us; but not a Mediator in a way of satisfaction, to satisfy God's wrath.

They say he is a Mediator, but not a Surety, to merit for us, or to pay our debt for us.

They say he is a Mediator, but deny the Deity of Christ, and so root up the very mediation of Christ; they cast a very black reflection upon this Mediator.

The Papists they say, that Christ is a Mediator, and our only Mediator in a way of redemption, but we have many mediators in a way of intercession, saints and angels.

They say that Christ is Mediator, but according to his human nature only, whereas the apostle saith expressly, that

“ he offered up himself through the eternal Spirit :” thus they reflect upon this Mediator.

And for practice, is it not a great reflection upon this Mediator for us to think, that we ourselves by our own tears and fastings, and humiliations, can reconcile God unto us, or pacify God’s anger, or make an atonement for a nation.

Is it not a very great reflection upon this Mediator to say, Oh, my sins are greater than can be forgiven ? Is not this a very blameable reflection upon this Mediator of the new covenant ?

But there are four or five ways especially wherein we do sin against the covenant.

By not looking into it, not studying it, not being acquainted with it. Shall the Lord Jesus be such a Mediator of such a covenant, and shall we not look into the covenant, and be acquainted with it. Yet Lord, how many poor souls are there that are ignorant of this covenant ? What unthankfulness is this, what a sin against the covenant is this, that Jesus should be the Mediator of the covenant, and men should not look into it, not study it, not be acquainted with it ?

Sometimes we sin against the covenant, by altering the mould and the frame of the covenant, by hanging our conditions upon God’s covenant, our padlock upon God’s door.

Sometimes we sin against the covenant, by slighting that great ordinance of the Lord’s supper concerning which Christ hath said, “ This cup is the New Testament in my blood :” to slight it, saying, these are low things, we are above ordinances, and these are carnal things, now thus to slight it is to sin directly against the covenant.

Sometimes we sin against the covenant by our unbelief and doubting.

But sometimes we sin against the covenant by turning the grace of this covenant into wantonness. Is this true, that the Lord hath promised mercy upon no condition to be performed by us ; then why may we not live as we list ? say men : thus turning this grace of God in the covenant into wantonness. But is this true, that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant ? Why then should we think, speak, or do any thing that may reflect against this Mediator, or sin against this covenant ?

If Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant, why, then,

why should you not trust in the Lord for ever, build upon him, and be secure as to the mercies and blessings promised in the covenant? If you come to a chamber to lodge in, and you see that it is laid upon weak, or lathy props, that the foundation be not sure, you say, I will not venture to lodge here; but if you come to a chamber that is laid upon a good foundation, you say then, I durst venture to lodge here. Why this new covenant is founded upon the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the foundation of the new covenant; And therefore why should you not rest and be secure, confident, as concerning the mercies and blessings promised in the covenant?

Oh, but you will say, I cannot be persuaded that Christ is my Mediator; I know that Christ is a Mediator of the new covenant, but I cannot think that he doth mediate for me. If indeed I were persuaded that Jesus were my Mediator, or that he did mediate for me in particular, Ah, then I should trust in the Lord indeed for the blessings of the covenant. But I cannot be persuaded that Christ is my Mediator; I grant he is the Mediator of the new covenant, but I cannot say that he is my Mediator, or that he doth mediate for me, and therefore I cannot be satisfied.

No, what, the Father satisfied, who is the person offended, and you not satisfied, who are the person offending?

No, Why if the Jew had sinned, and the high priest had offered an offering, or a sacrifice for him, the sinning Jew would not say, this was not for me, and therefore I am not satisfied, for the sacrifice was not for me; He would not say so, but he would say that he was satisfied. And shall Jesus be our great High Priest, and shall He make an offering of himself for us, and will you say, it is not for me?

But to come a little nearer to your objection, that I may bring this great doctrine home unto our hearts.

The apostle hath said, "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" what think you, are you not within the compass of those words, "if any man sin," will not those words reach you?

But if God be reconciled unto you, then Christ hath mediated for you; now God the Father is reconciled to you; for if you be reconciled to God and the things of God, then God is reconciled to you. Pray tell me, were you not an

enemy once to the good ways of God and the things of God? Yes; And are you not reconciled now to the things of God? Yes, I confess I am. Well, if you be reconciled to the things of God, God is reconciled to you; and if God be reconciled to you, I am sure Christ hath mediated for you. Luther was wont to say, The only way to make God our friend, is to cast ourselves into his arms when he seems to be our enemy. Thus have you done, poor soul? When God have seemed to be our enemy, then have you cast yourselves into the arms of God? Surely then God is reconciled unto you, and Christ is your Mediator.

Again, if you be the seed of Christ, then Christ is your Mediator, and Christ hath, and doth mediate for you; for he is a Mediator for his seed. Now mark it, there are but two seeds, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; "I will put enmity between thy seed and the seed of the woman." There are but two seeds: how think you, are you the seed of the serpent? Either you are Christ's seed, or the seed of the serpent, and that is an hissing seed, an opposing seed. Do you think you are the seed of the serpent? No, I hope I am not the seed of the serpent; why, then you are the seed of Christ, and Christ doth mediate for you. Now then humble yourselves for all your unbelief, and lay the wait of your guilty soul upon this sweet covenant of grace, for Jesus is the Mediator of it.

This doctrine methinks looks very wishly upon all sorts; It looks wishly upon those that are good, and upon those that are bad; It looks wishly upon those that are godly, and upon those that are ungodly; upon those that are converted, and upon those that are not converted.

Upon those that are bad, wicked, ungodly, unconverted, and to them it saith, why should not you, even you come unto God for the grace of this new covenant, which is confirmed by Christ the Mediator? Why should not you, you that are unconverted, go unto God the Father, and press him to give out the grace of this covenant to you? Hath not the Lord said, "Let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree; only let him take hold of my covenant. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me

from his people ; Only let him take hold of my covenant, and do the things that please me."

This new covenant confirmed by Christ Jesus the Mediator, either it is confirmed for saints only, or for sinners also, that are sinners for the present.

If for saints only, why doth the Lord say, "I will write my law in your hearts?" Surely, therefore, it is for some in whose heart God's law is not yet written. And if this covenant doth extend to such, who as yet have not the law written, the law of grace written in their hearts, oh, what encouragement is here for a poor sinner to go to God, and say, Lord thou hast made this covenant, and Christ hath confirmed it, and he is the Mediator of it; now this law is not yet written in my heart; oh, make good thy covenant, and write thy law in my heart.

And for you that are saints, this doctrine looks upon you, and it saith thus: If Christ be the Mediator of the new covenant, and your Mediator that God hath provided for you, then go away, and be ashamed of your sins, and of all your doings, the pardon whereof requires such a Mediator, and the blood of the Mediator; "Then shall you be ashamed," saith the Lord, "when I am pacified towards you." If Christ be your Mediator, and God be pacified, oh, then be you ashamed.

And to you it speaks thus: If the Lord Jesus Christ be the Mediator of this new covenant, your Mediator, and mediates for you, then why should not you appear for Christ on earth upon all occasions? Shall Christ interpose with the Father, and appear for you, and mediate for you in heaven upon all occasions, and will not you appear for Christ on earth? What, Christ appear for you in heaven, and mediate for you in heaven, and will not you appear for Christ on earth? Yea, unto you it saith, Why should not you all go away with your hearts full of love and thankfulness, both to God the Father and to Jesus Christ? If you were going to the prison for a debt, and a man should meet you, and undertake to be your surety, and pay your debt, you would love him as long as you lived. Here is the case: we were all going to prison, Christ comes, undertakes to be our Surety, pays our debt; then will not you love Christ the Mediator of the new covenant? Will you not love him, and

be thankful to him, and to God the Father? For though the performance of this mediation be Christ's, the contrivance is God the Father's. God the Father did contrive this covenant, and God the Father did send Christ this Mediator; "I have given thee for a covenant," saith the Father; and saith Christ, "Lo, I come to do thy will." Friends, it was the will of God the Father that Jesus should be the Mediator of this new covenant. Oh, the freeness of the grace of God the Father! He was the person offended; and yet, that he himself should find out such a Mediator of such a covenant, what grace is here! Now therefore blessed be God the Father for this Mediator, let us all say; and blessed be this Mediator Jesus, who hath mediated us into this new covenant.

Go away, I say, you that are saints with your hearts full of love, both unto God the Father, who hath contrived this mediation, and unto Jesus who hath performed this mediation; and now let your hearts be confirmed, let your hope be confirmed, let your love be confirmed, let your joy be confirmed, let your thankfulness be confirmed, let your graces be confirmed. A confirmed covenant calls for confirmed christians.

I have done, I cannot say whom we should love most and be thankful most unto, the Father or the Son; but this I say, love the Father with all your heart, and be thankful to him in reference to his contrivance; love the Son with all your heart, and be thankful to him in reference to his performance, for Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant.

And thus I have done with the second doctrine, namely, that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. The third follows, and that is, that now in these gospel times we are not come to Moses the mediator of the Old, but unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament.

SERMON V.

THE WAY AND SPIRIT OF THE NEW COVENANT OR NEW TESTAMENT.

“And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”—HEB. xii. 24.

THE third observation follows, which is this :

Observation III. That in these gospel times we are not come to Moses, the mediator of the Old ; but unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant or the New Testament.

The latter part of the doctrine you have in the words of the text, and the former part in the context ; for, saith the apostle, “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched,” to mount Sinai, “but ye are come unto mount Sion, and ye are come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” So that now in these gospel times, we are not come to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant ; but to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament.

For the opening and prosecuting whereof,

First, We must inquire what is here meant by coming unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, in opposition to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant.

Secondly, Whether it be possible for a man that doth profess Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, to have recourse unto Moses, the mediator of the old covenant or the Old Testament ? That is, whether a man may possibly be legal and Mosaical in these gospel times ?

Thirdly, When so.

Fourthly, The danger of it. And,

Fifthly, What we should do that we may stand clear from Moses, the mediator of the old covenant ; and come fully off unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new. That we may walk with a gospel, not a legal spirit ; and be found in a gospel, not a legal way, in these gospel times.

First of all, If you ask what is here meant by coming unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, in opposition to Moses ?

I answer in the general, It doth signify and note out that evangelical and gospel state that we are now brought unto,

by Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament; in opposition to the legal state that they were in, in the days and times of the Old Testament. But because this is general and common unto that which goes before, therefore you must know more particularly :

That a man is said to come unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, in opposition to Moses, when now in these gospel times, upon all occasions, he hath recourse unto Jesus, as in the times of the Old Testament, upon all occasions, they had recourse unto Moses. As now for example.

In the times of the Old Testament they came to Moses for the law, under God, and they received the law from his mouth. What saith Moses? was the saying then. So now in these times of the gospel we are to have recourse unto Jesus, and to receive the law at his mouth. What saith Jesus? And therefore saith our Saviour, "It hath been said unto you, Thou shalt not kill;" and, "Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, and I say unto you." Why? What, because (as the Socinians would) Christ made any addition to the law? No: but because now, as for other reasons, we are to receive the law from his mouth, from the mouth of Jesus.

And, as in the times of the Old Testament, they had recourse to Moses for their church and their church state. He it was that did give the tabernacle, under God, and the way of the tabernacle. So now in the times of the New Testament, we are to have recourse to Jesus. What saith Jesus to a church-way? not, What saith Moses? now. And therefore saith Christ, "If thy brother offend thee, tell him of it; and if he hear not, call two or three; and if he mind not, then tell it to the church; and if he hear not the church, let him be as a heathen or publican to you; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. We are to hear what Jesus saith in this matter, and not what Moses.

And, as then, in the times of the Old Testament they had recourse to Moses, under God, for their ministry; and Moses did direct them unto priests and Levites for their ministers: so now in the times of the New Testament, we are to have recourse to Jesus for our ministry; and therefore

saith the apostle, "He hath set in the church pastors and teachers." And in Ephes. iv., "He hath ascended up on high, and he hath given gifts unto men, pastors and teachers," and the like. We are to hear what Jesus saith now, and not what Moses, for our ministry.

And as in the times of the Old Testament they had then recourse unto Moses for the ordinances, for their Sabbaths, for their sacraments, and for their worship; so now in the times of the New Testament, we are to hear what Jesus saith, and to have recourse to him for these things. "Go," saith our Saviour Christ, "and teach all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe and do what I command you," Matt. xxviii. And for the Lord's supper, "What I received of the Lord, that delivered we unto you," saith the apostle. And for the Sabbath. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Go to him for your Sabbath; not to Moses, but unto him. And for worship, saith our Saviour Christ unto the woman of Samaria, John iv. 23, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." You that are Samaritans, you have worshipped God; but you have not worshipped God according to his own appointment, you have not worshipped him in truth. The Jews, they have worshipped God according to God's appointment, but not with the Spirit. But now, the hour cometh, when men shall worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." In *truth*, in opposition to the Samaritans, that did not worship according to appointment. And in *spirit*, in opposition to the Jews, that worshipped God legally and without the spirit. Thus we must hear what Jesus saith.

And as then in the times of the Old Testament they had recourse to Moses still; when they wanted bread, he, under God, gave them manna, and he gave them water out of the rock; so now, in the times of the New Testament, we are to have recourse to Jesus for our bread. In John vi. saith Christ, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

And as in the times of the Old Testament, they had much recourse to Moses for their faith: if they could not believe,

Moses wrought miracles before them, and they believed. Inasmuch as it is said in Exod. xiv. 31., "And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." But now what saith Jesus? "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." Not in God and in Moses; but, "ye believe in God, believe also in me."

And to say no more in it but this: in the times of the Old Testament, they had recourse to Moses for their rest. Moses was to lead them up to Canaan, and the land of rest: and so now in the times of the New Testament, we are to have recourse to Jesus for our rest; for saith he himself: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Thus, as in the times of the Old Testament, they were upon all occasions to have recourse to Moses: so now in the times of the New Testament, upon all occasions, we are to have recourse to Jesus, the Mediator of the new testament; for saith the Lord by Moses, in Deut. xviii. 18., "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee," rather, as thee, that is, as I raised up thee; "and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Which the apostle applies unto Christ," Acts iii. 22, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me," rather, as me, *ὡς ἐμε*, as me, that is, as he raised up me, not like unto me, as the Socinians would argue from hence; that Christ must be but man like to Moses: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me," rather as me: that is, as he raised up me; "him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you." So that thus, as they had recourse to Moses upon all occasions, in the time of the Old Testament; so now we are to have recourse unto Jesus; and thus we see what it is to come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, in opposition unto Moses the mediator of the old covenant.

Secondly, But then whether is it possible for a man that doth profess to come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new

covenant, still to have recourse to Moses; that is, whether it is possible for a man to be legal and mosaical, in these gospel times?

Without all doubt it is: and I wish, if it were the will of the Lord, that too many were not found upon legal ground among professors. What think you of the Galatians? Did not they live in gospel times? Did not they profess to come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant? Yet, see how the apostle treats them and reproves them again and again, for their being too legal, too mosaical: "Ye are fallen from grace, (saith he) my little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you." Ye are so much for Moses and the law, that I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.

As there was a mixture of the gospel in the time of the law; so there may be too great a mixture of the law in the times of the gospel.

And I pray what think you, are there not very many that live under the gospel, in whom sin reigns? Yes, many live under the gospel in whom sin reigns: and, saith the apostle, "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." If you be under the law, then sin will reign in you: and what is the reason that sin reigns in many that live under the gospel, but because they are under the law. As there were two in Abraham's house, the bond-woman, and the free-woman, Hagar and Sarah, so in these gospel times, there will be some that shall be freely for the grace of God, and the covenant of grace; some again, that will turn into the covenant of works, and be legal and mosaical.

And if that we be legal and mosaical in these gospel times, we shall be more legal, and more mosaical than before. As when a servant was bound, and the year of freedom came, and he might go free, and would not, then his ear was bored, and he was to be a servant for ever: so now; for what is our gospel time, but a time of spiritual freedom: and if men will be servants still, and under the law still, their ears are bored, and they are more mosaical and more legal than before.

But, friends, this ought not to be: for you know what the Lord saith from heaven concerning Christ, "Hear ye him."

Once in Matt. iii., ye have those words from heaven over Christ, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And a second time ye have those words at the transfiguration, in Matt. xvii. 5., "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Why are those words, hear ye him, added here? In Matt. iii., these words are not added, but only thus; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There it is not said, "hear ye him;" but in Matt. xvii., it is said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Why is "hear ye him," added here? Why, if you look into the former verse, ye find, "Peter answered 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." Moses gave out the law, and Elias restored the law: now they being present; now comes the voice, "hear ye him:" that is, not Moses, not Elias, but now, "hear ye him," in opposition to Moses, in opposition unto Elias, "hear ye him."

And if you look into Rom. vii., you shall find that now in these gospel times, we are to be dead unto the law; which the apostle clears by a very great similitude: saith he, "Know ye not brethren, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth: for the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband: so then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man: wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Ye are married to another, therefore ye are dead to the law. Dead, how dead? Why, ye are freed from the law; he expresses it so elsewhere, freed from the law. How so? What are we freed from the commandment of the law? From the precept of the law? No, saith the apostle: "The commandment is holy, and just, and good." How then are we freed from the law?

Why you are free from the vail of the law, 2 Cor. iii. And you are free from the dominion of the law: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi.

And ye are free from the pedagogy of the law, the law is not your school-master to bring to Christ, Gal. iii.

And ye are free from the covenant of the law, as a covenant. And thus are ye in these gospel times, dead to the law, and free. But now though we are thus dead, and be thus free, yet possibly a man may be too legal in these gospel times, that is the second.

Thirdly, But then when may a man be said to be legal, or mosaical, in opposition to this Mediator, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant? And when may a man be said to be evangelical in opposition to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant? Or, in short, what is the way and spirit of the old, and of the new testament, and wherein do they differ?

An old testament legal spirit, is a servile spirit, that serveth God upon the account of wages, or reward; mostly, chiefly, or only. An evangelical gospel spirit, is a filial spirit. Moses therefore, the head of that covenant, is called a servant; and Jesus the head of this covenant is called a Son: "Moses as a servant, Christ as a Son," Heb. ii. And if you look into Rom. viii., you shall find it is said there by way of difference: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear:" so you read it, but the words are *πνευμα δουλειας*, ye have not received the spirit of servitude again, or a servile spirit, or the spirit of servants: "But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." Compare this with Gal. iv., and you shall see the opposition doth lie between the spirit of adoption, and bondage, but servitude, verse 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father; wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son." In verse 1., "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons: and because ye are sons, God

hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father; wherefore thou art no more a servant." So that it is a servile spirit, and the spirit of a servant, that is here opposed to this adoption: and would you know the difference between the spirit of a servant, and the spirit of a son?

Why, a servant serves for wages, and a son serves out of love and duty: and are there not many in these times of the gospel, that do serve God only, or mostly upon the account of wages and reward. Ye know what men ordinarily say, What need ye be so strict in your life? you may go to heaven with less ado. So then it seems, it is heaven that is their measure of obedience. Why? Because men are legal and serve God upon the account of wages: it is heaven and reward, and wages, that is the business. Why? because men are legal.

I grant it is lawful to have an eye to the recompence of reward, Christ himself had. All love of reward is not mercenary. But for a man to serve God, mostly, chiefly, only, upon the account of wages, and for reward, this is plainly legal. A man of a gospel spirit, knows that he lives upon a better purse than all his own earnings can amount unto. But,

A legal spirit also is a fearing spirit, put on rather by the threatening than by the promise; a gospel spirit rather by the promise than the threatening. In the times of the Old Testament the threatening reigned. And if you look into Deuteronomy, you shall find that when Moses the mediator of the old covenant, preached and declared the mind of God unto the people, he begins with curses and threatenings, Deut. xxvii. They were upon two hills, and verse 14: "The Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel, with a loud voice, Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." And "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark," and so he goes on with curses. In the xxviii. chapter then come the blessings: "It shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day; that the Lord thy God will set thee on high,

above all nations of the earth ; and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee : 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 kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.” Mark how the blessing comes after. First comes the curse, when Moses the mediator of the old covenant preached. But now look into Matt. v., and ye find that when Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant comes to preach, that he begins with blessing. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, and blessed are the meek, and blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness,” and blessed, and blessed. First comes the blessing, and then afterwards in the following part of the chapter comes the law and the curse. And if you look into this Scripture you find the difference also ; for, saith the apostle here, “We are not come unto the mount that might be touched, that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words which they could not endure, so terrible was the sight thereof ; but ye are come to mount Sion.” Would you know the difference between the dispensations ? The one is terrible, the other comfortable. The one is fearing, and the other comforting. Look in Rom. x. The apostle there also makes the difference between the spirit of the law and the gospel. “Moses (saith he, verse 5,) describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things, shall live by them.” Do and live ; but at verse 6, “The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven ; that is, to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep.” But what saith it, “The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.” The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise ; say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven. It does not hold the soul in suspense, and anxiety, and fear, and trouble. “Christ hath ascended,” and “Christ hath descended.”

But you will say, May not a man that is of a gospel spirit, and that is come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, be full of fears ? May not a good and gracious soul be full of fears about his condition ?

I answer, He may ; but his fears do arise from the weakness of his adherence and faith. The other's fears do rather arise from the weakness of the ground he stands upon. As for example : Two men are afraid of drowning ; one stands upon a rock, and he is afraid of being drowned ; the other stands upon a quicksand, and he is afraid of being drowned ; both are afraid. He that stands upon a rock is afraid of drowning, why ? because he is afraid he shall be washed off ; his fear arises from the weakness of his adherence. But the other's fear arises from the unsoundness of the ground he stands upon, for it is upon a quicksand. So here are two fears : a gracious, gospel heart fears, and a legalist fears. One fears from the weakness of his adherence : I am upon the rock, but I am afraid I shall be washed off. But the other's fears arise from the weakness of the ground he stands upon ; he stands upon the quicksand, upon his own duties, and his own works ; so that a legal spirit is a fearing spirit. He is put on rather by the threatenings than the promise ; the other by the promise rather than the threatening. The one is kept from evil by his delight in good, and the other is put on to good by his fear of evil.

In the times of the Old Testament they did very much measure the love of God by outward things : for the promises (as you know) then were mostly concerning temporal things ; and so they measured the love of God much by those outward things. But now in the times of the New Testament, our promises are mostly spiritual, and therefore a New Testament spirit measures the love of God most by spiritual things, and not by these outward things.

A legal old testament spirit trades much, or most, or altogether, with conditional promises ; for the old covenant promises were most conditional, and ran conditionally. But now when God promises the new covenant, he gives out an absolute promise ; and therefore a new testament spirit trades much with absolute promises. For he knows, and you may know, that though a promise be conditional, the Lord hath promised the very condition in another Scripture, and that without a condition. And he knows, and you may know, that when God gives a promise with an oath, though the promise do run conditionally, it shall be fulfilled absolutely.

In the time of the Old Testament they came unto Christ by the promise, for Christ was not yet come, but promised. But now in the times of the New Testament we come first to Christ, and so unto the promise; for all the promises are yea and amen in Christ.

In the time of the Old Testament they came unto Christ by the law, and without the law they might not come to Christ; for the law was a schoolmaster for to bring to Christ. But now in the time of the New Testament, the law is not our schoolmaster for to bring to Christ. And though seldom any go to heaven, but come by the gates of hell; and seldom men do come to Christ now, but they have some workings of the law first; yet notwithstanding, if I will lay a necessity upon such a precedency of a legal work, before I do come to Christ, then I am too legal.

In the time of the Old Testament, men did then upon any great discovery of God, fly from God; as when God gave out the law they fled from God. And when Christ did a great work before Peter, "Lord (saith he), depart from me, for I am a sinful man." But now in the gospel, the greater the discovery is, the more a gospel spirit doth draw near to God. Oh, it is good for me to be here, saith he.

The time of the Old Testament was a time of the letter. And therefore if a man of a legal spirit can but perform his duty according to the letter of the commandment, he is satisfied. But the times of the New Testament are the times of the Spirit: "We are not ministers of the letter, but of the Spirit." And therefore a gospel spirit, though he can perform his duty according to the letter of the command, yet if he does not attain the Spirit in it he is unsatisfied.

To say no more in it but this: In the times of the Old Testament, God spake by visions, and dreams and signs; but now in these latter days, he hath spoken by his Son; and we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed. So that thus you see that there is a difference, and what the difference is between the way of the Old and New Testament, between an Old Testament and a New Testament spirit.

Fourthly, But then suppose I have recourse too much to Moses in these gospel times, and not enough unto Jesus the

Mediator of the new covenant; suppose I be legal in these gospel times, is there any great danger in it?

Much, very much. And I pray consider it, that we may be all found upon gospel ground, in this gospel day. Danger? I say much. For,

The more legal you are in gospel times, the more sinful you will be, and the less able for to live unto God.

The more sinful you will be; for, saith the apostle, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

And the less able you will be to live unto God; for, saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 19, "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." Till ye be dead unto the law, you will never live unto God. And in Rom. vii., "Ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him, who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Dead unto the law that ye may bring forth fruit unto God. Never think of bringing forth fruit unto God while you are upon a legal ground, and come not off fully to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. It is observed that the law was given out twice in tables of stone. And the first time that they were given out, God did cut out the tables of stone, and he himself did write the law with his own finger in those tables. The second time Moses cut out the tables of stone, and Moses wrote the words of the commandment upon those tables. In Exod. xxxiv., "Hew thee two tables of stone, like unto the first," saith God. Well, so he did. At the 28th verse, "And he wrote upon the tables, the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." The first tables were of God's own making, and the writing was of God's own finger. The second tables were of Moses's framing, and Moses's writing, and yet the first were broken, the second kept. What should be the reason? One would think that the first tables should have been kept as a holy thing rather than the second; but the first were broken and the second kept. Why? For a good reason, saith Austin, because when the commandment was given in the first tables, then God appeared in a dreadful way, with thunder and lightning. When God gave out the commandments again, the Lord appeared in a way of grace: "The Lord proclaimed unto Moses, The

Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands," Exod. xxxiv. Thus God proclaims himself as a "gracious and merciful God," and when the law comes out now, it is kept. No such way to keep the commandments of the law, as from the consideration of the free grace and mercy of God. When the law comes out with a gospel hand, aye, then it is kept, and the commandment not broken. So that I say, the more legal you are, the more sinful you will be, and the less able you will be for to live unto God.

The more legal you are, the more opposite you are to your own assurance; to a full settled assurance of your interest in God and Christ: "We have not received the spirit of bondage (you read it) again to fear; but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Assurance is a work of the Comforter; but the spirit of servitude, it is opposite to the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; it is a great enemy unto true assurance. Now is it not a miserable thing for a man or woman to be always fluctuating, and never to have assurance settled. The more legal you are, the more opposite to your own assurance. But

Though you do serve and worship the true God, yet if you worship him in a legal way, your worship will be antichristian. For what is antichrist, and who is antichrist? The apostle John tells you in the 1st Epistle iv. 3, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come."

But shall antichrist deny Christ to be come in the flesh in so many terms? No.

He shall not deny the Incarnation of Christ; for he shall sit in the temple of God.

How then shall antichrist deny Christ to be come in the flesh?

He shall set up such a worship as was before Christ came in the flesh.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there was an outward, glorious, and a pompous worship; so shall antichrist have.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came

in the flesh, there was a temple and a great cathedral ; so shall antichrist have.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there was a high priest, and priests, and Levites ; so shall antichrist have.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there were copes, and ephods, and linen coats ; so shall antichrist have.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there were candles, and tapers, and music in the temple ; so shall antichrist have.

As in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there were altars ; so shall antichrist have.

And as in the time of the Old Testament before Christ came in the flesh, there were sacrifices ; so shall antichrist have his unbloody sacrifices.

As then they turned into a covenant of works, so shall antichrist also do. Thus, the more legal and of an Old Testament stamp your worship is, the more antichristian it is. Now is it not a dangerous thing to have our worship antichristian worship in these gospel days ?

But again. The apostle Paul tells us that the inheritance is not to the bond woman ; there were two women in Abraham's house, Hagar the bond woman, and Sarah the free woman ; and these were types of the law and the gospel, saith the apostle. The inheritance is not to the bond woman, cast her out ; but the inheritance is to the free woman and to her children. So then, the inheritance is not to the legalist ; no, the inheritance is to the free woman.

Yea, friends, what is this, but a plain apostacy, or that which tends to apostacy, now, after we profess we are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, to have recourse to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant ? " All flesh is grass, and withereth, but the word of the Lord endures for ever," and what is that ? The gospel that I preached unto you, that will hold, saith he. " Whose house ye are, (saith the apostle,) if ye hold fast the confidence of your rejoicing steadfast unto the end." Where lies our confidence but in Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant ? yea, saith the apostle to the legal Galatians, " Ye are fallen from grace ;" because they were returned to Moses, and had recourse to Moses. Oh,

what a dangerous thing then is it for a man to be legal in these gospel times.

But yet may not possibly a godly, truly gracious soul, be too legal even in these gospel times ?

Possibly he may ; for as there is no duty which a good man doth perform, but a wicked man may perform the same for one act ; so there is no sin that a wicked man doth commit, but a godly man may commit the same for one act ; and therefore this of legality he may fall into as well as others.

Yet, let me tell you this, though a good and gracious soul may be overgrown with legality too much, yet he is very sensible of his own legality ; a mere legalist is not, he thinks it strange that we speak of a legal spirit in a gospel time.

And though a good man may be too much overgrown, be too legal, and too mosaical ; yet notwithstanding he doth not, he cannot wish that there were no law, because the law is written in his heart ; another that is under the power of the law, could wish with all his soul, that there were no law, because he is under the power of it.

Again, Though a good man may be too much overgrown with legality, yet he doth most favour the things of the gospel, spiritual things ; for every man is according to what he favours. Three men come to a sermon. One is an affectionate man. Another an expressionate man, a man of parts. Another a spiritual man ; and the preacher hath, it may be all three. He hath affection, he hath expression, he hath spiritual matter : the affectionate man is most taken with the affectionate part ; the expressionist, the man of parts is most taken with the expressions of the sermon ; and there he hangs, such and such rare expressions there were. But the spiritual man is most taken with the spiritual matter of the sermon ; for every man is according to the thing that he favours. Now, I say, a good man, though he may be overgrown with legality, yet he favours spiritual and gospel things most.

And then again, though a good man may be too legal, yet notwithstanding, he does not, he cannot oppose those that are spiritual, and evangelical, and of a gospel spirit. Though a spark of fire be not so great as the flame, it will not oppose the flame ; and though a good man be too legal, he will not

oppose and persecute them that are evangelical, a legalist will; saith the apostle, "But the son of the bond woman, persecuted the son of the free woman." And truly, the more legal we are, the more we are apt for to persecute. So that thus then we see what a dangerous thing it is to be legal and mosaical in these gospel times.

Fifthly, But what shall we then do, that we may stand clear from Moses, and come off clearly unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant?

This I must speak unto: only by the way give me leave to say three or four things unto you.

If we are not come to Moses the mediator of the old covenant, but unto Jesus the Mediator of the new; what a blessed, and happy condition are all the saints in now in these gospel times? It was a comfortable thing for the Jews to have Moses with them, that mediator, that upon all occasions he might interpose between God and them. But alas, what was that Moses, to this Jesus, this Mediator of ours. Though Moses was the mediator of the old testament, and did stand between God and the people: yet

He was but a typical mediator; and therefore look how much the thing typified goes beyond the type, the substance goes beyond the shadow: so much doth our Mediator go beyond theirs.

Again, Though Moses was a mediator between God and them, yet he was but mere man; but Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, is God and man; very God and very man. In Rom. ix. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came," there is his manhood. "Who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen." God, truly, not nuncupatively; truly God, and truly man.

Again, though Moses was a mediator, and did stand between God and them in the time of the old testament, yet notwithstanding he was unwilling to undertake the work: "Send by whom thou wilt," saith he: but now this our Jesus saith, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will."

Again, though Moses was a mediator then between God and them, and stood between God and them; yet he was not able to do that work of mediation perfectly; I am not eloquent, saith he; and I am not able to bear all this people, saith he: but now saith Jesus, "he hath given me the tongue

of the learned, that I may administer a word in due season, to them that are weary:" he hath borne us, and he hath borne our griefs.

Again, though Moses stood between God and them, and was a mediator between God and them, and did sometimes make an atonement, as in the case of the golden calf, when they had sinned; yet notwithstanding, he destroyed three thousand of them: "Peradventure, (saith he, after he had done it) I shall make an atonement for your sin." Exod. xxxii. 30., and he steps in to God for them: "And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book:" and I have heard thee (saith he), "nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." Now Jesus he makes an atonement, slays none, neither doth God the Father make any reserve with him, he freely forgives those that he makes atonement for, all at once without any reserves, or after-reckonings.

Again, though Moses was a mediator of the old covenant, stood between God and the people, yet notwithstanding he is dead; he did intercede, but he is dead, and intercedes no more: but Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, he ever liveth to make intercession.

And though Moses was a mediator between God and them, stood between God and them; yet they were not able to behold his face, after he had been in the mount, but a vail was put upon it: but now as for Jesus, "We saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father." And, "We all with open face behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." What a glorious Mediator have we now? What a blessed condition hath God brought his people to now? Friends, will you not be thankful for this Mediator, will ye return to Moses now; what, having such a mediator, will ye now return to Moses, and be legal now? Consider what a blessed state ye are now brought unto.

But, If we are now come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and not unto Moses: why then should we go to men for the worship of God, and for the ordinances of God? What, may we not have recourse to Moses, and shall we have recourse to men? Moses spake from God, and spake the words of God unto the people; and, may we not have recourse now to Moses for the ordinances, and worship,

and shall we have recourse to men for our worship and ordinances? As Gersom out of Austin observes: One commandment from a fellow-servant, is more burdensome than a hundred from the master; and Moses spake the words of God: if Moses' tool doth defile our christian altar, how much more doth the tool of man defile our altar? That is the second.

If we be come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, why then should we despair of any, and not go to God for the worst of men, for we are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. Mark, how it is brought in, 1 Tim. ii. 5., "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." What then? "I exhort therefore that supplications, prayers, and intercessions, be made for all men: for kings," even for Nero, a persecutor. Why? "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus:" and therefore you may go to God for the worst of men, "For there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Three sorts there are that do greedily snatch at this scripture, the Socinian, and the Arminian, and the Papist.

The Socinian thinks that here is something for him against the deity of Christ, because it is said, "the man Christ Jesus." Whereas in verse 3., it is said, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

The Arminian thinks that there is some ground here for his universal redemption: for it is said, "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for *all*:" whereas the apostle here doth explain himself, what he means by this *all*; that is, *all*, both Jews and gentiles: for saith he in the next verse, "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, a teacher of the gentiles, in faith and verity:" explaining his word *all*, to be meant both Jews and gentiles.

The Papists also think they have something here for their opinion, who hold that Christ is our Mediator only according to his human nature: for it is said the "man Christ Jesus." But if we observe how these words are brought in; we find it is an encouragement to pray for the worst of men. Why? "for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Be not discouraged, go to

God for the worst of men, "for there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

But then, if we are come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, why then, why should you not come to Jesus? If you be come, why should you not come? That is, if you be come in regard of your state, why should you not come in regard of act, in a way of believing. You are come unto him in regard of your state; why should you not come unto him in regard of your faith, come unto him in a way of believing. Some think, oh it is presumption to come to Christ, and to believe and lay hold on Christ: but friends, it is no presumption for any man to do that act, that is suitable to his state; it is no presumption to act according to my state that God hath brought me to: now this is our state; in regard of state we are come to Jesus, and therefore why should we not come to Jesus also in a way of believing. Especially seeing he hath said, "Those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

If we be come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and not unto Moses: why then should we not all stand clear from Moses, and come fully off to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

But you will say, What shall we do that we may be found upon gospel grounds, with a gospel spirit. I confess I have been too legal; legal in my performances, legal in my obedience, legal in the matter of my comfort; what should I do now that I may stand clear from Moses, and come fully off to Jesus this Mediator of the new covenant.

Improve all your former legal workings and fears, unto your dying to them; improve them so as by them, to die to them. Many it may be of you here, have been under legal workings and terrors. Either you have, or you have not; if you have not been under any legal workings of terror, thou art one of a hundred.

If you have, why should you not improve those legal workings, so as by them, to die unto them: saith Paul, "I through the law, am dead unto the law." What is that? "I through the law, am dead unto the law, that I might live unto God." I through affliction, am dead unto affliction. I through the disappointment of friends, am dead unto my friends. I through sin, am dead unto my sin. I through the law, and

the terrors of the law, am dead unto the law. Now then, improve your former terrors, so as by them to die unto them. You have been under them: aye, but have you improved them, have you so improved them, as thereby for to die unto them?

Observe what those things are that are commanded by Moses in the Old Testament, and go unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, for grace to perform them. There is nothing commanded in the Old Testament, but it is promised in the New. There is nothing commanded by Moses in the Old Testament, but Christ the Mediator of the New Testament is engaged to perform it for you, and to give you grace to do it: the law commands and grace helps: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Observe therefore, what that is that is commanded by Moses in the Old, and go to Jesus the Mediator of the New, for grace and strength to do the same.

Then be sure that you stand where the Spirit breathes: now the Spirit breathes in the pure and clean preaching of the gospel: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Would you be brought off from Moses and stand clear from Moses; choose to stand under such a preaching, where the Spirit breathes, and that is a gospel preaching.

Then put your selves upon the stream of the free-grace of God without having any foot on your own bottom: some men will learn to swim, and they are loth to lean themselves upon the stream of the water but keep a foot at the bottom; and they never learn to swim, till they take up the foot: some would fain be evangelical, but they cannot lean themselves upon the stream of grace, but keep a foot at the bottom still, upon something of their own.

Some there are that do, and work, and when they can work no further, then they eke it out with Christ's mediation. So indeed they make the mediation of Christ but an ekement to their own working: but away with these ekements: oh, let Christ be all, let Christ be all. And therefore,

Study much the body of Jesus and the all sufficiency of the mediation of this Jesus the Mediator of the covenant. The sight of God's all-sufficiency, will draw one off from the creature: and the sight of the all-sufficiency of the mediation of

Christ, will draw one off from Moses. Put thyself often unto this disjunction: come, O my soul, either there is enough in the mediation of Jesus, or not: if not enough, why do I go unto Christ at all; if there be enough, why should I not stand clear from Moses, and upon pure gospel ground? Thus therefore do.

But suppose I have come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, what shall I do that I may walk up unto this condition? What should I do, and how should I so walk, as one that is indeed come unto Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant; that yet I may stand upon gospel ground, and not touch at all upon Moses?

If you be indeed come unto Jesus, this Mediator of the new covenant, and would walk suitably thereunto: why then should you not still throng and press after the appointments, institutions and ordinances of Jesus? "The law and the prophets were until John, but from John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence;" that was suitable to the gospel. And what was the suffering violence, but peoples pressing after the gospel: so now, to press after the kingdom of heaven, suits with a gospel state; to press after the ordinances and appointments of Jesus suits with a gospel state.

But labour more and more for to know your christian liberty, in conjunction with strictness of life. Some there are that are very strict in their lives, but they do not know their christian liberty; some again know their christian liberty, yet abate in their strictness of life. But blessed is that knowledge of our christian liberty, that is in conjunction with more strictness of life. Oh blessed, blessed is that knowledge of our christian liberty, where strictness of life and holiness, grow up together with it. Therefore I say, labour more and more to know your christian liberty in conjunction with strictness and holiness of life, this suits a gospel state; then shall you do as those that are come unto Jesus. But then,

In regard of your faith: be sure that you close with Christ himself, the absolute promise; and live in continual dependence upon Christ, this Jesus, this Mediator. For as living upon an old stock, and a stock received, suited with a covenant of works: so living in continual dependence upon Je-

sus for fresh grace, suits with this covenant of grace whereof he is Mediator.

In regard of your repentance and sorrow for sin, the more your hearts do melt and thaw under a sense of love, that you have sinned against God : for the law rends and tears ; but the gospel melts and thaws. The more that you grieve for sin, and rejoice in God together. The more you grieve for sin that is pardoned, and because it is pardoned : for a legal spirit grieves for sin, only that it may be pardoned ; but a gospel spirit because it is pardoned. And the more you grieve for sins that are secret, the sins of your spirits, especially unbelief ; for saith Christ, “ I say unto you, he that looketh upon a woman,” &c. The more I say you are found doing these things in reference to your repentance, the more your repentance suits with the gospel, and with a gospel state. And then,

As to the matter of your obedience.

The more gracious you are upon the account of grace, the more evangelical. And,

The more free you are in your actings towards God, the more evangelical ; those that Jesus makes free, are free indeed. Free, not *from* duty, but free *in* duty ; free from sin, but not free to sin. A legal spirit is restrained from evil and constrained to good. Labour to be free in all your actings towards God. And,

Then again. The more you are conformed unto God the Father who hath given you this Mediator, and to Jesus this Mediator ; the more evangelical you are, and the more you suit with this gospel state unto which you are come. Now a man is conformed unto God the Father when he doth good to men for evil ; bless them that curse you, so shall ye be the children of your Father. Then a man is conformed to Jesus this Mediator, when his life is enamelled with meekness and humility ; “ Learn of me (saith Christ), for I am meek and lowly.” Friends, the law frets, and the gospel sweetens.

And then, In case that you have to deal with the things of the world. The more you are estranged from the world by faith, and can forsake the things thereof for Christ and his ways and truth, bearing witness to his truth and ways ; the more you comply and comport with a gospel state : “ If

thou wilt be perfect, (saith Christ to that legalist) go and sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." And,

In case that you meet with sufferings, look upon all your sufferings as part of Christ's purchase for you. Your sufferings are your servants; for all things are yours; for you are Christ's, who is the head of the covenant.

And in case that you are under any spiritual desertion, then praise God for his love to Jesus, when you cannot praise God for his love to you. A true gospel spirit will praise God the Father for his love to Christ his Son, when he cannot praise God for his love to himself, because he wants assurance.

Again, if you would yet walk up unto this condition of the gospel, whereunto now ye are come, then whatsoever you do, be sure that you do it upon gospel principles: principles of love, principles of thankfulness, principles of ingenuousness; principles are the springs of actions. If your principles be evangelical, your actions will be evangelical; if your principles be legal, your actions will be legal. Stock, therefore, and store yourselves with gospel principles: principles of love, principles of thankfulness, and principles of ingenuousness; doing all in the name of Jesus, this Mediator of the covenant.

And when you have wrought and done all, rest upon Jesus this Mediator, as if you had done nothing. Yea, repent work and do, as if you had no such Mediator; I say, Work, and pray, and read, and meditate, and confer, and repent, as if you had no Mediator for to rest upon, but only your works; and yet rest upon this your Mediator, as if you had done no work at all. Thus do, and thus shall you comply and comport with your gospel state.

Which that you may do, consider this is that you are now called unto; you are now come to Jesus, not to Moses; you are now come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. Why then, as in the time of the Old Testament they had recourse unto Moses, so now in the times of the New Testament ye are in all things to have recourse unto Jesus. What saith Jesus to this business? Here is worship. What saith Jesus to it? Here is an ordinance. What saith Jesus to it?

Here is an officer of the church. What saith Jesus to it? This is suitable unto the state that now ye are come unto.

And thus shall all your convictions, graces, and your duties be refined; you shall have much in a little room. A legal work may be great for the bulk, yet be but little; a gospel work though but little, hath a great deal in it, for it is refined.

And thus also shall you have the wedding garment on. For pray what is the wedding garment but a gospel disposition, suitable to a gospel dispensation? this is the wedding garment. Not faith, nor repentance, nor this, nor that particular grace, but a gospel disposition, suitable to a gospel dispensation, is the wedding garment; and thus you shall be clothed with it.

Thus also your *only* shall stand in its proper place; for mark where the apostle places your *only*: "*Only* (saith he) let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel;" there stands a christian's *only*, upon a conversation becoming the gospel.

Thus also shall you please the Father: The more that you come to Jesus the Mediator, whom the Father hath appointed; and the more your conversation suits thereunto, the more you please the Father. You can never please the Father more than in coming to the Son.

Now therefore, as ever you do desire that you may please the Father;

As you do desire that your *only* may be found in a right and proper place;

As you do desire that you may be found having the wedding garment on;

As you do desire that all your convictions, graces, duties, may be more refined, and so preserved and kept;

As you do desire to be found doing according to the state whereunto you are called; so let it be your work and business to stand clear from Moses, and to stand upon clear gospel ground, and to come off fully unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. For, saith this doctrine, in these gospel times, we are not come unto Moses, the mediator of the Old Testament or of the old covenant, but unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. And so I have done with this third Observation. There is a fourth thing yet behind

which concerns the “blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.”

SERMON VI.

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING.

And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—HEB. xii. 24.

When I made entrance into these words, I took up four observations from them, and having gone through three of them, I now come unto the fourth; which more largely runs thus,

Observation IV. That it is a very great privilege which in these gospel times we are partakers of: To come unto the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. For the clearing and prosecuting whereof,

First, I shall shew you what this sprinkling of blood is, what are the grounds and use of this sprinkling.

Secondly, That this blood of sprinkling is a speaking blood, and speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Thirdly, That we are now come unto this blood of sprinkling.

Fourthly, What are the privileges of coming to this blood of sprinkling, and of being sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling. And then,

Fifthly, What we must do that we may get our hearts sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling.

First, If you ask what this blood of sprinkling is?

I answer, That it is no other than the blood of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; called the blood of sprinkling, because it was, and is, the thing specified in all the sprinklings of water and blood in the Old Testament. In the days of the Old Testament, it was their way and manner then to mix water and blood together, and to sprinkle it upon persons and things; which was a pattern and type of this blood of Jesus, as you read from the 13th verse unto the 24th of the ixth of Hebrews. When our Lord and Saviour Christ died upon the cross, there came water and blood out of his side, saith John. And if you look into 1 John v.,

you shall see that John, his beloved disciple, insists much upon it, verse 6 : “ This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” Again, “ This is he, even Jesus Christ, that came by water and blood ;” which blood of sprinkling is the blood of Jesus, saith Peter expressly in his 1st Epistle i. 2 : “ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” So that plainly then, and briefly, this blood of sprinkling is the blood of Jesus. Called the blood of sprinkling in reference unto those types and ceremonies of sprinkling blood, in the time of the Old Testament.

For our better understanding whereof I shall labour to shew you briefly, what were the grounds and reasons of their sprinkling blood in the times of the Old Testament, and how that is applicable to the blood of Jesus.

If you look therefore into the Old Testament you shall find that they sprinkled blood upon a fourfold account.

To confirm and ratify the covenant between God and them.

To make an atonement for their sin.

For the sanctification and purification of their persons and things.

And, for the preservation of their persons.

Accordingly, therefore, saith the apostle, Heb. ix. 19, the book was sprinkled ; so in Exod. xxiv. 7, the meaning of it is given : “ And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people ; and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient : and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant.” And the ixth of Hebrews tells us that he sprinkled the blood itself. And why so ? But to shew thus much, that it is the blood of Jesus that doth ratify and confirm the covenant now made between God and us ; as at large in that ixth of Hebrews.

Then, also, in those times of the old testament they sprinkled blood to make an atonement for the sins of the people, as you have it in Lev. iv. 6, 20 : “ And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary.” The mercy-seat and the altar were sprinkled ; the reason is given at the 20th verse : “ And he shall do with the bullock as he

did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this; and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them." And why so? But to shew that it is the blood of Jesus whereby we have atonement, as in Rom. v. 11.

Again, In the times of the old testament they did sprinkle blood for the purification of men's persons, and of things, as you have it in Lev. xiv. 7, "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." And why so? But to shew that it is the blood of Jesus that doth cleanse us from all iniquity, as in 1 John i.

Then in those times they did sprinkle men's persons for preservation from the destroying angel: when the destroying angel came to destroy the Egyptians, the posts of the Israelites were sprinkled that they might be preserved. And why? But to shew that it is by the blood of Jesus that we are preserved from the destroyer. In the 1st verse of Jude's epistle it is said, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ;" or preserved by Jesus Christ: and "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," saith the apostle to the Corinthians. So that thus now you see, briefly, what were the grounds and reasons of their sprinkling blood in the times of the old testament, and how all this is applicable to the blood of Jesus.

And if you look wishly into the Scripture, and compare things with things, you shall find that Moses in the times of the old testament did divide the blood of the covenant, part whereof was sprinkled upon the altar, poured down at the foot of the altar, to oblige God to the covenant; and part of it was sprinkled upon the people, to confirm their souls in the certainty of the covenant, and to oblige them to observe and keep covenant with God. So with the blood of Christ. And therefore when our Lord and Saviour Christ speaks at the Lord's supper, he saith, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for many, for the remission of sins." The first part of the words—"This cup is the new testament in my blood;" hath regard to us, shewing that our souls are to be confirmed in this, that we are in covenant with God. The second part of the words—"shed for many, for the remission

of sins ;” relates unto God, shewing the use of Christ’s blood to satisfy God for our sins and to obtain our remission.

And if you would know what is the use of this sprinkling ; I say, sprinkling of the blood notes application. What are we the better for the blood of Christ, if it be not applied to us and sprinkled on us ? There are two great attributes of God that we have to deal withal in the great matter of our redemption ; the justice of God and the mercy of God. That the justice of God might be satisfied, Christ was made a sacrifice on the cross, and his blood shed on earth, that the favour of God might be obtained. Christ carries, as our great High Priest, his blood, the virtue of it, into heaven, and sprinkles the mercy-seat seven times.

And that we might be sanctified and reconciled to God, this blood is sprinkled upon us too. As it is sprinkled upon the altar and the mercy-seat, that God may be reconciled to us ; so it is sprinkled upon us that we might be sanctified and reconciled to God, and that thereby we might be assured that God is in covenant with us. As when the Jews were sprinkled with blood, the priest saying, “ This is the blood of the covenant ;” they were assured, thereby, that they were in covenant with God : so when we are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, we are, or may be assured that we are in the covenant of grace with God. And thus now, you see, what this blood of sprinkling is, upon what account it is sprinkled, and what is the use of the sprinkling thereof. And so I have done with the first general.

Secondly, This blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of Jesus, is a speaking blood, and speaketh better things than that of Abel, or than Abel.

It speaketh in regard of its continual and perpetual virtue and operation. But here are two things.

What this blood of sprinkling speaketh.

How and in what sense it speaketh better things than that of Abel.

What this blood of sprinkling speaketh.

It speaketh a necessity of satisfaction, for “ without blood there is no remission.”

It speaketh the righteousness of God. If God have burnt down such a city as this to declare his righteousness, how much more doth the shedding of the blood of Jesus declare

the righteousness of God: "To declare, I say, his righteousness," saith the apostle in the iird of Romans.

It speaketh the highest obedience that ever the sun saw. That the Son of God should be obedient unto death, laying down his blood, is the highest obedience. As the disobedience of the first Adam was in the matter of the tree, so the obedience of the second Adam was in the matter of the tree: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," saith the apostle. As the disobedience of the first Adam was in the transgressing a positive commandment, which was the symbol of obedience to the whole moral law; so the obedience of the second Adam doth consist in being obedient unto a positive commandment, which was the symbol of his obedience to the whole law of God; "This commandment received I of my Father," saith he. And as Moses the head of that covenant was "faithful in all his house," in-
somuch as it is said of him, "As the Lord commanded, so did he:" so Jesus, the head of this second covenant, was faithful in all his trust, and as the Lord commanded, so did he: "As the Father gave me commandment (saith he), even so I do," John xiv. 31. So that the blood of sprinkling speaks the highest obedience in the world.

It speaketh also the worth of souls. If a physician have a patient ready to die, and nothing will work his cure but the heart blood of the physician, and the physician should vouchsafe thereto, and let him have his heart blood to drink; would it not argue that the physician thinks this man's life is of great concernment and of great worth? so it is here. And what doth this argue, but that Jesus did look upon the souls of men as of infinite worth and concernment.

This blood of Jesus and the blood of sprinkling speaketh the evil of sin, the heinousness, the sinfulness, the evil of sin. There are many things that do speak the evil of sin, but of all things methinks the blood of sprinkling, the blood of Jesus, speaks the evil of sin loudest. Give me leave to name some, that so you may compare them and this together.

The separation from God and union with Satan speaks the evil of sin. As by grace we are united unto God, made one with God, and separated from the devil; so by sin we are

separated from God, and united unto Satan, and made one with him.

The condemnation of the whole world by the sin of Adam, speaks the evil of sin. If the eating of the apple, committing that one sin, brought condemnation upon all the world, how great must the evil of sin be.

The fire of hell speaks the evil of sin, for what is the fuel that the fire of hell feeds upon, but sin ; take sin away, and the fire of hell will die, it will be quenched.

The spoil of duties speaks it. One sinful thought is enough to spoil a prayer, to spoil a duty, to spoil a sermon. And if one drop of ink shall blacken a whole glass of milk, how black is that ink.

The horror of conscience speaks it : for if but one sin set on upon the soul by God, doth put a man into such horror of conscience, how great is the evil of sin.

The troublesomeness of the relics of sin in the saints speaks it. Sins in the saints are but wasps without their sting ; and if the wasps without their sting be so troublesome, how troublesome are the wasps that have their stings in them : how troublesome is sin in itself.

But above all, the blood of sprinkling speaks the evil of sin. For if the guilt of sin be so great, that nothing can satisfy for it but the blood of Jesus ; and the filth of sin be so great, that nothing can fetch out the stain thereof but the blood of Jesus ; how great, how heinous, how sinful must the evil of sin be. The blood of sprinkling speaks the evil of sin. And then,

As the blood of sprinkling speaks the evil of sin, so it speaks the riches and the freeness of the love of God. It was love in Jonathan to part with his garment for David. What love is it in Christ to part with his blood for us. It was love that made Christ weep over Lazarus ; they said, " Behold how he loved him." And if his tears speak his love, what doth his blood ? It is love to give a cup of cold water to a disciple, what is it then to give one's warm blood unto enemies.

Three things there are that do make a gift greatly free.

1. The greatness of the gift given.
2. The unworthiness of the person given unto. And,
3. The greatness of the person that gives.

1. As for the gift itself, what greater than the blood of Jesus?

2. As for the persons given unto, who more unworthy than sinful men?

3. As for the person that doth give, who greater than God in the three Persons? The Father gives Christ to die; the Son dies and gives his blood; and the Holy Ghost comes and sprinkles it, for it is the work of the Holy Ghost to sprinkle. This is another thing that the blood of Jesus speaks; it speaks the riches and the freeness of the love of God. These are the things that this blood of sprinkling speaketh.

And now if you ask, How and in what respects it speaketh better than Abel's, or than that of Abel: for it may be translated both ways, according to the several copies; but take it according to our translation, better than that of Abel, or than the blood of Abel: How and in what respects doth the blood of Jesus speak better things than the blood of Abel?

Why, it speaks better things than the personal blood of Abel; and it speaks better things than the sacrificed blood of Abel.

It speaks better than the personal blood of Abel: for the blood of Abel cried for vengeance against his own brother: but the blood of Jesus cries for mercy and for remission for his enemies: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," said Christ, when their hands were embrued in his blood.

But others think rather that these words are to be understood of the sacrificed blood of Abel. And because Abel is the first that stands upon record in Scripture for offering a sacrifice with blood; it is as if the apostle should say, The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and the blood of Jesus, speaketh better things than the sacrifice of Abel, or of all the sacrifices in the Old Testament. And indeed this is more suitable to the scope of the apostle here, for the design of the apostle here is, to shew the excellency of new testament sacrifice, and of the way of the new testament, above the old. And if you look into the Scripture you find, that though in Gen. iv. it is said, "Abel's blood cried;" yet notwithstanding it is not said that Abel or his blood speaketh:

but in Heb. xi. it is said that, in point of sacrifice, by faith, Abel speaketh: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and by it he being dead yet speaketh." In point of sacrifice by faith he yet speaketh.

And would you know how the blood of Jesus speaketh better things than the sacrificed blood of Abel, or than all the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Thus:

The blood of Jesus, and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, doth give efficacy unto all those sacrifices. What are all the types and ceremonies but dead things, without the thing typified?

And though Abel offered an excellent sacrifice, he did not offer his own blood: but Jesus did, he offered up himself by the Eternal Spirit, as in Heb. ix.

And though Abel and the fathers of the old testament offered excellent sacrifices, yet they offered often, and so those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect, saith the apostle, "But Christ offered himself once for all: and so he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified," Heb. x.

Though Abel and the fathers in the Old Testament did offer excellent sacrifices, yet their sacrifice was after their sin committed; when they had committed a sin, then they were to get a sacrifice, and possibly they might have died before the sacrifice was offered; but the sacrifice of Christ is *before* our sin is committed; we cannot die between the sin and the sacrifice.

And though Abel and the fathers of the Old Testament offered excellent sacrifices, the blood whereof was sprinkled on the people, yet that was but to the purifying of the flesh, for, saith the apostle chap. ix. 13: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, &c." But the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, purgeth our consciences from dead works. "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." Upon which words, saith Capellus, you have here the excellency of this offering above all other offerings in the world; above the offerings of the heathen, above the offerings of the Jews, above the offerings of the

christians. Above the offerings of the heathen; for they sacrificed to devils, but he offered himself without spot to God. Above the sacrifice of the Jews; for their blood of sprinkling sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but this to the purging of your "conscience from dead works." Above the offering of the christians; for though christians offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, as prayers and thanksgivings, yet "not without spot;" but he offered himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God.

And then, though Abel offered an excellent sacrifice, and so the fathers of the Old Testament, yet notwithstanding those were for themselves and for those times. Abel offered for himself, and the Jews for themselves, for that time only; but Christ offered a sacrifice for all the world, "He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and "a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world."

Again, though Abel offered an excellent sacrifice, and the fathers of the Old Testament offered excellent sacrifices, and the blood thereof was sprinkled; yet it was not sprinkled upon *all things*, but in Heb. ix. it is said: "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, and *almost* all things are by the law purged with blood." It was but *almost*, but now by the blood of Jesus *all things* are purged and cleansed, not *almost*, but *all things* are purged and cleansed. Thus now you see what this blood of sprinkling speaketh, and how it speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; better than his personal blood, and better than his sacrificed blood, and that is the second general.

Thirdly, Now unto this blood of sprinkling are we come in these gospel times. We are not come unto the blood of bulls and goats and heifers, but we are come unto the blood of Jesus the blood of sprinkling.

For what is the dispensation we are now under but the dispensation of a crucified Christ? There are two comings of Christ mentioned in the Scripture. A coming in a way of meanness, riding upon an ass; his first coming is in a way of humiliation, riding upon an ass, and accordingly his kingdom is a kingdom of patience. And there is a second coming of Christ, when he comes riding upon the clouds in power and great glory, and accordingly his kingdom then shall be a

kingdom of power and glory. When Christ comes the second time we shall be under glorious dispensations, but now we are under the first coming of Christ, and therefore what is the dispensation that now we are under, but the dispensation of a crucified Christ? What doth preaching signify and hold forth, but Christ crucified? "We preach Christ crucified," saith the apostle. What do the sacraments hold forth? Why: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," saith he. So that now we are under the dispensation of a crucified Christ. In the times of the old covenant, they did believe in God, and God himself was the first object of their faith, and so they came to Christ; now, in these times of the New Testament, the first and immediate object of our faith, is the blood of Christ, "Faith in the blood of Christ," Rom. iii. So that, I say, it is the blood of Jesus that now we are come unto.

Well, but though in these gospel times we are now come to the blood of Jesus, the blood of sprinkling, yet, it may be, this blood of sprinkling may not be sprinkled upon my soul. When may the blood of sprinkling be said to be sprinkled upon a man's soul? How shall I know whether this blood of sprinkling be sprinkled upon my soul in particular? That is a question of great concernment. Thus therefore,

If it be your great work in all your temptations and upon all occasions to apply yourselves unto the blood of Jesus, then is the blood of Jesus applied to you, and so sprinkled on you. The blood of Jesus is sprinkled on us by the Spirit of God, and when it is sprinkled by the Spirit of God, it is applied. If you do make applications of yourselves to Christ, certainly Christ hath made applications of himself to you; for all our grace is but a reflection of his grace; we love him because he loved us first, and we choose him because he chose us first, and we apply ourselves to him because he hath applied himself unto us first. If therefore in all temptations and upon all occasions, it be your great work to make an application of yourselves unto the blood of Jesus, then hath the blood of Jesus been applied to you and sprinkled upon you.

If you ever have had such a sight of the blood of Christ as that thereby you are purged from an evil conscience, then hath this blood been applied to, and sprinkled on you; they

go together. In Heb. x. 22, it is said: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," or *purged*, Heb ix. calls it *purged*; "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." What is that? Why an evil conscience is an evil conscience two ways; either because it is a sluggish conscience, and does not stir us up unto our duty and accuse for sin; or else because it is a clamorous and despondent conscience. Now if you have had such a sight of the blood of Jesus as hath quickened your conscience, and wakened your conscience, and yet pacified your conscience at the same time, then have you been sprinkled with this blood of Jesus. You see how they go together in the xth chapter 1, 2, 3. But,

If you have a continual sight and remembrance of the blood of Jesus in all your goings out and your comings in, then hath the blood of Jesus been sprinkled upon you. When the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites, the *posts* were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb. The *posts*; and why their *posts*? But that in all their goings out and their comings in, they might have an eye thereunto. So now how is it with me? Do I not only find the virtue of the Lord Christ within me; but that in all my goings out and comings in, I have an eye unto his blood? Then is his blood sprinkled upon my posts, and applied unto me.

If that you do walk in the light, as God is in the light; then the blood of Jesus hath been, and is, sprinkled upon you, and applied to you; 1 John i. vii.: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." If we walk in the light as he is in the light? What is that? How is God and Christ in the light? Why he is in the light certainly in regard of grace and holiness. So he is in the light, and to that purpose the apostle speaks here. So then, although you cannot walk in the light of comfort, but as a child of light walking in darkness; yet if you do walk in the light of holiness, walk in the light as God is in the light; then certainly the blood of Jesus Christ hath cleansed you, and so hath been sprinkled upon you.

If you are indeed separated and set apart for God, and for

the work and service of God, then is the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon you. He that is dipt in this blood of sprinkling, is separated. You shall observe that when the priests were consecrated, the tip of the right ear was sprinkled with blood, and the thumb of the right hand, and the toe of the right foot. And not only the priests when they were consecrated were so sprinkled; but when a man was cleansed from his leprosy, he was so sprinkled also. You have them both in Leviticus concerning Aaron. Lev. viii. 23: "He slew the ram, and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." Thus in regard of Aaron. In regard of the leprosy, you have it in Lev. xiv.: "And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand, shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering." And so in regard of blood as well as of oil. What is the meaning of this, that the tip of the right ear was to be touched with blood, and the thumb of the right hand was to be touched with blood, and the toe of the right foot with blood, both when the priest was consecrated, and when the leprosy was cleansed? But to shew thus much, that the whole man is to be set apart for God. The ear of his understanding and knowing part is to be set aside for God. The thumb of his right hand, the believing part (by faith we lay hold), is to be set apart for God. And the great toe of the right foot, the practical part of life and conversation; the whole man is to be set apart for God where this sprinkling comes. So that look therefore, when a man is set apart for the worship and service of God, ear, and hand, and foot, set apart for the worship and service of God; then he is said to be sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling.

Once more, If that you have had such a prospect of Christ crucified, and have seen what great and wonderful things Christ hath done and suffered, insomuch as your hearts have been astonished therewithal; then have your souls been sprinkled with this blood. See how they go together, Isa. lii. 13, 14, 15: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high, (speaking

of Christ). As many were astonished at him, (his visage was so marred, more than any man's, and his form, more than the sons of men,) so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them, shall they see, and that which they had not heard, shall they consider." Where this blood is sprinkled there comes astonishment at the mirror, and wisdom and mystery of a crucified Christ. So that thus now you see that we are come unto this blood of sprinkling: and how a man shall know whether his own soul be sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling in particular. And is this a small matter?

Fourthly. The fourth thing tells us it is a privilege, and a very great privilege to come unto the blood of sprinkling; it is a very great privilege to be sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling.

It was a very great privilege for the Jews to have a sacrifice at hand when they had committed sin, to have the blood of sprinkling by them. But, alas, what is that to this; what was that sacrifice to this of Christ, and what was that blood to this of Christ, and what was that sprinkling unto this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus? Look what difference is between the type and the thing typified; look what difference there is between the blood of bulls and goats, and the blood of Jesus; look what difference between carnal and spiritual things: so great a difference is there between the coming to the blood of bulls and goats, and the coming to and being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

Let me open this a little to you, if you be indeed come unto this blood of sprinkling, and be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus,

Then look whatsoever benefits do flow from the blood of Jesus: all those do belong to you. And do you well consider what are the benefits that do flow from the blood of Jesus. Let me name some to you.

Thereby, in the general, we have redemption: "In whom we have redemption through his blood," saith Paul, Eph. i.

Thereby the covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed, Heb. ix., at large.

Thereby the church of God is purchased, Acts xx. purchased by his blood; by the blood of God.

Thereby the wall of partition made between Jew and gentile, God and us is broken down. Eph. ii. 13.

Thereby all things in heaven and earth are reconciled. Col. i. 20.

Thereby are your souls justified and your sins pardoned : " In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins," Eph. i.

Thereby are you washed and cleansed and sanctified : " The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all iniquity," 1 John i.

Thereby is your great adversary, Satan, routed and overcome and spoiled : " They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb," Rev. xii.

Thereby Christ is made welcome by his Father when he comes into heaven in your name to intercede for you. In the times of the old testament the high priest went into the holy of holiest, and carried blood, and sprinkled the mercy-seat seven times ; but the high priest did not sit down. Now in Heb. x. 11, it is said, " And every high priest *standeth* daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin ; but this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down* at the right hand of God the Father." The high priest did not, then, sit down ; but now when Christ comes into heaven with your names upon his heart, to sprinkle the mercy-seat with his blood ; Come my Son, saith the Father, sit down and welcome upon this account.

And thereby, also, have you entrance into the holy of holiest, as in Heb. x.

And if, indeed, you be sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling, then are you at one with the mercy-seat. It is the same blood that is sprinkled upon the mercy-seat in heaven that is sprinkled upon your souls here on earth. The same blood, in the time of the old testament, that was sprinkled upon the people was sprinkled upon the altar and the mercy-seat ; so the same blood that is now in heaven, sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, is sprinkled upon your hearts.

If you are sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling, then all the promises are yours, for all the promises are yea and amen in Christ ; and if Christ's blood be sprinkled on you, and applied to you, then may you apply the promises to yourselves.

And if, indeed, you be sprinkled with this blood of sprin-

kling, then are all things clean unto you ; for as the blood of sprinkling is sprinkled upon your souls, so are all your enjoyments to be sprinkled with it.

And if you be indeed sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, then may you go away and say, Now are all the blessings of the covenant mine. The day that you are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, you may say, Now know I that my sins are pardoned : mercy is mine, and pardon is mine, and adoption is mine. As when the psalmist had a sight of God, he cried out and said, “ Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine ;” so the day that you have this sight of God, in being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, you may cry out and say, not, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine ; but, Pardon is mine, and adoption is mine, and heaven is mine, and God is mine for ever. Oh, who would not labour to get his soul sprinkled now with the blood of sprinkling !

Fifthly. You will say, in the fifth and last place, It is a great privilege to be sprinkled with the blood of sprinkling. We grant it. But what shall we do that even we may get our souls sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, the blood of sprinkling ?

First of all you must know that there is a twofold sprinkling with the blood of sprinkling. There is an initial sprinkling, and a renewed sprinkling. As there is an initial repentance and a renewed repentance, so there is an initial sprinkling and a renewed sprinkling.

An initial sprinkling, and that is a man’s first conversion, when he is justified, according to that in 1 Cor. vi. 11, “ Such were some of you ; but you are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Here is the initial sprinkling.

The renewed sprinkling is upon a twofold account ; upon the account of some great sin committed, and upon the account of some special duty to be performed.

A fresh sprinkling there must be upon some great sin committed. So in the list Psalm, saith David, “ Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.” He had sinned a great sin, but his sin was pardoned. Psalm li., title : “ A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came unto him ;” that was, after Nathan came to him. And what did Nathan say ? He told him his sin was pardoned. Yet saith David, “ Purge me

with hyssop ;” I must have a fresh sprinkling : after some great sin committed there must be a fresh sprinkling with the blood of Jesus.

And upon duty to be performed, especially some great duty to be performed, there must also be a fresh sprinkling. In Heb. x. 22, Paul saith, “ Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Why our bodies washed with pure water ? It relates to the washings in the old testament : when the priests were to come to offer a sacrifice, there was a laver, and they were then to wash themselves ; so saith the apostle, “ Let us draw near to God, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,” because upon a new address to God, a fresh sprinkling with the blood of Jesus is to be had. It is not enough to have an old sprinkling with the blood of Jesus, but upon all our approaches to God, especially after some great sin committed or some special duty to be performed, we must come and get a fresh sprinkling with the blood of Jesus.

You must know also that though you have been very great sinners, yet you are not incapable of this sprinkling with the blood of Jesus. The apostle saith in that place of the Corinthians : “ Such were some of you.” What such ? ver. 9 : “ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you ; but ye are washed,” how ? why “ ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” which sprinkles, which applies the blood of Christ. So then, though ye have been great sinners, yet you are not incapable of being sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling.

You must know this also, that there is nothing not this side the blood of Jesus, this blood of sprinkling, that can cleanse you. If any thing should bid for our cleansing, methinks it should be our sufferings and persecutions for the name of God. But look into Rev. vii. 14, it is said : “ These are they which came out of great tribulations, and have

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They have washed their robes. How? what with their "great tribulations?" No, they came out of great tribulations, but their tribulations do not wash them. "These are they that came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Nothing on this side Christ, and this blood of sprinkling, can cleanse your souls. But,

Though there be nothing on this side Christ that can cleanse your souls but the blood of Jesus; yet it is the Spirit of Christ that must sprinkle it. The blood of Jesus is then sprinkled when it is applied; now this is the work of the Holy Ghost, "I will sprinkle you with clean water," I will wash you with water. As it is a derogation to the blood of Christ to go to any else for cleansing; so it is a derogation to the Spirit of Christ to go to any else for sprinkling, or to go to any else for that application of the blood of Christ. It is only the Spirit of Christ that must sprinkle this blood upon your and my soul.

Though this sprinkling must be done only by the Spirit; yet notwithstanding this blood of Jesus is sprinkled by the ordinance in the hand of the Spirit, by the preaching of the gospel. He preaches not, that sprinkles not the blood of Christ in preaching; and especially by that great ordinance of the Lord's supper. You may observe therefore, that the same words that were used in the Old Testament when they sprinkled the blood, "This is the blood of the covenant," as in Heb. ix., are used by our Saviour Christ at the Lord's supper: This cup is the New Testament in my blood, &c." Why so? but to shew thus much, that this ordinance of the Lord's supper is the hyssop in the hand of the Spirit, whereby the souls of believers are sprinkled with a fresh sprinkling. Oh, therefore, who would not come to this ordinance of the Lord's supper in a right way and manner.

But then again, you must know also that you must come for sprinkling with the greatest sense of unworthiness that may be. If you look into the sixth of Numbers, you shall find that he that sprinkled the blood, was to be unclean until the evening, verse 7. "Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean

until the evening." At verse 6: "The priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer; and then the priest shall wash his clothes, and come into the camp, and shall be unclean until the evening." And at verse 8: "He that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation; it is a purification for sin, and he that gathered the ashes of the heifer, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening." What is all this? but to shew thus much, that they might not come to this sacred expiation, but with the greatest sense of their unworthiness. Plainly shewing thus much: that there is no meddling with this blood of sprinkling but with the greatest sense of our unworthiness of the blood of Jesus. Now therefore, do you desire that you may be sprinkled with this blood of sprinkling; then, whensoever you go to the blood of Jesus, and look upon it, go with the greatest sense of your unworthiness of this blood; then go to the Spirit of God, whose work above it is, to apply and sprinkle, and then stand and wait where the Spirit stands with his hyssop to sprinkle the souls of men. And so shall you be made partakers of this great privilege.

But suppose that I be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and that this blood of sprinkling hath indeed fallen upon my soul, what is my duty then?

Then, "Go away and doubt no more." When the sinning Jew was sprinkled, do you think he doubted whether he were pardoned or no? No surely, he did believe that he was pardoned, and that he was in covenant with God. For those words were used, This is the blood of the covenant. And shall you be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and will you doubt whether you be in covenant with the Lord by grace or no! &c.

This blood of sprinkling speaketh, and you have heard what it speaks. Now then I pray take heed that you do not refuse him that speaketh from heaven. Mark how it follows in the very next words to the text: "We are come to the

blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." Why, man or woman, it is Jesus that speaketh to thee, Jesus the Mediator of the covenant that speaks unto you to believe. What, are you sprinkled? go away then and doubt no more; but take heed that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.

And then also conclude and say, Now know I that I shall be preserved from the destroyer. When the Israelites' posts were sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, they could say, Now know I that I shall not be destroyed by this destroying angel. Art thou sprinkled with the blood of Jesus? say then, Now know I that I shall not be destroyed, but that the angel shall pass over me in the destroying day.

Then also go away and be contented with your condition whatever it be. And well you may. If you be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, you are made partakers of the greatest privilege that can be, and will you not then be contented with your condition? Go away and be contented with your condition, saying, I have now received the greatest privilege, for I am sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, therefore will I be contented with my condition whatever it be.

And then go away and praise God and be very thankful. Be very thankful to God the Father, and to the Lamb with whose blood you are sprinkled. Look into Rev. v., and you shall find there are three choirs of praisers, and all praising upon the account of this blood. And when he had opened the book, verse 9, "the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song." The four and twenty elders (these are men) saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." By thy blood; here is the foot of the song.

Then comes in the angels, another choir, praising God, verse 11. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." See the foot of the song still; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Men praise upon this account, angels praise upon this account also.

There is a third choir, and those are other creatures, verse 14: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The word *slain* is not there, but "To the Lamb," that is all one. Now shall there be such praising God upon that account, for the Lamb's being slain; and are you indeed most concerned, and sprinkled with this blood of Jesus, this Lamb, and will not you praise God? Oh, go away and be for ever thankful.

Go away and sin no more; be not defiled with sin, for you see it cost dear to cleanse you: the blood of sprinkling, the blood of Jesus.

And go away and honour God yet more in believing. It may be there are some here, that never honoured God to this day with a believing smile. Man, woman, art thou sprinkled, indeed sprinkled with the blood of Jesus? Go away then, and honour the Lord with one smile of faith this day.

And to conclude all. Art thou indeed sprinkled with the blood of Jesus? then go away and be sure that you never sell your birth-right for a mess of pottage. Mark how this text comes in. In Heb. xii., the apostle speaking of profane Esau, "Take heed (saith he) lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright: for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears: for ye are not come to mount Sinai, but ye are come to mount Sion, and ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." What then? Oh, take heed you do not sell your birth-right for a mess of pottage. What is your birth-right? The gospel is your birth-right, you are born thereto, through grace. And what is your little estate, but a mess of pottage; and what is your great estate, but a great bowl of pottage. Oh, do not sell your birth-right for a mess of pottage. You are sprinkled, and the blood of sprinkling is upon you; then hold fast, keep your birth-right,

and never sell it for a mess of pottage: "For ye are come unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." And thus now I have done with the fourth argument, and with this text.

Think on these things, and the Lord bless them to you.

SERMON VII.

THE SWEETNESS AND PROFITABLENESS OF DIVINE MEDITATION.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet."—Psalm civ. 34.

THE psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving, wherein the psalmist doth call upon and provoke himself to praise the Lord, upon the account of his greatness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty," verse 1.

Which greatness of God is illustrated by the work of creation and preservation.

By the work of creation, from the 2nd verse unto the 25th.

By the work of preservation, from the 25th unto the 33rd.

Having called upon himself thus to praise the Lord, he resolves to do it: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being."

And, saith he, "My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord."

"My meditation of him shall be sweet."

Take the words as they lie in themselves. and you have this doctrine presently:

That it is a sweet thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God. Meditation work is sweet work. A gracious soul doth find sweetness in meditating on God. David was a gracious man, and he found sweetness in this work of meditation on God. It is the property then of a gracious soul, to find sweetness in meditating on God.

For the opening and prosecuting of which argument:

First, We will inquire what this meditation is; what is the true nature and notion of meditation.

Secondly, How and in what respects a man may be said to meditate on God.

Thirdly, How it may appear, that it is a sweet thing to meditate on God and the things of God.

Fourthly, I shall answer unto some objections.

Fifthly, And then show how the work of meditation is to be carried on with sweetness; which is my design in the choice of these words.

First, As for what the work of meditation is, what is the true notion of it; it is several ways expressed in Scripture.

Sometimes it is called, a remembering of God. In Psalm lxiii., "When I remember thee upon my bed," which is explained by that which follows, "And meditate on thee in the night watches."

Sometimes it is called, a thinking on God. So in Psalm xlviii. 9, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God."

And sometimes it is called a musing on God. And so in Psalm cxliii., "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands." Thus it is severally expressed in Scripture.

Great authors do describe it several ways.

It is a vehement application of the soul unto a thing, for the investigation and experimental knowledge thereof. So Gerson and others.

It is a studious action of the mind, whereby a man labours to find out some hidden truth. So Austin.

It is the exercise of a man's soul, whereby calling to remembrance what he doth know already, he doth further think on it, and debate on it within himself, for his own profit and benefit. So Mr. Greenham.

But plainly and briefly thus:

It is the vehement or intense application of the soul unto some thing, whereby a man's mind doth ponder, dwell and fix upon it, for his own profit and benefit.

There must be the application of the soul to some thing; and therefore sometimes it is expressed by laying of a thing to heart: "The righteous are taken away, and no man lays it to heart;" no man considers on it. "If ye will not lay these things to heart," &c. Mal. ii. 2.

And as there must be an application, so there must be a vehement and intense application of the soul unto a thing,

for every consideration does not make meditation : consideration heightened makes meditation.

Meditation is the work of the whole soul. The mind acts, and the memory acts, and the affections act. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart:" it is an intense and a vehement application of the soul unto truth.

But there must be also a fixation of the soul upon the thing. It is not every slight and transient thought that makes meditation : "My meditation shall be of thee all the day," Psalm cxix. It is *Actio cunctabunda*, saith Alvares. A man may think on God every day, and meditate on God no day. There must be a fixation of the soul upon some truth ; a dwelling and fixing of the soul upon some thing.

But then this must be in reference to one's own profit and benefit. Though I do think, and think much of sin, if I do not think thereof to leave it, it is not meditation. Though I think on the life and the death of Christ, if it be not to conform unto him, these thoughts will not amount to meditation. Though I think on the love and goodness of God, yet if it be not to get my heart inflamed with love thereby, it will not amount to meditation.

Plainly, then, meditation, for the true nature and the notion of it, is a vehement, an intense application of the soul unto a thing, whereby a man's mind doth dwell and insist and abide upon it for his profit and benefit. That is the first.

Secondly. But, then, how and in what respects may a man be said to meditate on God ?

Why look when a man doth meditate on the name, nature, titles and attributes of God, then he is said to meditate on God.

On the nature of God. So in the lxiiird Psalm : "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

And look when a man doth meditate on Christ the Son of God, then he is said for to meditate on God, for Christ is God ; and therefore saith the apostle, "Consider the High Priest of your profession, looking unto Jesus."

And look when a man doth meditate on the word of God, the law and statutes of God, then he is said to meditate on God. Psalm i., "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate."

And look when a man doth meditate on the works and concernments of God, then, in scripture phrase, he is said to meditate on God. And so in the lxxviith Psalm: "I will remember the works of the Lord; I will remember thy wonders, and I will meditate also of all thy works." So that, briefly, then a man is said to meditate on God, not only when he doth meditate on the nature of God, but when he doth meditate on the Son of God, meditate on the word of God, meditate on the works and concernments of God. And that is the second.

Thirdly. But how may it appear that it is a sweet thing to meditate on God; that meditation work is sweet work, and that it is a sweet thing to a gracious soul to meditate on God?

Something first in the general and then more particularly in reference to a gracious soul. In general,

It is a sweet thing to meditate on God. Will you instance in the nature, name and attributes of God?

Is it not a sweet thing to enjoy God? Enjoyment of God is the life of our lives. And how do we enjoy God? God doth come down to us, and we do ascend and go up to him. Sometimes God doth come down into our souls; sometimes there is an ascent of the soul unto God. And what is the ladder whereby we ascend unto God, and take our turns in heaven with God, but believing meditation?

The more perfect any thing is, the more sweet it is to lay out one's thought thereon. Now God is all perfection, there is nothing not perfect in God. If you have a nosegay made up of flowers, and but one weed, the sweetness of the nosegay is spoiled; there are perfections in God, and no weeds among them. If there be a musical instrument, and one string out of order, all jars; there is no string out of order among God's perfections; perfections and nothing not perfect in God. You account it a sweet thing to see your lands and your estates lie together, a sweet thing to see all your children together; do but look and meditate on God, and you see all your wealth lie together.

And if the names, titles, attributes of God be your relief in all conditions; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God, in this respect. Why now; "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous fly thereunto and

are safe." A sweet thing it is therefore to meditate on God in this respect.

Will you instance in the meditating on Christ the Son of God? You know what is said by the spouse in the Canticles: "I sat under his shadow:" sat down, how? It is meditation sets the soul down under the shadow of Christ. And then his fruit, whether justification be the fruit, or sanctification, or consolation; then his fruit was sweet unto my taste.

And if Jesus Christ be our standing relief against all temptations, and desertions; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate and think much on him. Now he is our brazen serpent, our standing relief against all our temptations, and our desertions.

But will you instance in meditating on the word of God? It is a sweet thing to behold the light; and the word is a light, and a lanthorn unto our feet. Is it not a sweet thing to taste honey? David saith, "The word of the Lord was as honey and the honey comb." And the more it is meditated on, the more fully tasted.

And if the consideration, and the meditation of the word of God be our great relief against all the scorns and reproaches, and oppositions of the world, then certainly it is a sweet thing to meditate on the word of God. Now do but look into Ps. cxix., and you shall find David speaking thus; "Remove from me reproach and contempt; princes did sit and speak against me." What relief had he? "But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Here is his relief, princes, great men; they sate and spake against me, and they reproached me, and they opposed me, but here was my relief, I did meditate in thy word.

But will you instance in the works of the Lord? There are three sorts of God's works.

There is the work of creation.

And the work of providence.

And the work of redemption.

As for the work of creation: if it be a sweet thing to behold and to consider the workmanship of the finger of human wisdom: what a pleasure and sweetness is it to behold the workmanship of the finger of infinite wisdom?

And as for the works of providence: if the meditation and

the consideration of the providence of God be our great help against the pain of unbelieving thoughts ; then it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God in this respect. Friends, ye that know God, have experienced how painful unbelieving thoughts are ; great is the pain of unbelieving thoughts. Well, but what help against this pain ? The consideration of the providence of God : saith our Saviour in Matt. x. " The very hairs of your head are all numbered, fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." What then, " take no thought," here lies your relief. The consideration, and the meditation of the special providence of God, is your help against painful unbelief.

And as for the work of redemption, there all the attributes of God do meet : there is wisdom, there is power, there is mercy, there is righteousness, there is faithfulness : and if it be a sweet thing to behold the beams of the sun, what a sweet thing is it to behold all the beams of God's glorious attributes, meeting in one work ; which work the very angels desire to look into, where the glory of God is : certainly, it is a sweet thing then to meditate on God, in regard of his works ; these things more generally.

But now more particularly, as to our case.

How may it appear, that it is a sweet thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God : it will appear to you by divers arguments.

It is a sweet thing for a good and gracious man to meditate on God and the things of God, because it is natural to him. Natural works are pleasant works. It is a tedious and an irksome thing to row against the stream of nature ; but natural works are pleasing works. Now as it is a natural thing for a worldly man to think and meditate on the world, and the things thereof ; so it is natural to a gracious man, to think and meditate on God and the things of God. I pray, what is the reason, that wicked men take so much delight in thinking and meditating and musing on their sins and sinful ways, but because sin is natural unto them. Why, a good man being made partaker of the divine nature, it is natural to him to think on God, and the ways and things of God ; and therefore pleasant, therefore sweet.

But as it is natural to a gracious man to think on God, and the things of God, so it is suitable to him. As it is a

natural work, so it is a suitable work: suitable things are pleasant; the more suitable any thing is unto us, the more it pleaseth us, all pleasures and delights arise from the conjunction of suitables. If you have never so great an estate, if it be not suited to your heart, you have no delight in it. If you have never so small an estate, if it be suitable to your heart, you are delighted and pleased in it. Now, what in all the world, so suitable to a gracious soul as God? Is the object of man's understanding truth? God is truth. Is the object of his will good? God is good. Is the object of his affections love? God is love. Is the soul of a man immortal, immaterial? God is so, an immortal, and an immaterial being. Is the soul of a man eternal, a *parte post*? God is so, God is eternal and unchangeable. Are our desires infinite? God is infinite. What is there that the soul of man can want, but it is answered in God? A suitable good he is surely, therefore it must needs be a sweet thing to meditate on God, and the things of God.

But especially, as it is a suitable thing for a gracious soul to meditate on God, so it is profitable. Gain is sweet. Now it is a very gainful thing, and very profitable for to meditate on God, and the things of God: meditation work is gainful work.

For meditation is a great help to knowledge: the more you think and meditate on what you read and hear, the more you know; and though you read never so much and hear never so much, if you do not meditate on what you read or hear, it will amount to little, you will be never the wiser: if a man doth meditate, he proves the wiser. Mark what David saith, Ps. cxix., "I am wiser than mine enemies," verse 98. "I am wiser than my teachers, I am wiser than the ancients," verse 99. "Through thy commandments thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies." It may be so, they might be fools. But saith he, "I have more understanding than all my teachers." verse 99. Aye, but this teacher may be some young man, newly come to the university. I have more understanding than all my teachers. Aye, but, saith he, "I understand more than the ancients." Pray how? "For thy testimonies are my meditation. Through thy commandments, thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all

my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation," *Meditatio sapientiæ parens*, meditation is the parent of wisdom. If you read over a book, and there be many notions and good things in the book, yet if the notions be not made your own, if you be not master of the notions you read, you are never the better. If I read, and read, and find such and such notions in a book, if I be not master of those notions, I am little the better for my reading. It is meditation that makes you the master of the notions that you read, or that you hear, otherwise, it is but the book's notion still. By meditation after a sermon, a man may look further into a truth, than the preacher ever intended. Meditation is a great help to knowledge : that is the first.

As meditation is a great help to knowledge, so it is a great friend to memory. *Meditatio firmat memoriam*. Meditation strengthens memory ; it fastens the things that we hear or read in the memory. Many complain they have bad memories. Oh, their memories are very bad, they cannot remember ; what is the reason that we remember no more what we read and what we hear, but because we meditate no more upon what we have heard or read ? Meditation is a great help to memory.

As meditation is a great help to memory, so it is a heart warming work, a friend to warmth of heart. If a thing be cold, you chafe it, if a man's body be cold, you chafe it and rub it ; and by chafing and rubbing of a cold part, you put life and warmth into it ; meditation chafes the soul, and rubs the soul with a truth. And what is the reason that our hearts are no warmer by what we read, or hear, or observe, but because we meditate no more on it. Meditation is a heart warming work.

As it is a heart warming work, so it is that which will keep your hearts and souls from sinful thoughts. When the vessel is full you can put in no more. If the vessel be full of puddle water, you cannot put in wine ; if the vessel be full of wine you cannot put in puddle water. If the heart be full of sinful thoughts, here is no room for holy and heavenly thoughts ; if the heart be filled with holy and heavenly thoughts by meditation, there is no room for evil and sinful thoughts. And what is the reason that men's hearts are so full of sinful and evil thoughts, but because their

hearts are no more full of God; they think no more, they meditate no more of God. Thereby, I say, you will be kept from sinful thoughts.

As it will keep you from sinful thoughts, so it will fit and tune your hearts for every duty. For prayer, for thanksgiving, for holy conference and communication of good things to others.

For prayer, it is *Orationis Mater*, &c.

As it is the sister of reading, so it is the mother of prayer. Though a man's heart be much indisposed to prayer, yet, if he can but fall into a meditation of God, and the things of God, his heart will soon come off to prayer. Meditation lies so near unto prayer, that in the Hebrew, the word that signifies to pray, signifies to meditate. And therefore you shall observe, that whereas in some books it is said that, "Isaac went out to pray," in other books it is said that "Isaac went out to meditate." Meditation is a friend to prayer.

And it is a friend to thanksgiving; and therefore saith the Psalmist here in the text, "I will sing praise unto my God, my meditation of him shall be sweet;" they go together.

And it is a great help unto holy conference, which I am afraid is too much wanting among us. Private meditation on God and the things of God, is a great help unto holy conference. *Psa. xlv. 1*: "My heart is inditing a good matter." What then? "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." When? When the heart hath been at work in meditation, *Psa. lxxvii. 12*: "I will meditate also on all thy works." What then? "and talk of thy doings." See how conference comes in: "I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of all thy doings." So that thus then, meditation will fit and prepare you, and tune your hearts to prayer, thanksgiving, holy conference, and other duties.

As meditation is a great friend to prayer and to other duties, so it is a help unto growth in grace, and the knowledge of Christ.

A help to grow: the more we meditate on what we read and hear, the more we grow. And what is the reason that men grow no more after all that they have heard and read, but because they meditate no more. The best scholar reads

and meditates, and meditates and reads. And the best christian reads and meditates, and hears and meditates. The growing christian doth. Suppose now you have a load of dung or marl to lay upon the ground, you lay it upon the ground to make it fat and fruitful ; but if it be laid upon the ground and not spread, will it make the grass or the corn grow ? No, it will hinder the growth of the grass ; the spreading of it makes the grass grow. So now, come and lay down a load of truth upon a poor soul, and let it lie unspread, it rather hinders his growth ; but the hand of meditation spreads it. And, I say, What is the reason that men grow no more, but because it may be sermons, or truths, like loads, are laid down upon the soul, but no spreading by the hand of meditation.

As meditation work is a great friend to growth in grace, so thereby also your hearts shall be kept savoury and spiritual in the midst of all your outward and worldly employments. Oh, saith one, that my heart were but more savoury and spiritual in all my outward employments, and in my calling. Why meditation carries a still up and down in the soul, whereby it doth extract and distil the virtue and the juice of all the leaves of Providence, that it meets with in the calling. You see how it is with a cow, or with a sheep, though the grass that the cow or the sheep eats be green ; yet by concoction and digesting of it, it turns white, and turns into milk ; so now, though that which you read, that which you meet withal in your callings be but ordinarily as the common grass, yet if you can digest it, it will be milk unto you. And how are these things digested but by meditation ?

Friends, thereby you steal out of your calling to get unto God.

Thereby your hearts are perfumed as you walk along in your calling and in your place.

This is that that will keep your hearts savoury and spiritual in all your outward and worldly employments.

Thereby also you shall fill up all the chinks and crevices of your lives and spend your spare times for God. There is no man but hath his spare times, more or less ; some more, some less, but all have their spare times. That, look as it is with a book, all books have their margins, some books

have a greater margin, some a lesser and a narrower margin, but all books have their margins ; so all men have their margins, their spare times ; some have a greater margin, and more time to spare than others, some have a lesser and a narrower margin, and less spare time than others. But all men have their margins and their spare times. Some men know not what to do with their spare time, therefore they call in for dice, and call in for cards, and call in for vanity. Some when they are out of employment, they dare not be alone. Have but the skill of meditation to meditate on God and the things of God, and you will never be afraid to be alone ; your margins will be all filled up, all the chinks and crevices of your lives shall be all filled up with God. Therefore, oh, what a profitable thing is this work of meditation.

Thereby you shall be also able to draw good out of evil, there is the philosopher's stone. What a great ado hath there been in the world about the philosopher's stone, to get that. Why ? Because of the profit of it ; thereby lead is turned into gold, and other metals turned into gold. But here is the philosopher's stone indeed ; meditation will turn all into gold ; turn evils into good, bring good out of evil, grace out of sin. There is a deal of dirt lies at your door, and there is no flowers grow out of it ; but bring the same dirt into your garden, and then flowers grow out of it. So now, if sin lie at your door, there are no flowers grow thereon ; but bring your sin, your dirt into your garden of meditation, and you shall have flowers grow out of your dirt.

Thereby you shall converse with God and enjoy God. The happiness of our life lies in our enjoyment of God, and in our converse with God. There is a converse with God in this life, a *πολιτευμα* our conversation is in heaven, our trade is in heaven. And how do we come to trade in heaven ? Why, we go up to God in meditation, and there we take our walks with the Almighty ; thus we trade with God, thus we converse with God. Surely therefore, this work of meditation is sweet, for it is profitable, as you have heard in these particulars.

Again, As the work of meditation is very profitable, natural, suitable, so it is very contentful, and satisfying to a gracious soul. What person in love is not satisfied in thinking and meditating on the person loved ? What gracious, loving

child is not satisfied in thinking on its father that is absent in another country? See what David saith in the lxiird Psalm: "My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness." When? "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." I shall not only be contented, but my soul shall be satisfied. How? In a way of meditation. It is meditation work that is soul-satisfying work.

And as it is a soul-satisfying work, so this work of meditation to a gracious soul is a most delightful work. What greater delight than to think on that God in whom he doth most delight? Is it delightful to a wicked man to sit and muse and meditate on his sinful ways; and will it not be delightful to a gracious soul to sit, and think, and muse, and meditate on the Lord? Certainly, it is a work that is most delightful to a gracious soul.

But how can it be so delightful; it is a hard work, meditation work is hard work, and therefore how can it be so delightful to a gracious soul?

Yes, very well, for though it be hard in regard of its practice, yet it may be sweet and delightful in regard of its profit. Is it not a hard work to the husbandman to plough, to sow, to reap; and yet delightful in regard of its profit? Is it not a hard work for a man to be digging in the mines, digging up of silver; and yet delightful in regard of the profit? Is it not a hard work for a man to make such ventures at sea, through all storms: and yet it is delightful in regard of its profit? the profit of the voyage makes it delightful. Why, you have heard now the profitableness of the work of meditation. It is an help to knowledge, thereby your knowledge is raised. Thereby your memory is strengthened. Thereby your hearts are warmed. Thereby you will be freed from sinful thoughts. Thereby your hearts will be tuned to every duty. Thereby you will grow in grace. Thereby you will fill up all the chinks and crevices of your lives, and know how to spend your spare time, and improve that for God. Thereby you will draw good out of evil. And thereby you will converse with God, have communion with God, and enjoy God. And I pray, is not here profit enough to sweeten the voyage of your thoughts in meditation.

But, hard work you say, and therefore how can it be delightful?

Friends, the harder the work is, the sweeter it is, being overcome: it is a sweet thing to overcome. It is a hard thing to fight, but it is a sweet thing to overcome. The harder the nut is to crack, the sweeter the meat when it is cracked; the harder the scripture is that is to be opened, the sweeter is the kernel, the truth when it is opened. When God opened the rock, the waters that flowed out were as sweet as honey. Now meditation makes a conquest of the work.

Though it be a hard thing to meditate on God and the things of God, yet notwithstanding do but consider why the work is hard, and you will say that the difficulty of the work is no impeachment to the suavity, or the sweetness thereof. There are two things that make meditation hard.

The one is, because men are not used thereunto, men are not exercised therein:

And another is, because they do not love God enough.

Every thing is hard at the first: writing is hard at the first, painting hard at the first, and the getting languages hard at the first. A trade is hard at the first. So certainly the work of meditation will be hard at the first. There is nothing not hard to those that are unwilling. There is nothing hard to those that love, love makes all things easy. Is it an hard thing for a lover to think or meditate on the person loved? Is it a hard thing for a child at a distance from his father to think or meditate on his father, and his father's love and kindness, is this hard? Indeed to a rebellious child it is hard, to a child that is run away from his father it is hard; but for a loving and an obedient child, it is not hard. And what is the reason that the work of meditation is so hard to many of us, but because in truth we are not used thereunto, or because we are rebellious children, and do not love the Lord as we ought to do.

But you will say, may not a wicked man meditate on God, and find sweetness in the work?

I answer, that it is possible that a wicked man may separate and sequester himself unto this work of reading, studying, and thinking on the word and law of God. 1 Sam. xxi. 7. "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord, and his name was Doeg." He was there separated, cloistered for the studying of the law, and yet a Doeg, a great persecutor. And who doth not

see it? Friars and monks separate and cloister up themselves at this very day, and spend much time in that which they call meditation.

Yea, possible it is, that a wicked man may not only think and meditate on the law of God, but he may find some sweetness therein; for if wicked men do delight in their approach unto God, as in Isaiah lviii. why may they not delight also and find a sweetness in their meditation concerning God?

But though a wicked man may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness in the work of meditation, yet with this difference. There is great deal of difference between the sweetness that a wicked man finds in the work of meditation, and the sweetness that a good man finds in the work of meditation. For though a wicked man may meditate, and find some sweetness in the work, yet notwithstanding the sweetness doth arise from the satisfaction of his natural conscience, than from the con-naturalness and suitableness that is between his heart and the work. Possibly a Doeg, a wicked man may be convinced that he ought to read the Scriptures, and to meditate therein, and having done so his conscience is satisfied, and he finds sweetness therein. But this sweetness doth rather arise from the satisfying of his natural conscience, than from any con-naturalness and suitableness that there is between his heart and the work.

It is one thing for a man to find a sweetness in this work of meditation in reference to his own employment, calling or livelihood; another thing for to find a sweetness in it in reference unto God, to his own practice, and holiness of life and conversation. Suppose I be a preacher: it is my duty to study the Scriptures: and studying of the Scripture I meditate, and when things come off well, I have a sweetness therein; yet all this may be in reference to my calling, to my employment, and to my livelihood. But now a gracious man he meditates on God and the things of God in reference to God, to his holiness and practice. Mark what David saith, Psalm cxix., "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes." "Lord, (saith he,) I love thy commandments:" and upon that account I meditate in thy commandments: and I do not only meditate, but "my hands

also will I lift up unto thy commandments.” For practice, I will not only lay my eye to reading, I will not only lay my head to studying, but my *hands* also will I lift up unto thy commandments ; to take hold on them, and to practise them. So that thus a gracious soul, as he meditates on God and the things of God, he finds a sweetness ; so it is in reference unto God, and to his own practice and holiness in conversation.

But though a wicked man may meditate on God and the things of God, and find a sweetness in so doing ; yet he doth also find as great, if not a greater sweetness in other things, and in meditating and musing upon his sins, and in the world, Job xx. 12., “ Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth,” as a sweet pellet ; here is his great delight. Though he may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness there, his great delight is here, in his sin ; and he finds rather, more delight and pleasure in musing on his sin and sinful course, and meditating on the world and the things thereof, than he finds in meditating on God and the things of God. But now a gracious man delights in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate : why, but doth he not also stand in the counsel of the ungodly ? No, “ he walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate.” He standeth not in the way of sinners : possibly he may meet with sinners, and wicked men occasionally ; but he doth not walk with them ordinarily, he doth not stand with them, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate.

But to say no more. Take a wicked man, and though he may meditate on God and the things of God, and find some sweetness therein, he doth not do this ordinarily, meditate ordinarily, and continually, “ God is not in all his thoughts.” God may be in some of his thoughts, but God is not in all his thoughts. But this meditation of God and the things of God is the ordinary work of a good man, he delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night. Meditation on God and the things of God is his ordinary work ; so that thus now you see the difference, and

thus you see the doctrine cleared. It is a sweet thing to a gracious soul to meditate on God and the things of God; meditation work is sweet work to a gracious soul. Sweet, for it is natural; sweet, for it is suitable; sweet, for it is profitable; sweet, for it is satisfying; sweet, for it is delightful. And if these things be so,

What shall we say of those that never spent any time yet alone in meditating on God and the things of God? Never spent a day, never spent half a day, never spent an hour in private meditating on God and the things of God. Shall we say these are godly? Why, in the time of the Old Testament the beasts were unclean that did not chew the cud; in the New Testament it is made the property of the highway ground, that the seed falls upon it, and it is not covered over with meditation and consideration.

What, is it the property of a gracious soul to meditate on God, and doth he find so much sweetness in meditating on God and the things of God; and have I lived twenty years, have I lived thirty years, have I lived forty years, and never spent an hour yet in private in meditation on God and the things of God, how can I think I am godly?

If this doctrine be true, that a gracious, holy man finds a sweetness in meditating on God, and meditation work is sweet work to a gracious soul, then, friends, why should you not all labour to be found here, in this work of meditation? I fear we are strangers hereunto; many come and hear sermons, and write sermons one time after another, and afterwards they stand up upon dusty shelves, and are never meditated on. But is this true, that a gracious man finds so much sweetness in the work of meditation, and that it is so profitable a work; why should we not all labour to be found herein?

You will say then unto me, Meditation is a sweet work we confess, and very profitable; but what should I do that I may be able to carry on this work of meditation with sweetness? I have found it hard sometimes, and after I have begun it I threw it off. Sometimes I have thought that the work of meditation is incumbent only upon preachers, but I see it is sweet, and profitable, and good for every one. What shall I do then that I may be able to carry on this work of meditation with sweetness?

That I shall speak to more largely. Only for the present give me leave to say something to it by way of premises ; I will only speak to four cases and so conclude this exercise.

Would you meditate on God and the things of God with sweetness ? In case that you would meditate on the nature and attributes of God, be sure that you divide your thoughts, for variety is most refreshing. All the attributes of God are worthy of our thoughts ; do not therefore stand poring on one excellency, or upon one attribute ; but when you are most fearful, put your thoughts upon that in God which is most cheerful ; when you are most cheerful, put your thoughts upon that in God which is most dreadful ; evermore divide your thoughts if you be to meditate on God, and the name, and nature, and attributes of God.

And be sure of this, That you meditate, not in a way of reason only, when you come to meditate on God, but in a way of faith. For who can give the reason of the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity ? How can men know and understand this : That the second person should be begotten of the Father from all eternity, and yet be co-equal with the Father ? Here reason halts. Saith one truly : Dispute not with God, lest you be confounded ; dispute nor with Satan, lest you be overcome. And I say, If you would not fail and miscarry in your work of meditation, be sure that when you are to meditate on God, the nature, the names, the attributes of God, that then your meditation be carried on in a way of faith, and not of reason only.

And then be sure of this, that you never think of God out of Christ. “ I thought upon God and was troubled,” saith the psalmist. Why ? He did not think of Christ too. “ I thought upon God and was troubled.” Aye, but think upon God in Christ and you will not be troubled. Never think of God but in Christ. It is an horrible thing, saith Luther, to think of God out of Christ. This is the first thing, in case that you would meditate on God, the nature, the names, and attributes of God ; divide your thoughts, meditate in a way of faith, and not in a way of reason ; and never think of God out of Christ.

In case that you would meditate on Christ the Son of God, be sure of this, that you think on Christ, and meditate on Christ as your great example as well as your gift, and your

gift as well as your example. There is both in Christ: when your hearts are most brisk, think on Christ as your example; and when your hearts are most low, think on Christ as your gift. But if that you would meditate on Christ, carry on both; think on Christ as well for your example as for your gift, and for your gift as well as for your example.

And never think on Christ out of the gospel; for as you may not think on God out of Christ, so you may not meditate on Christ out of the gospel: Christ is a living gospel and the gospel a dead Christ.

And in all your meditations on Christ, be sure that you observe what that title of Christ is that is most suitable to your condition, and then meditate thereupon.

But in case you would meditate on the word of God, know that there are four parts of the word. There is the commandment, the promise, the threatening, the example. These four divide the whole word of God: precept, promise, threatening, example.

If you have to deal with a commandment, or precept, remember this, that there is no precept or commandment but is backed and surrounded with several promises; promises of assistance and promises of reward.

In case you have to deal with a promise, know this, God is as punctual in performing as he is gracious in promising.

In case you have to deal with a threatening, then remember this, that God threatens that he may not fulfil, but he promises that he may fulfil: as God promises that he may fulfil, so he threatens that he may not fulfil.

And in case you have to deal with an example, remember this, that there is no example but hath a promise or a threatening in the bowels or bosom of it.

But if you would meditate on God in reference to his word, then look upon all the word of God as your Father's letter and your own evidence. If a child be beyond sea, and a letter come from the father, the child reads it; he reads it again and again, and thinks on it: another, that is a stranger to the letter, though he see it, he does not read it so often over, nor meditate so often on it, but the son doth. Why? It is my father's letter, saith he, and so I will read it, and meditate on it, and think on it. So some men do not look upon the Scriptures as their Father's letters sent from heaven

to them ; but those that are good, they look upon all the chapters there as their Father's letters : and I will read it over for it is my Father's letter, and I will think on it much for it is my Father's letter. Thus, then, look upon the word as your Father's letter.

And look upon the Scripture also as your own evidence. A man hath an evidence for land, and it may be the parchment is a dusty thing, yet he takes a great deal of pains in reading it over and thinking on it. Why, saith one that stands by, why will you spend so much time in reading of a dusty parchment ? But, O friend, saith he, friend, it is my evidence for my inheritance. So now, when men come to the word, and do not look upon it as their evidence for their land, they have no list to meditate on it ; but when a man comes to the word, and can look upon it as his evidence for a great inheritance, then he loves to meditate on it. Remember, therefore, these two things, that all that is in the word is either commandment or promise, threatening or example. And look upon the word as your Father's letters and as your own evidence. And then,

In case that you would meditate on the works of God, be sure of this, that you look upon all the works of God as enamelled and embroidered with so many attributes of God ; for the more you see the attributes of God shining forth upon his works, the more sweetness you will take in the meditating thereof. But if you do not see the attributes of God shining forth upon his works, you will take no sweetness in meditating thereon.

Then be sure that you do not take things apart and separate from another, but take all together ; they are set one over against the other. If you part the works of God, you will find no beauty nor sweetness in the consideration of them ; but put all together, the design and end of the work, and the wholeness of the work gives a beauty to it. Take heed, therefore, that you do not separate between piece and piece, but carry all together, and the end thereof.

If you would meditate on God in reference to his works, be sure of this, that you never go to read God's work but by God's candle. The work of God is a great book, but the work of God cannot be read but by God's word ; God hath a candle of his own to read his work by. When you go to

read his work, be sure you carry his candle along with you, and so shall you be sure to read it the better. I have done.

Be sure you look upon every work of God as coming out of the hand of your Father, that you may say, Oh, this is my Father's work, and this is my Father's work. London is destroyed, but this is my Father's work. You have heard of that honest, good man of Chelmsford, when it thundered and lightened, insomuch as all the town were afraid that doomsday was come; how he got upon a stall in the street, and said, This is my Father's voice. And so when you look upon any work of the Lord, look upon it as your Father's work, and then you will take a sweetness and contentment in the meditation thereof.

And thus I have given you some taste. But how this work of meditation is to be carried on with sweetness I reserve for the next exercise; only for the present you have heard what a profitable thing it is to meditate on the things of God. What now remains but to get up and be thinking and meditating on God and the things of God.

SERMON VIII.

THE WORK AND WAY OF MEDITATION.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet." PSALM civ. 34.

HAVING shewed how sweet and profitable the work of meditation is, to meditate on God and the things of God; we came the last day to this question or objection:

But if the work of meditation be so sweet and profitable, what shall we do that this work of meditation may be carried on with sweetness and profit?

I am a stranger to this work of meditation: I have often read the Scriptures and not meditated on them; I have often heard the word and not meditated thereon; I have sometimes begun to meditate, but finding it a hard work I have left it off again. And sometimes I have thought that this work is incumbent only upon students and preachers. But if it be our duty to meditate on God, and the things of God, what

shall we do that the work of holy meditation may be carried on with profit and with sweetness?

For answer hereunto, four or five things I shall speak unto.

First, I shall labour to shew you, that it is our duty to meditate on God and the things of God.

Secondly, That this work of meditation is every man's work, and every day's work, and such a work as is consistent with every business and condition.

Thirdly, I shall lay down some means for the right performance of this work.

Fourthly, Give you some rules and directions, how this work of meditation should be carried on with sweetness and profit, in a right manner.

And then draw forth some arguments or motives to press you all hereunto.

First, It is our work and duty to meditate on God and the things of God. Will you instance according to our explication at the first.

Will you instance in the nature, titles and attributes of God? Why, it is our work and duty so to meditate on God; for wicked men are blamed that God is not in all their thoughts. If they be blamed for this, that God is not in all their thoughts, then surely God is to be in all our thoughts.

Good and holy men are commended and rewarded for this. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name." They are commended, and they are rewarded. In the day when God makes up his jewels, they shall be found among them. Mal. iii.

And who doth not know that it is our duty to praise the Lord. Not only to be thankful to God upon the account of benefits received, but to praise the Lord upon the account of his own excellencies. And how should the heart be tuned and framed unto this praising of God, but by meditation on the name and nature and titles of God? "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised," Psalm xlviii. 1. How doth he tune his heart to this praise? "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God."

The more that the heart of any man is laid in with meditation, the more pregnant will his words be in the praises of

God. So that thus then, it is our duty for to meditate upon this account.

But will you instance in Christ the Son of God? As it is our work and duty to meditate on the nature, titles, and attributes of God; so to spend and to lay out our thoughts upon Christ the Son of God. You may observe therefore, that this word "Behold," is oftener prefixed and set before the mystery of Christ, than before any other depth or mystery in Scripture. And why so? But to show that this depth and this mystery is that especially that calls forth our consideration and our meditation. There are four things concerning Christ which do call for our meditation.

The personal excellency of Christ. The offices of Christ. The life, and the death of Christ.

As for the personal excellencies of Christ, you read what the apostle saith, Heb. vii. 4, "Now consider how great this man was," Melchizedek, the type of Christ; and if the type were so great, Christ is greater. And if we are to consider the greatness of the type, much more to consider and meditate on the greatness and personal excellencies of Christ typified.

And as for the offices of Christ, you read what the apostle saith in chap. iii. 1, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

And as for the life of Christ, you know what the apostle saith, in chap. xii. 2, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

And for the sufferings of Christ, you read what follows: "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame; for consider him (verse 3) that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," &c. So that thus then, we are to meditate on God upon this account; laying out and spending our thoughts and meditations upon Christ the Son of God.

But, will you instance in the word of God? Why, as we are to meditate on Christ, the Son of God, so we are to meditate on the word of God. Psalm cxix. 15, "I will meditate on thy precepts." Verse 23, "Thy servant did meditate on thy statutes." Verse 48, "And I will meditate on thy statutes." At the 93rd verse, "Oh how I love thy law, it is my medita-

tion all the day." The word of God we are to meditate on ; to meditate on God, and the things of God upon this account, Now here are four things that will lead you out to meditation :

The exactness of the commandment.

The faithfulness of the promise.

The terror of the threatening.

And the weightiness of the examples ; all which meet in the Scriptures, and in the word of God. And accordingly we are to meditate on the word of God, upon this account.

Will you instance in the works of God ? Why, as we are to meditate on the word, so we are also to meditate on the works of God. The work of creation, the work of providence, and the work of redemption. The works of God are sought out of all those that have pleasure in them. " I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands," Psalm cxliii. Thus David did, and thus should we also do ; so that thus then you see, that it is our work and our duty to meditate on God and the things of God, in reference to his nature, name and attributes ; in reference to his Son ; in reference to his word ; and in reference to the works of God. And that is the first general.

Secondly, Now this work of meditation is every man's work, it is every day's work, and it is that work that is consistent with every business and condition.

I say it is every man's work ; it is the work of the wicked, and it is the work of the godly.

It is the work of the wicked, for it is their first step unto conversion. The prodigal bethought himself, and returned unto his Father's house. The prophet Haggai calling upon the Jews to repent saith, " Consider your ways." " I considered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies," saith David. Consider your ways ; or, as in the Hebrew, set your heart upon your ways. And when doth a man set his heart upon his ways, but when he doth seriously ponder and meditate on his ways ? This work of meditation therefore, I say, it is the work of the wicked, it is their first step unto conversion.

And it is the work of the godly ; meditation work is a godly man's work. For either he is weak or strong :

If he be weak, he hath need of it that he may be strengthened.

If he be strong, he hath need of it that he may be quickened. There is no man but hath need of meditation.

If a man be a beginner, he ought to meditate that he may proceed.

If he be a proficient, he ought to meditate that he may be perfect.

If he be perfect with gospel perfection, he ought to meditate that he may hold on his perfection. Psalm i. it is made the general description of a good man, "He delighteth in the law of the Lord; and in that law doth he meditate."

And as it is every man's work, so it is every day's work. There are some special times, as you will hear, which are more fit for meditation. But this work of meditation is every day's work. "When I awake (saith the psalmist) I am ever with thee." How? By prayer and meditation. "I have set the Lord always before me." How, but by meditation and prayer? What time is there that is not fit for this work of meditation?

Is the sabbath day unfit for it? No; there is a prayer for the sabbath, Psalm xcii., to meditate on the works of God.

Is the week day unfit for this work of meditation? No. The sabbath day is our market day; and then after we have bought our market on the sabbath, we should roast it by meditation on the week. We do not go to the market on the market day, to buy meat into the house only for the market day, but for all the time until the market day comes about again. Indeed Solomon saith of the sluggard, that he is so sluggish and slothful, that "he doth not roast what he hath taken in hunting." The sabbath day is the hunting day for souls wherein the venison is taken: on the week day we are to roast it, and to live upon it by meditation, and otherwise. And what is the reason that many do not live upon their venison, that they have taken on the Lord's day? but because they do not roast it by meditation on the week day, and so are in the number of Solomon's sluggards: the sluggard roasteth not the venison that he hath taken in hunting. I am sure that David in the cxixth Psalm saith, that his meditation was at work all the day long: "It is my meditation all the day;" not a piece of it, it is every day's work, it is

all the day's work. Yea in Psalm i. he takes in the night too. "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night." So that that is the second thing, meditation work is every day's work. As it is every man's work, so it is every day's work. And,

As it is every day's work, so it is that work that is consistent with every business and with every condition: a garment that will fit the back of every condition. What dunghill condition, but this flower of meditation may grow thereupon? In Judges v. 11, it is said there, "They that are delivered from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water; there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." There, where? Why in "the places of drawing water;" when they are in the field drawing water: and if that be a fit place to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, certainly then it is a place fit for meditation. And if that the place of drawing water, then the very place of scraping trenchers, and sweeping the kennel, may be a place fit for meditation. If that the place of drawing water, be a place fit for rehearsing the acts of the Lord; what place, what condition, what business, but meditation may accompany it?

Possibly a man may be sick, and he may be kept from books, or he may be kept from hearing; but yet he may meditate on God and the things of God.

Possibly he may be thrown into prison, and he may be kept from books and Bible, yet he cannot be kept from meditation. It is said of Mr. Glover, that great martyr in queen Mary's time, that lying in prison at Coventry, it was told him he should be removed to a close prison at Lichfield, and all books taken away from him. At that he was much troubled; but, saith he, I sat down and considered, and meditated with myself, Is God the God of Coventry, and not of Lichfield? is not God the God of Lichfield as well as of Coventry? And when I had thought on this thing, and meditated thus, my heart was quiet within me. Surely there is no condition so sour, but sweet meditation may grow thereon. Now if this work of meditation be a work that is consistent with every business and every condition, every day's work and every man's work; why should we not be found in the practice of it?

Thirdly, But you will say, What help or what means to

this work of meditation? What shall I do, how and by what means should this work of meditation be performed?

If you could meditate on God rightly and duly, (to speak first by way of means, and then for the rules of direction afterwards;) be very sensible of your want, and of your neglect herein. A man is never more fit for a duty, than when he is very sensible of his neglect therein; sensibleness of neglect of former duty, fits one for future duty. If a man have very great possessions, and he lose them, he is very sensible of the loss thereof. Why now look into Job xvii., and you shall find there are thought-possession: saith he, "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." In the Hebrew, even the "possessions of my heart." As if he should say thus: Time was that I had very great thought-possession, I thought on God, I enjoyed God, I possessed God; but now I have lost these my possessions of God, and the thoughts of my heart, the possessions of my heart are broken off. Thus sensible, Job was of the loss of his thought-possession. And the more rich our thought-possession are, the greater is our loss. And the more sensible we are of the loss of our thought-possession, and of our meditations, the more fit we shall be for this work of meditation. First therefore be very sensible of your want and neglect of this work of meditation thus long.

If you would meditate indeed on God and the things of God, labour more and more for a serious spirit; a frothy, light and giggling disposition, is never fit for meditation: labour therefore to be serious. And there are three or four things that will poise and make your hearts serious.

The sight of the glorious majesty of God.

The sense of your eternal condition; eternity, eternity.

Humiliation for sin.

And converse with those that are serious. Be serious, and you will be more fit for meditation.

If you would indeed meditate on God and the things of God, labour more and more for a fixed spirit: fixation of spirit is a great friend to meditation. An unsettled, an unfixed soul, cannot meditate: fix therefore first. And there are many things that may fix your spirits.

The great and weighty judgments of God that are upon us, may help to fix us, and hang lead upon our heels.

In case you are to come to meditation, or any other work, come free, and do not leave any business standing at the door; for a hundred to one but your hearts will step out unto it, at the time of your work, whether meditation, or prayer, or any thing else. Therefore come free unto every duty, if you would be fixed.

And labour for intenseness of affection. In meditation, prayer, or any other work, be intense. We used to say, When the candle burns, the mouse doth not nibble; but when the candle is out, then the mouse nibbles. When our hearts are warm and lively in prayer and meditation, we are free from distractions; the mouse nibbles not.

And in case you meet with any distraction in meditation, or other duty, do not stand to correct your heart in the time of the duty, but go on with your work. If a woman carries a child abroad among friends, and the child cries and makes a disturbance, the mother does not then correct the child there; but calls the child to an account when she comes at home: for, saith she, else would my correction be a further disturbance to the company. So here, when you meet with distractions in duty, if you call your hearts to an account then, it will be a further disturbance; but on with your present duty, correct afterward; and thus shall your hearts be the more fixed, and fixation of heart is a great help to meditation.

If you would indeed meditate on God and the things of God, be sure that you lay out such objects as may give entertainment to your thoughts. For if there be no corn in the quern, what grinding will there be? Have therefore objects laid out to exercise your thoughts withal, upon all occasions; and so when you have any spare time, your objects lying by, you will be presently upon the work of meditation: only let those objects be such as are drawing, alluring, thought-begetting objects, and thought-entertaining objects: but then

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, strengthen your love and delight; for meditation grows upon the stalk of love and delight: and the more a man doth love God and the things of God, the more he meditates thereon: Psalm cxix., "Oh how I love thy law?" What then? "It is my

meditation all the day :” this was much ; his meditation all the day. What is the reason ? Why, his love was beyond expression ; “ Oh how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day.” Love loves to be thinking on the person loved. It carries the picture of the person or thing loved up and down in its bosom ; the more you love, the more you meditate ; and the more you delight, the more you meditate. Can a woman forget her child ? No. Why ? Because she loves it. Can a worldly man forget the world, his money and his house or land, can he forget this ? No, why ? Because he loves them. What is the reason we meditate no more, but because we love God no more ? Do but strengthen your love to God and the things of God, and your delight in God and the things of God, and you will meditate more. Strengthen therefore your love to, and your delight in the Lord : and then

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, then labour to get a deep impression of the things of God upon your heart and soul. It is a deep impression that calls for meditation. A man reads the word of God, and it may be he understands it, but he does not meditate. Why ? Because the word made no impression upon his heart as he went along. But if he read it, and understand it, and hath an impression made upon his soul as he reads it, then he thinks on it afterwards : as in hearing the word of God, a man hears the word of God in public or in private, and he meditates not thereupon. Why ? why, because it has no impression upon him. Possibly a man may think of the free grace of God, yet if it make no impression upon his soul, he does not go away and meditate on it. If a man think on the wrath of God, and it make an impression upon him, he goes away, and is still in the thoughts thereof. What is the reason that many poor souls, troubled in conscience are always thinking of hell, and judgment, and wrath, but because the wrath of God hath made a deep impression upon their souls ; and the more deep the impression is upon your soul, the more full will your meditation be. You see how it was in the former times, when they went in procession at the end of the parish, they would take up a boy and whip him. Why ? that he might remember the bounds of the parish : for, passion is the best door-keeper of memory. And as passion is

the door-keeper of memory, so impression is the door-keeper of meditation.

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, take heed that your hearts and your hands, be not too full of the world, and the employments thereof. The more full your hand is of worldly employments, the more you will think thereon; and the more you think thereon, the less you will think of God and the things of God. And what is the reason that many meditate and think so little of God and the things of God, but because their hearts are so full of the world, "Where their treasure is, there will their hearts be."

Oh, saith one, I would think on God, and I would meditate on God with all my heart, but meditation work is a work of time, it will cost time, and I have no time; my hands are so full of business, and so full of employment, I have no time for this work. Meditation is not a transient thought, but it is a work of time, and will ask time, and I have no time. Mark therefore what David saith in Psalm cxix., "Lord incline my heart unto thy testimonies," how so? "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." The way to have one's heart inclined to the testimonies of God, is to turn away one's eyes from these outward vanities. Would you therefore meditate on God and the things of God, then take heed that your hearts, and your hands, be not too full of the world and the employments thereof.

If you would meditate on God, and the things of God, go then to God for this skill of meditation. Friends, there is an art, and a divine skill of meditation, which none can teach but God alone. Would you have it, go then to God, and beg of God these things.

Beg of God that he would change your nature: for if your soil be not changed, nothing but weeds will grow still, not the flowers of meditation, but the weeds of vain thoughts; go first to God to change your nature, to change your soil.

Go to God and beg of him that he would sanctify and sequester your mind unto himself, that your whole mind may be under God's sequestration. Every man is as his mind is. A man's mind is a profuse thing, and it is as full of thoughts, as the sun is full of beams. If God do not take it in, and bring it under his sequestration, it will be full of

evil; go then to God, and desire him to sanctify your devising, your thinking, and your projecting faculty.

Go to God and beg of him that he would lay out drawing objects before you, that may draw out your thoughts, and your meditations. It is God that must present such objects.

Go and beg of God your thoughts also, and beg of God these thought-possession, that God would give you thoughts. And then,

Beg of God a fixed heart: for fixation of heart is a great friend to meditation. And then,

Beg of God the Spirit, for the Spirit is our remembrancer, to bring all things to our remembrance. Thus do, and you shall in some measure be able to carry on this work of meditation in a right way, with comfort and sweetness. These things by way of means: by way of means; be sensible of your former want of meditation; labour to be more serious; get a fixed heart and spirit; lay out objects that may entertain your thoughts upon all occasions; strengthen your love to, and delight in God; labour to get impressions, deep impressions made upon your souls to the things of God, and take heed that your hearts and hands be not too full of the world; and then go to God for this skill of meditation.

Fourthly, But then what are those rules and directions that will help therein? How and in what way and manner should this work of meditation be carried on, with sweetness and success?

In all your retirements, for the work of meditation is a work of retirement, in all your retirements, be sure that you retire in to God himself. Do not retire into your retirements as the monks and those do retire into a monkish devotion. But in all your retirements be sure that you retire into God himself.

Take heed that you be not legal in this work of meditation. Legal work is sour work; meditation work is sweet work. A man is legal in this work of meditation when he doth make it a mere task, when he doth in his meditation think on God out of Christ. "I thought upon God and was troubled;" to think upon God out of Christ is sour work; I thought upon God and was not comforted, but was troubled, saith the Psalmist. So that to make our meditation work a mere task, is a legal work; to think upon God out of Christ is a

legal work; and to pass through God unto Christ also is legal. For, in the times of the old testament they came to Christ through God, but in the time of the new testament we go to God through Christ. An old testament way is a legal way, would you therefore have this work of meditation carried on with sweetness? take heed of a legal spirit in this work of meditation, which will sour all.

Be sure of this, that nothing fall within the compass of your meditation, but what falls within the compass of the Scripture. It may be you may think of God, and you may think what God was doing before the world was made, this you have no Scripture for, therefore it is no work for your meditation. It may be you think you are a reprobate; for say you, I have the marks of a reprobate upon me. But where doth the Scripture give any marks of a reprobate? The Scripture gives marks of a wicked man that possibly may be converted. But now, if you would carry on the work of meditation in such a way as it may be done with sweetness, be sure that it be bounded with the Scripture; and let nothing fall within the compass of your meditation, but what falls within the compass of the Scripture.

In all your settled meditation, begin with reading or hearing. Go on with meditation; end in prayer. For as Mr. Greenham saith well: Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is hurtful; to meditate and to read without prayer upon both, is without blessing.

If you do read and not meditate, then you will want good affections.

If you do meditate and not read or hear, you will want good judgment, and be apt to fall into some ill opinions.

If you do read, or hear, or meditate, and not pray, you will want the blessing of the Lord upon both. Read or hear first; then meditate; and then pray upon both. I speak of settled meditation, and let one be proportioned unto another. There must be a proportion between the one and the other in a settled meditation; and therefore if that you would meditate rightly, I say, in all your meditations, begin with reading, go on with meditation, and end with prayer.

If you would have this work of meditation carried on with profit and sweetness, join with your meditation the examination of your own souls; in case you meditate on God and Christ,

think with yourselves by way of examination, But have I an interest in this? I have been now thinking and meditating on the excellencies of Christ, but have I an interest in him? Come, O my soul, thou hast been meditating on God, and on the excellencies of Christ, but hast thou any share, hast thou any interest therein? Join examination with your meditation, then it will be profitable, then it will be sweet; otherwise it is but contemplation, or but a study; but join examination with your meditation, so it is sweet, and so it is profitable.

Observe what those times and seasons are that are most fit for meditation, and be sure you lay hold thereon. Though meditation work is every day's work, yet there are some times and seasons that are more fit for meditation. Shall I name four or five:

Look when the Lord hath made any deep impression upon your soul by word or work, then is a time for your meditation; for impression calls for meditation.

The morning is a fit time for meditation before the world come in. What more fit for God than the best of time; the morning is the best of time, therefore a fit time for meditation on God.

The sabbath day is a fit time also for meditation, therefore the xciiid Psalm is appointed for the sabbath. A Psalm for the sabbath day, saith the title to the Psalm.

The time of God's special dispensations is a fit time for it; look when there is a special dispensation of God abroad, either of mercy or judgment, then is a fit time for meditation. In the ixth Psalm: "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands, Higgsaion Selah." What is that? It comes from the Hebrew *Hagah*, which signifies to meditate. When the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands, here is work for meditation. Look, I say, when there is a special dispensation of God either in mercy or judgment, that is a fit time for meditation.

Look what time that is that lies next, or near, or close to any great work or service; that is a fit time for meditation. As for example: Suppose we be to receive the Lord's supper; the time that lies next before it is a fit time for meditation. Suppose a man be to be called out for some great service or

employment; the time that goes close before it is a fit time for him to sit down and meditate with himself upon the work; for the more a man doth prepare for a work, the more likely he is in reason to perform it well. Now, meditation is a good preparation. Look therefore what that time is that goes immediately before or close to the work of the Lord, that is a fit time for meditation. Thus now you see what the special times are for the work of meditation. The time of impressions. The morning time. The sabbath day. The time of special dispensations, either of mercy or judgment. And the time that goes immediately, or next, or close before the great work and service of the Lord. And, if you would meditate rightly, observe what the fit times for meditation are, and be sure you lay hold thereon.

I will name but one more. Though there is a great deal of profit and sweetness to be found in this work of meditation, and it is every day's work, yet take heed that you do not so meditate on one of God's excellencies as to neglect another; nor do not so spend your whole time in the work of meditation, that this work of meditation should eat up other duties: God would have us rise from this work of meditation, as from any other duty, with an hungry appetite. Friends, God would have us rise hungry from every duty, and not glugged; variety is refreshing; he hath given many duties that we may not pore upon one. In case, therefore, you have been at the work of meditation, either God hath come in upon you with his special influence or not: if he hath, praise the Lord for his assistance, it is a mercy that you have had one good thought of God, but meditation is more than a thought, meditation is thought upon thought; praise God, that is the way to have more. And in case that God hath not come in upon you in the work of meditation, then yet be not discouraged, for God would not have you glugged, and God would lead you to some other work; and one duty, one work is not to eat up and devour another. I say with one, Let not your time be the measure or rule of your meditation, but your meditation the rule of your time. Yet take heed that you do not spend so much time in musing and considering and meditating as that this work of meditation should eat up any other duty, but quicken thereunto. And thus you see some means, some helps to this work of meditation; some rules and directions

for the right carrying it on sweetly; what now remains, but that you up and be doing; turn your hand to it. You have heard the duty proved; you have heard the sweetness and profitableness thereof cleared; you have heard what objects we are to lay our thoughts out upon; and you have heard some means as helps unto the work, and some rules and directions for the carrying of it on: oh, then, you that have never spent an hour in meditation all your days, if there be any such here, now bethink yourselves, and now give up your thoughts to God. You that have gone one year after another, and one week after another, and never spent any time in meditating on God or the things of God, oh, now bethink yourselves: and that you may do so, and be provoked hereunto, give me leave to lay down some arguments and motives to press both your souls and mine unto this great work of meditation. The arguments are divers. Thus,

Friends, the more acquaintance you have with this work of meditation, the more time you will get, and the less you will lose. A man that hath the skill on it need never lose an hour. Who knows the worth of time? This little spot of time doth our eternity depend upon; yet, Lord, how many are there that lose their precious hours and time! But what is the reason? They have no hand at this work of meditation: when their business is over they might, otherwise, turn their hand to this work, and lose no time. The more acquaintance you have with this work of meditation, the more time you will get, and the less you will lose.

Hereby, even by this work of meditation, you shall get into the secrets of divine things. There is a secret and a mystery in every trade: a man does not know the trade till he knows the secret and the mystery of it: it is said, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Knowledge brings us to the door of truth, but meditation hath us into the house, and into all the rooms thereof: thereby, I say, you shall get into the inwards and the secrets of the things of God.

Thereby, also, you shall suck out the sweetness of all those divine and precious things that you know. As a man by musing on his sins, sucks out the sweetness thereof; so by meditating on the things of God you suck out the sweetness of the things of God into your own souls.

By this work of meditation you shall have a testimony in

your own souls that you are truly godly. Every man is what he is most in private. A good man's work lies most underground, lies most out of sight. In the time of Moses, the beasts were clean that chewed the cud, and unclean that did not chew the cud. In the time of David it is made the description of a godly man; "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate." Hereby, then, you shall have a testimony in your own hearts that you are truly godly. But you shall not only have a testimony that you are truly godly, but practice it, and thereby you shall be very godly: for the more constant you are in godliness, the more godly you are. By the work of meditation, you will be constant in the work of godliness. The more extensive your godliness is, the more godly you are. Now by meditation you can extend your thoughts beyond your hands. As by sinful musings a man can extend his thoughts beyond his power to practice; so by meditation on God and the things of God, a man may extend his thoughts concerning godliness beyond his power to act. As in sin, a man by his thoughts may be naught where he hath not an outward power to be naught; so by holy meditation, a man may be good where he hath not a power in his hand to practice. The psalmist saith in the xlvth Psalm: "The king's daughter is all glorious within, her garment is of wrought gold," verse 13. Her clothing is of wrought gold, is not that glorious? clothing is outward, but saith he, "She is all glorious within;" it is not the wrought gold without makes her glorious, but she is all glorious within; though the garment, and though her clothing be of wrought gold, yet her glory lies within. Here lies the glory of a christian, to be glorious within. And how can we have this inward holiness, grace, and goodness, and glory, unless we be versed in this work of meditation?

Thereby also, you shall offer up yourselves unto divine embraces; and upon this ground of meditation will God give out his loves unto you. In Cant. vii. 12, saith Christ: "There will I give thee my loves." There; where? "Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." Here is the public assembly. What is this to meditation? Yes, in the former verse: "Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages;"

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places of retirement; "There will I give thee my loves," upon the ground of retirement. There will he give forth his loves. Oh, what a great mercy is here, by this work of meditation, you do not only offer up yourselves unto divine embraces; but there, upon meditation ground, will God give out his loves unto you.

Thereby also your souls and hearts shall be subdued unto God: as in sin, so here, friends, it is not a sinful thought that doth subdue my heart into sin; it is not a sinful suggestion that subdues my heart into sin: but, a complacential dwelling of sinful thoughts in my heart, subdues my heart into sin. So it is not a transient good thought that will subdue the soul, or the heart unto God; but it is a complacential dwelling of good thoughts in the heart that doth subdue the heart unto God, and that is done by meditation. Thereby therefore, I say, your very hearts shall be subdued unto the Lord. Oh what a mercy is this.

By this work of meditation on God, and the things of God; you shall live on God. Possibly a man may come to the court where the king is, and not live upon the king, because he does not stay there; but those that stay at the court, they live upon the king, for they stay there. Now by a thought, I do not stay upon God; but by a frequent meditation on God, I shall live in God; for then I stay by God, and I do stay on him.

Thereby also you shall have a constant relief against all your afflictions both inward and outward.

Inward, Psalm cxliii., "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, (for saith he, verse 4.) My spirit is overwhelmed within me, my heart within me is desolate:" what then? "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works." Here lies the relief against spiritual fears, and overwhelmings of soul, even to meditate on God as one ought to do in a right manner: I am overwhelmed, but I will meditate on all thy works, and muse on the work of thy hands.

As for the outward afflictions, Psalm cxix., the place cited before verse 23. "Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Reproach from an ordinary man, is affliction enough; but for kings and princes to speak against one, this is a great matter. What relief then? "But thy servant did meditate on thy statutes." So that by

this, you have a constant relief against both outward, and inward afflictions. And,

Thereby also you shall be freed from that unkindness, that God will take at your hands if you do not meditate on God and the things of God. Friends, if you do not meditate on God and the things of God, God will take it very unkindly at your hands. What man that is abroad beyond sea, hearing that his wife frolicks it at home and never thinks on him, will not take it unkindly? We are absent now from God, and to frolick and be vain, and go up and down, and have no thoughts on God, no meditation on God; how unkindly must God take this at our hands? It is a slight, if a man speak unto you, and you do not think of what he speaks, it is a slight to him. So to read what God saith, or see what God doth, and not think on it, not to meditate on it; what is this but a slight unto God?

Respect and meditation go together. Psalm cxix. 15, "I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." So then, the want of meditation and thinking on what God saith and what God doth, is a great slighting of him, it is a want of respect, and God will take it unkindly. And what then? Why he will deal by you as you deal by him: if you think not on him, he will not think on you; and in the day of your extremity, when you call and cry to him, because you thought not of him, he will not think of you. But to end all.

God knows, and your own souls know, how you have lain musing in the way of sin; how sometimes you have lain devising mischief upon your beds; how often you have chewed the devil's cud; what swarms of unclean thoughts, of proud thoughts, of unbelieving thoughts, have possessed your hearts. Oh, friends, shall we lie musing upon our bed in a way of sin, and shall we not think and muse and meditate on God and the things of God? What, shall we not be the same for God, that ever we have been for sin? Oh, we have had our sinful musing times, therefore now why should we not have our holy musings also?

And to conclude all; meditation, holy meditation, is a very great friend to heavenly conversation. Sweet meditation of God, is a very great friend to holy conversation; private meditation, a great friend to an outward holy conversation.

Now then, as ever you desire that the holiness of your conversation may be advanced ; that you may be as godly now in your thoughts. as ever you have been ungodly ; that God may take nothing unkindly from you ; that you may have a constant relief against all afflictions, both inward and outward ; that you may live on God ; that your hearts may be subdued unto God ; that God may give out his loves unto you ; that you may be very godly ; that you may have a testimony in your own souls that you are truly godly ; that you may suck out the sweetness of all the things you know ; that you may be let into the secret of godliness, and not stand at the door of knowledge only ; that you may never lose a precious hour, but redeem your time : now to the work of meditation ; and you that have neglected it so long, be not ashamed to begin it at last.

SERMON IX.

GOD'S RETURN TO THE SOUL OR NATION.

“ Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants,” PSALM xc. 13.

THIS psalm is a “ psalm of Moses the man of God,” saith the title.

Wherein he doth strengthen his faith, and the Israelites’ faith in God ; shews the misery and frailty of man’s life, and petitions God for his mercy.

He sets down the misery and frailty of man’s life, in the body of the psalm. But before, in the beginning of the psalm, he doth strengthen his own and others’ faith in God.

A man is never fit to look upon the troubles of this world, and the miseries thereof, until his heart be established in God by believing. This therefore he doth, in the first place, by several arguments of comfort.

First drawn from their interest in God. Verse 1, “ Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” As if he should say, We are now in the wilderness, and so no

abiding place ; well, "Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

Faith finds that in God which we want here below, and that is the way to true comfort.

The second is drawn from the eternity of God's essence and being: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," verse 2.

The third is drawn from our resurrection. Though now we die, and are destroyed, yet, at verse 3, "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

Our resurrection is an easy work with God ; it is but saying, "thou sayest, Return, ye children of men."

The fourth is drawn from the shortness of the time that lies between our death and the resurrection: for it will be said, there is a great deal of time between our death and the resurrection ; but, saith he, you must account as God accounts, for at verse 4, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past; and as a watch in the night." These things being thus premised, now you may read over the miseries and troubles of this world, which you have at large from the 5th unto the 12th verse.

But what then, what is the work and duty of the psalmist then ? Why, then he petitions God.

He petitions first for wisdom ; that by all the troubles and miseries of this life, he may provide and lay in for eternity. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom," verse 12.

And then he petitions for the return of God's love. "Return (O Lord) how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants." Where you have the matter of the petition, the explication, and the reason thereof.

The matter of the petition in those words, "Return, O Lord."

The explication thereof, "And let it repent thee concerning thy servants."

And the reason, "How long." Thou hast been long absent ; O Lord, how long wilt thou be absent, how long wilt thou be angry ? Return, O Lord ; how long ; and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

God is said to return, when after some judgments for sin, he doth shew forth some fresh tokens of his love and favour.

God is said to repent, when he doth change his dispensations of anger into love. And this is that which the psalmist doth here most desire ; from whence I take up this doctrine or observation :

When God is in any measure departed from his people, it is their great desire that God would return unto them, and repent him concerning his servants. For the clearing and prosecuting of which,

First, I shall labour to shew you, that God doth sometimes forsake, desert, and depart from his own people for a time.

Secondly, That they are very sensible of such departures, and think it long.

Thirdly, That then, in the time of those departures, their great desire is that God would return. And,

Fourthly, That when God doth return unto his people, then he doth repent him concerning his servants. And,

Fifthly, What we should do in case God should be in any measure departed from us, that he may return again unto us.

First. As for the first: God doth sometimes desert and forsake and depart from his people for a time. Not in regard of their union, so he never departs ; but in regard of communion and manifestation, so sometimes he doth. Though nothing is hid from the heat of this sun, yet our souls may be hid from the light of this sun : God doth sometimes depart from his own people.

For he is the sovereign Lord of all. And what if God will, to make his power and sovereignty known among his own people, sometimes withdraw, forsake and depart from them. Twice you read in the book of the Canticles, that Christ withdraws from the spouse: once upon occasion of her sin and security, and then she meets with blows, Cant. v. ; once upon an account of his mere pleasure, Cant. iii.

As whom God will he shews mercy to, and whom he will he hardens ; so whom God will he is present with, and whom he will he is absent from. He is the sovereign Lord over all. But,

What if God will that his people should have a taste of hell in this life, that so they may be sensible of and very thankful for their deliverance from hell and the wrath to come. There

are three things in hell: torment of body, horror of conscience, loss of God.

By our pains and torments, gouts and stone, we think of the torments of hell, or may think.

By the horror of conscience that we meet withal, we may think of the horror of conscience there.

And by God's withdrawing and God's departing from us here, we may think of the loss of God for ever there.

These things are not in perfection here. In heaven there is nothing but the presence of God, and all the comforts there flow from that fountain. In hell there is nothing but the absence of God, and all the miseries there flow from that fountain. This life lies between both. And what if God will, that we may be sensible of the great deliverance from the wrath to come, give us a taste of hell, by his withdrawals and by his departings from us for a season.

I am sure it is very fit that we should be conformed unto Jesus Christ. As Christ was conformed unto us, in reference to our temptations, so it is fit we should be conformed to him in reference to his desertions. Christ was deserted, Christ was forsaken: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Surely the disciple is not above his Master.

But I am sure of this, that God loves to see the workings of all our graces, our faith and love especially. There are some graces that do not open nor shew themselves but in the sun-shining day of God's presence. When the sun shines the marigold opens. When the sun shines, the fish that lay at the bottom of the water in a cloudy day, swim at the top of the water, and are seen. In the sun-shining day of God's presence, then, our thankfulness, our joy, our assurance float and are to be seen upon the top of the water. But there are other graces, that are best seen when God withdraws, and when God is absent—faith in God, and love to God especially.

Faith in God; for faith works best when it works all alone, without the auxiliaries of comfort. It is no great matter for a wife to believe her husband's love when he is at home and daily and hourly shewing kindness; but when he is abroad, and absent, and she hears not from him, then to believe his love is somewhat. So to believe the love of God toward us when he is present is no great matter, though it is good; but

when God is gone, when God is absent, then to believe his love, is faith worthy of God, as Parisiensis speaks.

Thus, also, our love unto God doth and will appear. For when God is present with us, and shines upon us, then we see God's love to us; but when God is absent from us, by our longings after him, then we see our love unto God. Now, I say, what if God will, to draw out all our graces, and that he may see the workings of our graces, faith and love especially; what if he will withdraw and absent himself from his people for a time? But,

What if God will, for the good and benefit of others, withdraw and absent himself and depart from his own people? In the book of Canticles we find that when Christ doth withdraw from his spouse, and she could not find him, chap. v. 6, she searches after him, inquires for him, makes great complaint. Then the daughters of Jerusalem say, "Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women; whither is thy Beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?" So long as he was present others were not drawn on for to seek him with her; but now he is absent, and she looks after him, and complains for want of him, now others are drawn to inquire after him.

And why so? But to teach us thus much; that God will so overrule the desertions of his people, that his withdrawal from them shall draw others to him. And thus now you see, there is reason, and good reason why God should sometimes depart from, forsake, and be absent even from his own people for a time. And that is the first thing.

Secondly, The saints and people of God are very sensible of his displeasure. "How long, Lord?" They are most sensible of this, they look upon it as a very tedious thing, and most afflictive, to lie under God's departure. "How long, Lord?"

Words of expostulation note affection, especially if they come with an ingemination; and so you have it in the xliiith Psalm: "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever; how long wilt thou hide thy face from me, how long shall I take counsel in my soul?" Four how longs. How long, how long, how long, how long. It is a very tedious thing, and most afflictive to the people of God, to lie under God's departures.

It was so with Christ: ye may measure the hearts of the saints by the heart of Christ. The first in every kind is the rule of the rest. Christ was the first of saints. Now though our Saviour Christ met with many afflictions and troubles in his death, you shall find he is most sensible of God's departure: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He doth not say, Oh, my disciples, why have you left me, and why have you forsaken me; but, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?" That is not the greatest affliction that weak men account the greatest: that is not the greatest burthen that a weak man accounts the greatest; but that which a strong man accounts the greatest burthen is the greatest burthen. Why now that the Rock of Ages, Christ himself should complain under this of God's forsaking, what doth this argue? When Paul cries out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death;" will you not conclude thereby that the body of death was a great burthen, that the sin of our nature was a great burthen? So when Christ himself shall cry out and complain of God's forsaking and departing, will you not conclude, then, surely this is a burthen indeed? This is that the saints and people of God are the most sensible of.

It is the property of a gracious soul to be most affected with the inside and the spiritual part of mercies and of deliverances. Though God give them outward deliverances, they are not so much affected with the outward part as with the inside and the spiritual part of the deliverance. And therefore, in Micah vii. 18, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage: he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." It was an outward deliverance that God gave them, but the church is most affected with the spiritual part of it.

And as they are most affected with the spiritual part of a deliverance, so they are always most affected with the inward and the spiritual part of an affliction. What is that? The anger of God, the displeasure of God, the desertion of God, the departing of God. This is the thing that the saints, therefore, are the most affected with and the most sensible of.

That is most afflictive to a gracious soul which is most contrary to him and to his will: all that is affliction which is

contrary to one's will. It was no great matter, in itself, that Mordecai did not pull off his hat and bow his knee to Haman; it was no great affliction in itself, but it was contrary to Haman's pride, and that is an affliction that is contrary to one's will. Now what is the will and what is the desire of the saints but the presence of God? That they may ever be at their Father's knee, that they may ever be in his arms, and held in the embraces of his love, held in his smiles; this is the thing that they do most desire. And therefore in the very beginning of the Canticles, "Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth." This, therefore, being the thing that they do most desire, the contrary must be the most afflictive.

That must needs be most afflictive which hinders them in all their enjoyments. Without the presence of God they have no enjoyment, their enjoyments are as no enjoyments: the presence of God with them is the top of all their enjoyments. If the sun be down, it is not all the torches and candles lighted up that will give you a day; and if God be gone, it is not all your creature comforts will give you joy. Take away the word *my*, take it away from the word *God*, you take away the comfort of the word *God* if you take away the word *my*. And therefore, whereas the Lord had used to call the Israelites *his* people, and God had a little forsaken them; he saith to Moses, *Thy* people, and, *the* people; but not, *my* people. But then,

Thereby the saints and people of God are exposed to great temptations. When God goes the devil comes. And so far as God doth go, so much the devil comes. If God do forsake and depart from a man as to final rejection, then the devil comes in a way of possession. If God departs from a man in a way of desertion, then the devil comes in a way of temptation. As God goes so the devil comes. Now is it not a grievous thing for the saints and people of God to be exposed to temptations? Thus they are by the departure of God, and by the absence of God; by the withdrawments of God. No wonder, therefore, that God's departure is the most afflictive to them. And that is the second.

Thirdly. But, then, as the departings of God are the most afflictive to a gracious soul; so when the Lord is in any measure departed, it is the great desire of the saints and people of God that God would return. Not that God would

take away his hand, the psalmist doth not say so: We are afflicted, Lord, take away our affliction; no, but "Return, O Lord, how long." They did not say, We are in this or that distress; take away this distress and misery from us: no, but "Return, O Lord." This is the great thing that they do most desire. When God is gone in any measure, or departed from them, their great desire is that God would return unto them: and it must needs be so. For,

What is the presence of God but the most desirable thing in the world: "When the days of refreshing shall come from his presence." It is the presence of Christ that will make the day of judgment, a day of refreshing. God's presence is the saint's pleasure. In it there is a filling up of our indigent nature. In it there is the obtainment of our last end, with the knowledge thereof. In it there is an universal good. God's presence is the most desirable thing in all the world. No wonder then that when God is departed in any measure, the saints should above all things in the world, desire that God would return again. But,

God never returns empty handed to his people. If a husband be long absent from his wife, he will not return empty handed; I am sure God will not return empty handed unto his people. When he hath stricken them, he will let out more love unto them than ever before. It was a sad and a sharp dispensation, that the basket of good figs should be carried away captive with the basket of bad figs; but see how God returns unto them, not empty handed, Jer. xxiv.: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place, into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good; for I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up; and I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." See how God returns; when he returns, he doth not return empty handed unto his people. When God returns unto you, he will not only pay you the

principal of your enjoyment ; but will pay you all your forbearance money too. But, and especially,

Take the saints and people of God, and where do they live, but in the love of Christ's person, not of his benefits, not of his comforts, but they live in the love of his person. Look into the book of Canticles and you shall find, how the heart of Christ is drawn out in love to the person of the spouse ; " Let me hear thy voice," saith he, " for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is comely : how fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse ; thy lips, oh my spouse, drop as the honeycomb," and so he goes on insisting in his love upon the person.

So doth the spouse also towards him, " My beloved is altogether lovely," and as you read, " my beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." And so she goes on. Thus love is drawn out towards the person of Christ. Now, if this be the spirit, and if this be the disposition of the saints and people of God, that they live in love to the person of Christ, then no wonder that when Christ is withdrawn, they do above all things desire that he would return again. This must needs be, for they live in the love of his person, and not of his benefits, not of his comforts ; therefore above all things they say, Return, O Lord, return.

Fourthly, When the Lord doth return unto his people, he doth then repent him concerning his servants. Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. For the opening and clearing of this, four things briefly :

What it is for God to repent.

Whether God doth at any time repent, or will at any time repent.

How it may appear that when God returns unto his people, that then he will repent him concerning his servants. And,

How should we know in the day and time of God's departure from us, that God will again return unto us.

If you ask what it is for God to repent,

I answer, It is to change the dispensation of his anger. God doth not repent by the changing of his affection, but he repents by the changing of his dispensation. As when a man is writing, and he blots out what he hath written, he

repents that he had wrote such a thing; so when God is writing hard things against his people in a way of dispensation, and he shall blot out that dispensation, then God is said to repent. So it repented the Lord that he had made man, Gen. vi.

If you ask, Whether God doth or will at any time repent?

I answer, Yes, expressly in Exod. xxxii. 14: "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." It is a direct answer of prayer to the very words at the 12th verse, Moses prays: "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." And at the 14th verse: "The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." God doth and will sometimes repent.

Only you must know, God will more easily repent of his judgments than of his mercies. And you must know that the gifts of God are of two sorts: ordinary and common gifts, and so God repents of them, and he takes them away, "It repented the Lord that he had made man." Of the gifts of God that concern effectual vocation, so God repenteth not; for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Those gifts that concern our effectual vocation, those God repents not of.

But then, how may it appear that when the Lord doth return unto his people, that then he will repent him concerning his servants?

Why that appears by the thing itself. If a man say he will go from such a town and never return again, and then do return, he doth repent him concerning the thing, by his return; and so concerning God. In Jer. xviii.: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Well,

But then, how shall we know in case God be absent, or God be departed, how shall we be able in the time of God's absence, or departure, to know that God will return again. Suppose that God be withdrawn from my soul in particular, I am this day under a spiritual desertion, how shall I know that God will return again to me. Or suppose that God

have forsaken, and departed much from the nation, how shall we know whether God will return again or no ?

Indeed it is a very hard thing to bear the departures of God ; but yet if I did know that God would return again, I should be comforted ; how therefore shall I know, both in reference to my own soul in particular, and in reference to the nation, that God will return again ?

Here are two cases, and I shall speak all along to both.

If your question do relate unto your own particular case and soul. I answer thus ;

You may know it by your relations. If you be in covenant with God ; God will return again to you though now he be absent ; “ Though he afflict you with rods, his loving kindness will he not take away, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.” Will a father or mother leave their child ? no ; I am sure God will not. Joseph was under a great displeasure with his brethren, yet notwithstanding at the last he could hold no longer, but he bursts out, and saith “ I am your brother Joseph.” And so though you be under some great displeasure from Christ, yet there is a time when Christ will break forth and say unto you, I am your brother Jesus. And I say, if you be in covenant with God, you may conclude it, for so doth the Psalmist, Psalm xlii. 11. “ I shall yet praise him.” My soul, thou art cast down and disquieted, but be quieted, “ for I shall yet praise him.” Why, “ he is the health of my countenance, and my God.” You may know it then by your relations. But

Though God or Christ be gone, and in a great measure departed from your souls, yet if you cannot leave God, God cannot leave you. In our conversion, God comes to us before we come to him. But in apostacy we depart from God, before he departs from us. How is it therefore with you ? Can you say truly, my soul cannot leave God, then conclude and say, God will return again, and cannot leave you. But

Though God be very much gone, and departed from you in a great measure ; yet if in the time of his absence he doth send you letters and tokens of love you may know for certain he will return again. Possibly God or Christ may appoint an affliction to bring you a token, or to bring you a message of love in the time of his absence. Possibly, he may appoint

or order some providence to bring you a token, or some message of love. Possibly he may order and appoint upholding mercy, to be a pledge to you of delivering mercy. And believe it, upholding mercy is always a pledge of delivering mercy. How is it therefore with you, are you deserted, is Christ gone; yet have you not had the upholding presence of God all this while? then be of good comfort, Christ is not so gone but he will return again.

If your case and condition be such that although you cannot find Christ, Christ is gone: though Christ be gone and departed from you and you cannot find him, yet if you can direct others to the finding of him when you cannot find him, then certainly he is not gone, but he will return again unto you. The spouse in the Canticles seeks after Christ: saith she, "He hath withdrawn himself and I cannot find him." (chap. v.) The daughters of Jerusalem say, "Whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee? My beloved is gone down into his garden to the beds of spices." Mark, she could not find him herself, and yet she can direct others to the finding of him. What doth this signify, but plainly teach us thus much, that though Christ be gone, and we cannot find him, yet if we can direct others to the finding of him, he is not quite gone, but he will return again. Now is it thus with you, when Christ is gone, cannot you direct others to the finding of him? If you can, then build upon it, he is not so gone but he will return again.

But then, suppose that the Lord be departed from this nation much; we are under a very great displeasure of the Lord this day: God is departed from us, how shall we know now in the time of God's departure, that he will return again to this nation?

You know how it is with a man that doth leave his house: though he go away, yet if his children be there, and his goods be there, his plate and his jewels there, he will either come again to them, or send for them to himself. Believe it christians, God hath a very great cupboard of plate in this nation, Christ hath much plate in England, as much as in any nation in the world, and he will not lose his plate. There are three things very precious in the eyes of God, his truth, his worship, his children: such plate the Lord hath much of here, and he will not lose his plate, therefore he will return again.

Though he may afflict, and afflict sorely, yet he will return again.

God will never go while prayer stays. If there be a praying spirit, and a spirit of prayer be up in this nation, conclude that God is not quite gone, but he will return again.

You may know it by the providential pledges, that the Lord sends you. God was very much displeased with Jonah; you know, he threw him overboard into the sea; but then he appointed a whale to receive him, to give him entertainment: to provide a chamber of preservation, even in the belly of destruction. What did this signify? It signified thus much, that God would deliver him afterwards; this providence was a pledge for after deliverance. So David was hunted in the wilderness by Saul, but in the wilderness, God gave Saul into his hand. What did that signify? That present deliverance did signify to David, an after deliverance. Now though God be gone and greatly departed from us here: have you not many providential pledges of his love? What think you of the house that should have been blown up with fire lately? What doth it signify, but thus much, that God doth mind to restrain the remnant of their rage: How many pledges, providential pledges, have we had of God's return; therefore let us say: yet God will return again. But,

If your estate and condition be such, upon which the Lord will deliver for his name's sake, and with a notwithstanding; then why should you not conclude that God will return again: friends, there is a time when God will deliver his people, for his name's sake; and with a notwithstanding all their sins, and notwithstanding all his own displeasures; "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake," Psalm. cvi. And when is that, that God will deliver a people for his name's sake and with a notwithstanding? Look into Psalm xliv., and you shall see when. Look, when a people do suffer for his name's sake, then God will deliver them for his name's sake. "Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercy sake." Why? at verse 22. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Therefore, Lord, arise for thy name's sake. For thy sake are we killed. When a people suffer for God's name's sake, then God will deliver for his name's sake, then God will de-

liver with a notwithstanding. How is it with you now? You are in a suffering day, but are not all your sufferings for the name of Christ? Be of good comfort then, though God may be departed, and your city destroyed, yet he is not quite gone but will return again. But then,

Fifthly, What shall we do that God may return again? In answer, I will still carry it on in answer to both the cases.

If this question do relate unto your own particular souls; if you say, God is now gone from me, what shall I do that God may return to my soul again?

I answer briefly, Be sure of this, that you keep your door open, the door of your hearts open for Christ's return. When the master is abroad, the servant sits up to keep the door open for his coming in.

Be sure of this, that now in the time of Christ's absence, you neglect no duty, though very unsavoury to you. The more unsavoury the duty now is unto you through the absence of Christ, the more acceptable unto Christ.

Be sure that you go and stand there where Christ uses to be. And let me tell you this, if you cannot find him where he uses to be, you shall find him where he uses not to be, as you read in Cant. iii.

Then be sure of this, that you be not foolish with other lovers in the time of his absence, lest he hear thereof and come home no more.

Be sure of this also, that you do gather in upon Christ by all those words and by all those things whereby he seems to put you away from him. As the woman of Canaan, "True, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs." Which made Christ turn in again, "Oh, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." But then,

Be sure that you send unto him one way or other, and tell him that you are sick of love unto his person. Then he returns. And,

Now say, Lord, though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee. Friends, it was faith that brought Christ and your souls together at the first; and it must be faith that must bring Christ and your souls together after a desertion. Whatsoever therefore the displeasure of the Lord be upon you, say, Lord, though thou killest me I will trust in thee;

though I cannot see thee, yet I will trust in thee, and wait upon thee.

But then, suppose it be the case of the nation.

God is departed in a great measure, who doth not see it? What shall we therefore now do that God may return unto us again?

Friends, truly it is not an easy thing to bring God back again, when he is in a way of displeasure towards a people. The Lord was angry, and sorely displeased with Jonah; the mariners prayed, Jonah confessed his sin, and yet the storm ceased not, yet God goes on. I say it is not an easy thing to bring God back to a nation, when he is once in a way of displeasure against a people.

And sometimes the Lord will never return unto a people again. The case of the Gaderenes in the matter of their hogs. The whole city came unto Christ, and "besought him to be gone." And away he went, and we do not read that ever he came there again.

Sometimes he will return again, but with reserves of after-judgments. In Exod. xxxii., Moses prayed, and the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people, verse 14. But, saith he, verse 34: "Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." Nevertheless; for all I thus repent me, and for all I do thus return unto them, nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. Sometimes, I say, he doth return with reserves of after-judgments, yet if you look into Deut. iii., the thing is expressed: "The Lord will judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left."

Well but then, what shall we do? It is too manifest, God is in a great measure gone from us, and departed from us, what shall we do now that God may return again unto this nation?

Be sure that you make your peace with Christ. Christ is this day offended, his gospel and institutions trampled upon. A prophet will the Lord your God raise up among you, hear ye him; if not, he will not pardon you; that is Christ. He that sins against the great remedy, shall be judged without remedy. Christ is the great remedy; it is a dangerous thing to sin against Christ. "O Jerusalem," saith

Christ, "how often would I have gathered you, and you would not be gathered; your house is left unto you desolate." And in Matt. xxii., you read that after that great invitation to the supper, those that were invited refused, they made light of it, went their ways; and the remnant took his servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them; but when the king heard thereof, he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city. It is a gospel quarrel. And therefore, I say, Is the Lord gone and departed from us? Oh, make your peace with Christ, it is Christ that is offended. Oh, make your peace with Christ, else never look the Father should return again. But then,

If you desire that God may return again unto you, then let us all return unto the Lord with all our hearts, Joel ii. 12, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" Who knows if you will turn unto him with all your heart, but he will return to you, and leave a blessing behind him?

But look into Hosea vi., "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; after two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." God will return.

Well, but what assurance have we of it; are we certain God will return? Yes, verse 3, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." As sure as a morning is after night, so sure will God return; his going forth is prepared as the morning; as certain he will return as the morning doth.

Aye, but when will God return?

In due season: "He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." That is, he will return in due season, his return of love shall be as the rain, as the former and the latter rain in their season. Would you now therefore that God should return to you, oh, now do you return unto God.

And that you may do so, only thus,

Be sure of this, that you pray and believe, believe and pray. Some pray, but do not believe; some say they believe,

but they do not pray. That which prayer cannot do, nothing can do ; and that which faith will not do, prayer cannot do. The prayer of faith shall heal the sick ; and who knows but it may heal a poor sick nation also. And therefore, I say, pray and believe, and believe and pray.

Be sure of this, that in all your addresses unto God in prayer, you come to the bottom in the matter of your confession. If you have days of fasting, and prayer, and humiliation, be sure that you come to the bottom in the matter of your confession, to confess the original sin of all the displeasure that is come upon us. Otherwise, though you fast, and pray, and confess, yet if you do not confess and bewail that sin which is the original of all our miseries, you do but cry lapwing cry, farthest off from the nest, and it will do us no good.

Be sure of this also, that you put away the evil of your doings, and do the contrary good ; put away the evil of your doings, especially your *Ashtaroth*. Friends, though you fast and pray, and humble yourselves ; if you do not reform, all your fasting and prayer will not bring God back again. All the days of fasting and prayer that you keep, will do nothing unless there be reformation. Yet I confess still, God must have a latitude, and he will sometimes save and deliver before we are prepared for it ; but, I say, ordinarily, though you fast, and pray, and cry never so much, yet if you do not reform, all your prayers will not do. And though you do reform, yet if you do not reform and put away your *Ashtaroth*, that sin that hath brought this displeasure, your reformation will not do. And though you do thus also, yet if you do not do the contrary good, it will not serve. Look to that therefore.

Be sure of this, that you go out of yourselves, and lay down all your worldly interests at the feet of the Lord, saying, Come Lord, return, O Lord : not, Return, O my trade return ; not, Return, O our ships return ; not, Return, O our peace return : but, Return, O Lord, return, O Lord. Friends, the more you go out of yourselves, the more fit you are for God to return unto you.

And to conclude it, If you desire that God should return unto you, and that you may return to God, go then to God,

and pray, and say, Turn us, O Lord, and we shall be turned. And thus I have spoken to this case.

Yet there is one thing more. It is a tedious thing to lie under God's departure. There may be hopes that God may return again; but what shall we do in the interim till God returns again?

I will briefly speak to it, and have done.

If your question do relate unto your particular souls, and you say, God is now gone from my soul, what shall I do in the interim till God return again?

Be sure that you carry it as the afflicted spouse of Christ in the absence of your husband; and for that you may read at large in the book of the Canticles.

Be sure of this, that you maintain your interest, and let not the sense of your interest in God and Christ be dissolved. Return, O Lord, how long! and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. Still they keep their interest, thy servants still. And so the spouse, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

Be sure of this, that you never come to say, God will never return again; though you say, Lord, how long? yet never say, God is gone, and will return no more. Poor, drooping, afflicted, and deserted soul, be sure of this, that you never say, God will never return; lo, he cometh leaping over the mountains, over difficulties to you; only be you willing to go leaping over the mountains of difficulties for to meet with him.

And if your question do concern the public or the nation, what shall we do till God do return again?

I answer, Then go and lament after God. Is God gone, and is God departed in a great measure from this nation? now go and lament after God. Twenty years, when the ark was taken, the children of Israel lamented after God in the ark. How long, how long God may stay at a distance from us, God only knows; in the interim let us all now go and lament after God. And

Be sure that you keep his ambassadors with you. When he calls home his ambassadors, he proclaims war against a nation; but so long as he hath any agents among you, he is not quite gone. And

If ever God begins to return to us again, be thankful for

the beginnings of his return. He that is thankful for little, shall have much ; and he that is thankful for the beginnings of return, shall have a whole return. Thus do then, and who knows but that the Lord may yet return, and leave a blessing behind him ? That he may do so, let us now pray, and say with the Psalmist, “ Return O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.”

SERMON X.

PREVENTING MERCY.

“ For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.

“ Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.”—PSALM XXI. 2, 3.

THIS psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving, wherein the psalmist doth profess, that he will joy in the Lord, verse 1., “ The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice.” Why so ? because that the Lord had heard and granted his petition, “ Thou hast not withholden the request of his lips,” verse 2. Yea, more than so, “ Thou hast given him his heart’s desire,” verse 2., yea, more than so, thou hast given him more than he asked, for “ he asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever,” verse 4. Yet more than so, thou hast not only given him his heart’s desire, an answer to his prayer, and more than he prayed for, but “ thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness.” As if he should say, Lord, I never asked a kingdom, I never thought of a kingdom, but thou hast prevented me with the blessings of thy goodness, and thou hast set “ a crown of pure gold on my head ;” blessings of goodness, in the Hebrew, is put for good blessings, wherewith the Lord doth anticipate the psalmist ; for thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness ; in the consideration of which preventing love and grace, his heart was much warmed, and affected.

From whence then I take up this note or doctrine.

That it is a sweet thing, and worthy of all our thankful acknowledgments to be prevented with the blessings of God's goodness, or God's good blessings.

Preventing mercy is sweet mercy, soul refreshing mercy, which a thankful gracious heart doth well observe, and in the observation thereof is much refreshed therewithal.

For the opening and prosecution of which argument,

First, I shall labour to shew that it is no new thing for God to walk in the way of preventing mercy with the children of men.

Secondly, How and in what respects God will prevent us with his mercies, or his blessings.

Thirdly, What those choice blessings are, wherewith God will prevent the children of men.

Fourthly, Why God will carry on the work of his mercy in a way of preventing love.

Fifthly, What there is in this preventing love, that should be so sweet and soul refreshing to a thankful gracious heart. And

Sixthly, In case that God hath prevented any of us with his love or mercy, what is our duty that doth flow from thence.

First, It is no new thing for God to walk in a way of preventing love and mercy with the children of men. Thus he hath always dealt, doth deal, and will deal so; thus he hath always dealt, so with the world, so with the nations of the world, so with great towns and places, so with families, and so with particular souls.

As for the world; did not God first come with his mercy to the world, before the world made after it? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." But how did he give this gift? Did we beg it first, did we seek it first, or did he first prevent us with it? When Adam, and all the world in Adam had sinned, fallen, did Adam and the world first go to God for Christ, or for the promise of Christ; or did God first give out the promise of Christ, before Adam or the world sought it? "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;" God first gave out this promise of Christ, before Adam or the world sought it. Thus in regard of the world.

And as he hath dealt thus with the world in regard of pre-

venting mercy, so with the nations of the world : with the nation of the Jews ; so in Ezek xvi., " When thou layedst in thy blood, and no eye pitied thee, I passed by thee, and said unto thee, live." So when the nation of the Jews shall yet be converted again : " He is found of those that seek him not : " it is spoken of the calling of the Jews. And as for the nations of the gentiles, says our Saviour Christ to his disciples, " Go, teach all nations." Did the nations of the gentiles come to Christ, and say, Lord, the nation of the Jews have rejected thee, now then let the gospel come to us, and we will receive it? No, but says the Saviour Christ, " Go, teach all nations," whatever they be, rich or poor, high or low, whatever they be, " Go, teach all nations, and I will be with you," for their conversion, for their salvation, to the end of the world. Thus in regard of nations.

So, also, in regard of towns, great towns, places, corporations. What worse town than that of Capernaum which afterward was exalted to heaven? But did Capernaum first come to Christ, or did Christ first go to Capernaum? Christ first went to them. Matt. iv. Ye read of several towns in the Acts of the Apostles that did receive the gospel by the hands of the apostles, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra; but did these towns first seek to the apostles, and say, Pray come and preach Christ to us; or did the apostles first go to them? The apostles first went with commission from God to them. Thus in regard of towns.

And as God dealt thus with towns, preventing towns and corporations with the means of grace, when they never thought on it, so in regard of families. Who doth not know how God by his mercy did prevent the family of the jailor, converting that family by his preventing love? Who doth not know how God dealt by Zaccheus and his family : Zaccheus got up the tree, may be in curiosity, among the multitude to see Christ go by; but Christ seeing him, invites himself to his house : " Come down, Zaccheus, for to day I must abide at thy house." Did Zaccheus first invite Christ, or did Christ first invite himself? Christ first invited himself. Thus in regard of families.

And as for particular souls, you know how it was with Matthew the publican, sitting at the receipt of custom; Come and follow me, says Christ; preventing of him. And

you know how it was with Paul; "I was a blasphemer, and I was a persecutor, but I obtained mercy." How so? Did he seek it first? No, says he, I went breathing out threatenings against the people of God, and God met me, and unhorsed me; God prevented me with his grace and mercy. Thus Paul. And pray tell me what do you think of that whole chapter of Luke, the xvth? There are three parables: the parable of the lost groat, of the lost sheep, and of the lost son. The woman lost her groat, and swept to find it; but did the groat make first towards the woman or the woman make after the groat first? The shepherd lost his sheep, but did the sheep make first after the shepherd or the shepherd after the sheep? Indeed it is said concerning the lost son that he first takes up a resolution, "I will return home to my father;" but when his father saw him afar off, he ran and met him and embraced him and welcomed him home. Why? But to shew that the work of grace and mercy shall be all along carried on in a way of preventing love. Thus it was with the world from the beginning, thus with the nations of the Jews and gentiles, thus with great towns and corporations, thus with whole families, and thus with particular souls. It is no new thing, therefore, for God to walk in a way of preventing love towards the children of men. That is the first.

Secondly. Well but, then, how and in what respects will God prevent us with his mercies, or with his good blessings?

He will prevent us with his mercies in reference to our own deservings; when we deserve evil we shall receive good. Is it not a great prevention when a man shall deserve evil, to receive good? Thus will God deal with men sometimes: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Did not Moses deserve a sharp chiding and to be beaten out of his excuses, when God sent him upon his work, and he stood excusing the matter so long? Exod. iv. "He said, Oh, my Lord, send I pray thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." What was the issue of it? Instead of blows, mercy; instead of chiding and threatening, a promise. "And he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well, and lo, behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart; and thou shalt speak unto him, and put

words in his mouth, and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach ye what ye shall do." Here is good in the stead of evil. Thus God prevents us with his mercies in reference to our own deservings.

As God doth prevent us thus in reference to our own deservings, so he doth prevent us also in reference to his own proceedings of common providence. Look when God doth give in a mercy that is beyond the reach of the second cause, that is stronger or greater than the root of the second cause will bear, or beyond common providence, then God is said to prevent us with his mercy. Now thus God doth many times give in a mercy that the root of the second cause cannot bear. So he gave Elizabeth a child and Sarah a child when they were old. "With this staff came I over this brook (says Jacob), and lo I am become two bands." And thus Israel said, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father, (Deut. xxvi. 5,) and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous." A Syrian ready to perish was my father. As if a man should say, I came here to London, poor, having but my pen and inkhorn by my side, and now I am risen up to a great estate, beyond all my own parts, wits and endeavours, for the Lord hath prevented me with the blessings of his goodness. Thus God doth sometimes prevent us with his mercy in reference to his own proceedings of common providence, or the course of nature.

And then, again, as the Lord doth thus prevent us with his mercy in reference to his own proceedings of common providence, so he doth prevent us with his mercy in reference to our own preparedness. Look when God doth give in a mercy that we are not prepared for, then God is said to prevent us with his mercy. Now was it not a great and choice mercy for the ark to be brought home again to Israel? Yet, notwithstanding, you shall find they were not prepared for it; before they were prepared God gave them in the mercy: the ark came back, 1 Sam. vi., but their preparation you read of in the viith chapter: "And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, If you do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroth; and the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth and served the Lord only." This was after the ark come home;

so then the ark returned before they were thus prepared. And you know what is said in the lviith of Isaiah: "For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." What then? Verse 18, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him, also, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners;" over and beyond all preparations, for he went on frowardly in the way of his heart, and he was not prepared; but notwithstanding his want of preparation, I have seen his ways and will heal him, and will restore comforts to him and to his mourners. Thus God doth sometimes prevent us with his mercy in reference to our own preparedness for his mercy.

As God doth prevent us with his mercy, in reference to our preparedness for his mercy; so he doth prevent us with his mercy, in reference to all our prayers. Look when God gives in a mercy before we pray for it, then God is truly said to prevent us with his mercy. It is ordinarily said, God will not set in his mercy before our oven be hot; but if God should never set in his mercy, until our oven and hearts be hot in prayer, we had been an unredeemed people to this day. Though God will answer prayer, yet he will be found also of them that seek him not. Do ye say, Why then should we pray? I answer, that you are to pray, not only because it is your duty to pray, but, the more God works in an extraordinary way, the more it is our duty to be found in the use of ordinary means. And what if I say, that the same mercy may come as an answer to prayer, and yet in a way of preventing love too? What say you to the case of Hezekiah? When he was sick he prayed, and God heard his prayer, and health came as an answer of prayer; and yet he was prevented, for fifteen years more God gave in to him, which was beyond his prayer. You know how it was with Zacharias; says the Lord, "I have heard thy prayer," and gave him a child, yet he did not pray for a child, for he could not believe that he should have a child; so that God gave him a child in a way of preventing mercy, and yet it was in answer of prayer too. So here in the text: "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips, for thou hast prevented him with the blessings of thy goodness." Why? Why although the mercy received may

be an answer of prayer in regard of the body of it, yet it may come in a way of preventing love as to the moreness of it. So it was with David, so with Hezekiah, and so with Zacharias. Thus God doth sometimes prevent, as in reference to our prayer, giving in mercy beyond all our prayers.

And then, as God doth prevent us in reference to our prayers, so in reference to our believing thoughts or expectancies. "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed." Why were we as them that dreamed? Why truly we never looked for it, nor expected it, we did not think on it, it was beyond all our expectations. Thus God doth prevent us sometimes in reference to our expectancies, to our faith, and to our thoughts.

As he thus prevents us with his mercy in reference to our thoughts, and faith, and expectance, so in reference to his own promises and the conditions thereof. If I promise a man a kindness upon a condition, and do that kindness for him when he hath not performed the condition, then I prevent him with kindness. Now the Lord hath promised many a mercy upon a condition, and yet given the mercy when we have not performed the condition: "I said (says David) I would confess my sin, and thou, Lord, forgavest my iniquity." Lord, thou hast made a promise of forgiveness, upon condition of our confession and humiliation; I did not go so far, I did but say, I would confess my sin, and thou preventedst me with thy forgiving love. Thus now you see, how and in what respects God doth prevent us with his mercy. He doth prevent us with his mercy in reference to our deservings, in reference to his own proceedings of common providence, in reference to all our prayers, in reference to our faith and expectance, in reference to our preparedness, and in reference to his own promises and the conditions thereof. That is the second.

Thirdly, Well but then, what are those choice blessings wherewith God will prevent his people?

What not? But the greater the blessing is, the more it is steeped in preventing love. There are outward blessings and there are inward blessings; there are temporal blessings and there are eternal blessings. Now though the preventing love of God doth shine forth in all, yet the greater the blessing

or the mercy is, the more it is irradiated with the beams of preventing love.

Will ye instance ?

Will ye instance in the great matter of our redemption ? What greater mercy or blessing, than our redemption in and by Jesus Christ ? that is of grace : “ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.” And when Christ came into the world, in reference to our redemption to take our nature upon him ; do but see what a pack of wicked men were then extant upon the ground, in Luke iii. 1, “ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, (there is one,) Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, (there is another,) and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, (there is another,) and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, Annas and Caiaphas being high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.” And why was Christ born in such a time as this, and among such company ? but all to shew that the work of our redemption was to be carried on in a way of preventing love.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our conversion ? What greater mercy or blessing than our conversion ? Yet look into Job xxxiii., and you shall see how that mercy comes swimming down the stream of preventing love. “ God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.” What then ? “ In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.”

Or will ye instance in the matter of our justification ? What greater mercy or blessing than that of our justification ? Yet this also comes swimming down the stream of preventing love, for “ he justifies the ungodly.” And in Rom. iv. it is said of Abraham, that he was justified not yet circumcised, for we say, “ that faith was reckoned to him for righteousness,” verse 9. How was it then reckoned, when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision ; not in circumcision but in uncircumcision ? Why, why not in circumcision, but in his uncircumcision ? but to shew that this mercy of justification must be carried on in a way of preventing love.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our sanctification ? What greater mercy than to be truly sanctified ? Yet this

also comes swimming down the stream of preventing love. "I will wash ye with clean water." "Such and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord." This also in a way of preventing love.

Will ye instance in the matter of consolation? What greater mercy than for a poor drooping soul to be truly comforted? This also comes in a way of preventing love. "Or ever I was aware," before I was aware, saith the spouse, "my soul was as the chariots of Amminadib." I was unwilling to receive the promise, my soul refused to be comforted; but, "Or ever I was aware, my soul was as the chariots of a willing people," of Amminadib, that is, of a willing people. When Christ was dead, how sad was Mary; Christ did but come unto her, and say, Mary, and she was comforted.

Will ye instance in the revelation of the truths of the times? What greater blessing than for a man to be well acquainted with the truth of the times, in opposition to anti-christ? Now says John in Rev. i., when these truths were given out, "I heard a voice behind me;" before I was aware, God prevented me, acquainting me with these truths of the Revelations.

Or will ye instance in outward blessings or mercies? Then I will appeal to you, in the great turnings of your lives, hath not God prevented you with his blessings? It is true we are to trade in a way of prayer to gain outward blessings and mercies; but, I say, when ever did you meet with any great turn of your life, but it was cast by preventing love before prayer came in? So that do ye ask, what are those choice blessings wherewith God will prevent his people? you see here what they are. So I have done with the third thing.

Fourthly, Now why will God carry on the work of his mercy in a way of preventing love?

Because the heart of God is full of love to the children of men. Ordinary love will shew kindness upon kindness; but when the heart is full of love, it delights to prevent the person loved with kindness. Now the heart of God is full of love for the children of men.

God will so carry on the work of his grace and mercy, that all his mercies and blessings now may be conformed to the womb that bare them. The child follows the womb that bare it; the first in every kind is the rule of the rest.

Now election is the womb of all our mercies ; and doth not preventing love sway there ? “I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau,” before they had done either good or evil ; there is preventing love. Now I say, God will so carry on the work of his mercy, that all his mercies and blessings may be conformed to their first original election, and there preventing mercy is very sweet.

But God will so carry on the work of his mercy, as it may be most taking and effective upon the souls of the children of men ; and what is more taking than preventing love ? What more operative, what more powerful, what more taking I say ? You know the parable ; some were invited to the supper, and some not invited ; some came and some came not ; who were those that came ? who were those that came not ? those that came not were such as were invited ; those that came were such as were in the lanes, highways, and hedges, compelled to come in. Aye, preventing love is the most taking ; now God will so carry on the work of his mercy, as it may be most taking, and most effective upon the souls of the children of men.

Again, God will so carry on his mercy, as that it may be holding and sure. The more any mercy is laid upon that which is in God himself, and the less laid upon that which is in us, the more holding and sure it is. Now mercy laid upon grace is sure, and therefore God will carry on the work of his mercy in a way of preventing love, that his mercy may be sure, that it may be holding.

Again, God will so carry on the work of his mercy, as that it may be most engaging, and most obliging with the hearts of men. What is there in all the world that is more engaging to an ingenuous spirit than grace ? And what is there more gracious than preventing love ? Thereby a soul is engaged to God. Aye, says a poor soul, I was going on in the way of my sin, lay snorting in my sin, and never thought on the good ways of God, unless it were to oppose them, and speak against them ; but then, before I was aware, I know not how, God did reveal himself and his ways to me ; oh, now what shall I do for God ? I will spend and be spent for God ; “anything for Christ,” who hath thus overcome me with his preventing love. Of all those that are called the ancients, Austin did most magnify the grace of

God ; Bradwardine called him the son of grace ; and of all in those days, none that we read of tasted so much of the preventing mercy of God as he. When he was young he prayed for the mortification of his sin, and yet he confesses that he secretly desired that God would not grant his prayer, yet God prevented his prayer. Another time being alone, he heard a voice saying, *Tolle lege, tolle lege*, take and read, take and read ; and he opened the bible, and pitched upon some words in the first of John, that proved the beginning of his conversion. Another time going a journey, he misses his way, and missing his way he escaped his enemies that lay in the way for him ; several times God prevented him, insomuch that he brake out into this expression : Lord, I did not first come to thee, but thou didst first come and stir me up to come unto thee. And who ever magnified the freeness of the riches of the grace of God like Paul ? And why ? Of all the men in the world, he lay under the greatest preventions of divine love ; no wonder therefore Paul of all men magnified the free grace of God, for he of all other lay under the preventions of divine love.

Again further, God will so carry on the work of his grace and mercy, that no flesh may glory in itself, that we may not rest upon any thing that we do, or have, or suffer. When we are to come to duty, we are unwilling to it ; after we have performed it, we are as apt to rest upon it, as before we were unwilling to come unto it. What is the reason ? but because men think that they do come to God before God comes to them ; but let a man be once fully convinced of God's preventing love, and he rests no more upon what he doth, but says he then, If God hath prevented me in reference to my prayer, why should I rest on my prayer, if God hath prevented me in reference to my duty, why should I rest on my duty ; says Paul to the Corinthians, " He calleth things that are not, that no flesh may glory in his sight ;" And in Job xxxiii., says Elihu there, " In deep sleep, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction ;" why ? " That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." There is no such way in the world to take down the pride of man, to keep him from resting upon duty, as to be

well seen, well experienced, in the preventing love of God. And therefore God carries on the work of his grace and mercy in a way of preventing love, that no flesh may glory in itself.

God will so carry on the work of his mercy, and goodness, and of his grace, that men may be made most gracious, and in case they sin against him, they may be reduced to true repentance. What is there in all the world will make one so gracious as a sight of grace? And what gives one a greater sight of grace than preventing love? And what is there in all the world that will reduce a soul to true repentance, having sinned, like preventing love? It is said of Peter, "He went out and wept bitterly;" all his tears came out of the eyes of preventing grace; Christ looked upon him first, it was preventing love that brought forth that repentance. I say, no such way to reduce a poor soul that hath sinned to true repentance, as the consideration of God's preventing love. Do you therefore ask why God is pleased to carry on his mercy thus, in a way of preventing love? For these six or seven reasons. And so you have the fourth thing.

Fifthly, Well but then in the fifth place, What is there in this preventing love that is so sweet to a gracious soul, to a thankful heart?

The more immediately that any mercy doth come out of God's hand, and the less it runs through ours, the more sweet it is. Water is sweetest out of the fountain. Now preventing mercy comes immediately out of the hands of God, and runs not through our hand at all, nor through the hand of the second cause at all, therefore must needs be very sweet.

But the more costless, or less costly to us any mercy is, the sweeter it is. Possibly a kindness may cost more to keep it than it is worth. Suppose a man promise me or give me wood; the cutting down of the wood, and bringing it home, may cost me more than the wood is worth. So a kindness may cost one more care than the thing itself doth amount unto. But now preventing mercy cost me nothing, it is cut down to my hand, it is brought into my hand, it is costless mercy, it cost me nothing, surely therefore it is very sweet.

But then again, the more perfect, and complete, and

entire any mercy is, the sweeter it is. Half-mercies are not so sweet as whole. Preventing mercy is complete and entire. In Ezek. xvi. you may see what a complete mercy is there given: "I washed thee with water (verse 9) I thoroughly washed away thy blood, and I anointed thee with ointment, I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger's skin; and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck, and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head;" and so he goes on. What mercy was this? It was preventing mercy. "I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy own blood, and said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, live, yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, live." So then, preventing mercy is the most complete mercy; and it must needs be so, for it comes immediately out of God's hand, and not through the hand of the second cause. That that comes immediately out of God's hand, not running through the hand of the second cause, is most complete. Upon this account our justification is more perfect and complete than our sanctification, because it comes immediately out of the hand of God, and not out of our own hand. In justification our *guilt* is removed, in sanctification our *filth* is removed; our guilt is offensive to ourselves, our filth is offensive to God. Now one would think, God would rather take away all our filth that is offensive to himself, than all our guilt that is offensive to us; no, but our justification is perfect, our sanctification not perfect; why? because our justification comes immediately out of the hand of God, and doth not run through our own hand; for though we be justified by our faith, yet it is as faith is God's instrument, not as our act. Now the more immediately that any mercy comes out of the hand of God, and the less out of our hand, the more perfect and complete it is. So doth preventing mercy do, and therefore must needs be very sweet.

Again, The more that any mercy doth correct difficulty and sweeten duty, the sweeter is that mercy. Now preventing love doth correct difficulty, and it doth sweeten duty. See it in Zaccheus; what an hard and great work was he upon! "Lord," says he, "the half of my goods I give to

the poor." Stay then : suppose his estate was a thousand pounds, he would have but five hundred pounds left ; and " Lord," says he, " if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Suppose he had wronged men to the value of a hundred pounds, there is four hundred pounds more gone, so there is but a hundred pounds left of a thousand. What an hard work is this ! Yet mark how easily he comes off to this hard work, " Behold Lord ;" why he had drunk deep of preventing love. " Zaccheus, come down," says Christ, " for to day I must abide at thine house." Christ doth not come and say, Zaccheus, give half thy goods to the poor, and if thou hast wronged any man, restore him fourfold, and then I will come to thy house ; no, but : " Zaccheus, come down, for this day I must abide at thy house," preventing him with his love, and then this hard work comes off easily. There is nothing will correct difficulty and sweeten duty more than preventing love, therefore preventing love must needs be sweet. And thus now you see what there is in preventing love, that is so sweet to a gracious soul. That is the fifth.

Sixthly, But now lastly. You will say, Suppose I have tasted of preventing love and mercy, suppose I have had experience of it, for I must needs say, this is my case ; for I was going on in the way of my sin, and God prevented me many a time with his preventing grace. I have been backward *to*, and dull *in* duty, and God hath many a time prevented me with assisting grace. I have been full of unbelief, and said : I am cast off, and shall never see the face of God again, but the Lord hath prevented me with his comforting grace, and with the shines of his face. I was galloping to hell as fast as I could, but God hath prevented me with his saving grace. And as for my outward estate in the world, I was low and knew not what to do, and God prevented me with such a gift, such a house and land ; what hath my life been but a bundle of preventing mercy ; if any have drank deep of this preventing grace, I may say, I have much more. Now what is my duty that doth flow from hence ?

If you have tasted of God's preventing love and mercy, if God hath indeed prevented you with the " blessings of his goodness," why then should not your hearts be filled with

the sense thereof; why should not your thoughts be much thereupon? How God hath prevented you at such a time, in such a thing. The more sense you have of God's preventing love and mercy, the more humbly you will walk with God, and the more closely, especially considering that God will not upbraid you. If a man takes a beggar from the dunghill, and makes her his wife, prevents her with his love and kindness, the sense of his preventing love, will make her walk humbly all her days, unless the man upbraid her with it; if he upbraids her with it, it will not make her walk humbly; but unless he upbraids her with it, the sense of it will make her walk humbly all her days. Friends, God doth prevent us with his love, and will not upbraid us with his preventions; and therefore why should we not walk humbly, and why should we not think much thereon, and have our hearts filled with the sense thereof. The more necessary and useful any mercy is, the more we are engaged to think thereon. Some mercies are more necessary, and some less necessary. Those mercies and blessings we put God upon the giving of with our own desires, we may suspect are less necessary; but those that God gives us in a way of preventing love, we may think them most necessary. This is the way of preventing love, surely therefore we are engaged to think much thereon; thus ye become God's darlings by his preventing love. The world hath its darlings; such a one lies long in bed, takes little pains, yet the world flows in upon him, the world prevents him, he is the world's darling; another man is up early and late, takes a great deal of pains, and yet is poor; but here is a man do what he will, yet he grows rich, for he is the world's darling. So now you have blessing upon blessing, and in a way of prevention, what doth this argue, but that you are God's darlings? And will you not think much of this? Oh, think much thereon.

If you have tasted of this preventing love and mercy, go away and be very thankful to God upon this account. Shall David be thankful to the Lord for preventing him, taking him from the sheep-fold, and will not you be thankful for preventing mercy? Shall Ruth be thankful to Boaz for preventing her with his kindness, spreading his skirt over her, and will not you be thankful to the Lord for his preventing love to you? Why should ye not all say with

David here: "He hath prevented me with the blessings of his goodness." Indeed I was a great sinner, but he hath prevented me with his justifying mercy; and I was a wandering creature, as a lost sheep, but he hath prevented me with his redeeming mercy; God spake once, and twice unto me, and I heard it not, but in the deep sleep of my soul, then did he open mine ears, and seal instruction on me before I was aware; therefore all that is within me bless the Lord. Oh, you that are thus prevented, bless the Lord for this his preventing mercy, his sweet mercy.

But if you have tasted of God's preventing mercy, and have indeed been prevented with the blessings of his goodness, even your very prayers have been prevented with the blessings of his goodness; why then should ye not be early up, and sooner at your prayers, that if it may be, you may prevent God's mercy with your prayers, as God hath prevented your prayers with his mercy. When a master comes into the chamber where his servant lies, and finds him in bed, what says the servant if he be ingenuous? This my master's coming into my bed-chamber before I was up, is a plain rebuke to my sloth, I will be up the sooner hereafter. So says a gracious, ingenuous soul, God's preventing my prayer with his mercy, is a plain rebuke to my prayer; wherefore awake prayer, up prayer, through the grace of God I will never be so tardy again with my prayer and duty, but as God hath prevented my prayer with his mercy, so through grace I will prevent his mercy with my prayer for the time to come.

If you have tasted of God's preventing mercy, and God hath indeed prevented you with the blessings of his goodness, why then should ye not all labour to be like unto God in your dealings with men, preventing them with your loving kindness. You think it a great matter to forgive a man that hath injured you upon acknowledging of his fault, but God prevents us with his forgiveness before we acknowledge and be humbled; therefore why should you not labour to be like to God therein? If a man hath done you a wrong or injury, do not stand upon it to have his acknowledgment, but say, I will be like to God; God prevents me with his love before my acknowledgment, therefore through grace I will prevent this man with my kindness before his acknowledgment, I will

forgive him. Thus labour to be like unto God in all your dealings with men.

But, If you have tasted of this preventing love, and God hath indeed prevented you with the blessings of his goodness, why, then, why should ye not trust in the Lord for ever? Whatsoever your condition be, trust in the Lord, and believe for ever now, for your souls, for your bodies. Some there are that doubt of their salvation, of the salvation of their souls. Ah, says one, I am afraid I shall not be saved because my prayer cannot be accepted. But will the Lord be found of those that seek him not, and will he not be found of you that seek him, though your prayers are poor prayers? Ah, says another, I am afraid the Lord will not receive me when I come to him, he will not receive me. No; but if the Lord comes to us first, and makes a tender and offer of his grace to us; if he seeks us, will he not receive them, think you, that seek him? Surely he will. Some there are that doubt in reference to their outward condition, and say they shall want provision, shall want estates to maintain them; but hath the Lord prevented you with his mercy in the great turns of your life, why, then, should you not trust in the Lord though you see no means at all how you should be supplied? Heretofore God hath prevented you with his mercies; and why should you not say, God hath prevented me heretofore, therefore now I will trust in him though I see no means of supply? Whatsoever your condition be, trust in the Lord now upon this account; believe, believe. Let me say this to you, Would you believe? Do you desire to believe? Yes, I desire to believe. Do ye? then let your eye be fixed on God's preventing love. What is the reason that men do not believe? but because their eyes are fixed no more steadily upon preventing love. The more you know God is willing to help you, the more you will believe; I believe that, you will say. Now I pray then, tell me, suppose a man comes to a beggar, and before the beggar asks, the man gives him money; will not the beggar conclude that the man was willing to relieve him? Yes. Thus now it is, we beg and we beg, but it is as no begging, then comes the Lord and prevents us with his mercy; will you not say the Lord is willing to shew mercy? surely he is. Now, therefore, seeing God is thus willing to shew mercy, oh, then, believe; you that have gone

doubting and fearing and trembling all your days, for shame now believe. Have you tasted of God's preventing mercy time after time, in the matter of your justification, in the matter of your sanctification, in the matter of your consolation, and in reference to our outward concerns? Oh, trust in the Lord for ever upon this account, and magnify the riches of his grace. Now go away, and say, through free grace, I will doubt no more. Upon all occasions trust in the Lord, O you that have been made partakers of preventing mercy.