

THE
SINFULNESS OF SIN
AND THE
FULNESS OF CHRIST.

IN TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED A. D. 1667.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,—Thou art desired to take notice that these two Sermons are not exposed to public view by the Author's own hand, but were taken as they fell from his lips in his ordinary preaching: nevertheless the style, method, spirituality, conciseness and depth of them, give in ample testimony to all that have acquaintance with him that they are his genuine offspring; and being suitable and useful to all persons, in all conditions, thou mayest, through the blessing of God, reap much advantage by them.

THE
SINFULNESS OF SIN AND THE FULNESS
OF CHRIST.

SERMON I.

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN.

“ But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”—ROM. VII. 13.

MY purpose is now to speak something concerning the evil and sinfulness of sin, and therefore have made choice of these words. In this chapter the apostle Paul doth give us some account of the way and manner of his conversion. Before I was converted, says he, “ I was alive without the law,” verse 9; but “ when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;” for without the law, sin was dead, and “ I was alive without the law once.” I thought myself a jolly man, I was very brisk and jolly, had good thoughts of my condition: “ I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came;” when the word of the Lord came in power unto my soul—for I had the law and the commandment always with me, “ concerning the law I was blameless,” Phil. iii. 6; the letter of the law was not absent from me—but when it pleased God to set on the word of the Lord in power upon my soul, then, whereas I was alive before, now sin revived; sin that lay dead before, and was hid, now revived, and did appear to be sin; for that in the 9th verse, and this in verse 13, are the same: verse 9, “ Sin revived, and I died;” “ But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me;” in this 13th verse. But how did sin revive and appear? By the coming of the law, by the coming of the commandment, thereby it broke out the more, and so was discovered; as by the coming and shining of the sunbeams upon the dunghill, the filth stinks the more, not that the sunbeams are the cause, but the occa-

sion thereof. And sin revived by the coming of the commandment, and appeared to be sin, appeared more to me in its own shape, and struck me dead with the apparition thereof; whereas before, sin was dead and I alive, now sin alive and I dead.

From whence then I take up this observation :

That there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin which doth not appear to a man until he doth convert and turn unto God. Look when a man doth convert and turn unto God, then sin appears to be sin indeed, and not before.

For the clearing and prosecution whereof I shall labour to shew,

First, That there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin.

Secondly, That this evil and sinfulness of sin doth not appear to a man until conversion work pass upon his soul.

Thirdly, Look when a man doth convert and turn to the Lord in truth, then sin appears in the sinfulness thereof unto him.

There is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin.

To make it out in the general, and then more particularly :

In the general. This may appear by the names of sin, for sin hath taken up all the names of evil, of all evils. The Scripture doth not nickname sin; and yet what evil is there incident unto man, but sin is invested with the name thereof in Scripture?

Is it an evil thing for a man to be unclean and filthy? Sin is called filthiness: "I will wash you from all your filthiness," Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

Is it an evil thing for a man to be naked? Sin is called nakedness: "That your nakedness may not appear," Rev. iii. 18.

Is it an evil thing for a man to be blind? Sin is called blindness: "The blind shall lead the blind," Matt. xv. 14.

Is it an evil thing for a man to be foolish? Sin is called folly: "That you may no more return unto folly," Psalm lxxxv. 8.

Is it an evil thing for a man to be mad? The prodigal returned unto himself, Luke xv. 17; and, "I was mad," says Paul, Acts xxvi. 11.

Is it an evil thing for a man to be dead? Sin is called death: "Dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1.

It is called an abomination, Prov. viii. 7; and because there is no word that can express the evil and sinfulness of sin, the apostle in this place says, "That sin might become exceeding sinful." Why? Because there is no word of evil that can reach the evil of sin. Now look what that is that doth engross and take up all the names of all evils, that must needs be exceeding evil; so it is with sin.

Look what that is that doth separate betwixt us and God, who is the chiefest and universal good, that must needs be the greatest evil. Now says the prophet, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," Isa. lix. 2.

Look what that is that doth unite us to Satan, and make us the children of the devil, that must needs be very evil. Says our Saviour, "You are of your father the devil:" why? "for his works you do," John viii. 44. Sin makes us the children of the devil.

Look what that is that did put Christ to death, that was the cause of his death, that must needs be exceeding evil. So sin did: "He was made sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. "He bare our sins upon the cross," 1 Pet. ii. 24. "And the Lord made the iniquity of us all to meet on him," Isa. liii. 6.

Look what that is that doth bring a general curse upon the whole creation, that must needs be evil. So sin hath done: "Cursed be the ground and the earth for thy sake," Gen. iii. 17.

Look what that is that doth soil and stain all our glory, and the image of God in us, that must needs be great evil. Sin hath stained the beauty of the image of God that was stamped upon us, and by sin, saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 23, we come short of the glory of God, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Look what that is that doth bring such horror of conscience, that a soul is not able to bear, and cannot be allayed but by the blood of Jesus, that must needs be a very great evil: sin, and the eating of the forbidden fruit, hath bred this worm that never dies.

Look what that evil is that is the fuel of hell, that feeds hell-fire to all eternity; that must needs be great evil: take sin away, and hell-fire dies; sin is that brimstone that hell-fire feeds upon to all eternity.

Look what that evil is that is worse than the worst of

afflictions, that must needs be very evil: the least sin is worse than the greatest affliction. For,

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, it doth not defile the man; "for that which is from without doth not defile the man, but that which is from within," Mark vii. 15. Sin is from within. Affliction is not from within, but from without; but sin is from within. Therefore if I give a reproachful word to another, it more defiles me than a hundred reproachful words from another, because my word comes from within me, his words from without me. Now affliction is from without, and doth not defile; but sin is from within, and doth defile. Therefore the least sin is worse than the greatest affliction.

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, yet notwithstanding, God is the author of it. "Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6. God bade Shimei curse David: "Let him alone, God hath bidden him," 2 Sam. xvi. 11. I send famine, and I send pestilence, and I send mildew, says God. God is the author of affliction, but God is not the author of any sin. Indeed it is said God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and others, but that is, *non infundendo maliciam sed subtrahendo gratiam*: not by infusing malice into their hearts, but by withdrawing his grace. God is not the author of sin, but God is the author of all affliction.

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, yet it is not contrary to God; but sin, though never so small, is contrary to God.

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, yet notwithstanding it is but the fruit and the claws of sin. What are the claws to the lion? If the lion be dead, the claws can do us no hurt, but if the lion be alive, his life puts strength into his claws. Afflictions are but the claws of sin, "The sting of death is sin," 1 Cor. xv. 56, and the sting of affliction is sin; but as for afflictions, they are but the bare claws, and it is sin that puts life and strength into these claws.

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, yet God doth not hate affliction, neither doth affliction make a man hate God; but God hates sin, and sin makes a man hate God.

Take an affliction, and though it be never so great, a man may be a blessed man in the worst affliction. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered," Ps. xxxii. 1; but he cannot be a blessed man that lies in sin. "Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. Thus you see the least sin is worse than the greatest affliction; therefore certainly the evil of sin is very great.

Look what that evil is that God doth punish with the greatest severity, both in his own and others, though it be but small in our eyes, that must needs be exceeding evil. Now he doth severely punish that which we look upon as a small sin, both in his own and others. In his own: you think it was no great matter for Adam to eat the forbidden fruit; you think Moses was but a little in passion with the children of Israel, for which he was kept out of Canaan; and you think it was no great matter for Uzzah to stay the ark when it was falling; yet God punished these small sins, small in our eyes, he punished them severely in his own people. And, as for others: because there is an infinite evil in sin, and God doth justly punish, he punisheth them to all eternity for the least sin; for amongst men, it is just to punish until a man repenteth, but in hell men never repent, therefore God punisheth them to all eternity. So that God doth punish sin with the greatest severity, both in his own and others; therefore surely it is very evil.

Look what that is that is a worse evil than hell or the devil, that must needs be a very great and exceeding evil. Sin is worse than the devil; for the devil is a creature that God made, but sin is none of God's creature. And it is worse than hell; for hell is of God's making too, but sin is not. It is worse to be given up to sin than to the devil; if a man be given up to the devil, it is that his soul may be saved; but if a man be given up to sin, it is that his soul may be destroyed and not saved. So that sin is worse than hell or the devil.

Look what that evil is that is a punishment in itself, that must needs be exceeding evil, Sin in itself is a punishment, though there were no other punishment to follow. "In keeping thy commandments there is great reward," Ps. xix. 11. So in breaking God's commandments there is great

punishment. Therefore sometimes when God would punish men for their sins, he punisheth them by giving them up to great sins: "God gave them up to vile affections, to uncleanness," &c. Rom. i. 26. Now I say, look what that is which is in itself a punishment, that must needs be exceeding evil: and thus it is with sin; this therefore must needs be a very great evil. Thus in the general, you see, there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin.

But now, more particularly, I shall shew it you in the sin of our nature, the sin of our hearts and thoughts, and the sin of our lives and practices; especially living under the gospel, the evil of these sins.

As for the sin of our nature; the more universal and overspreading any leprosy or contagion is, the worse and the greater it is: now the sin of our nature spreads over all our faculties; our understanding, reason, will, affections; it spreads over all our faculties.

Look what that contagion or leprosy is, that is so great that nothing will help against it, but the pulling down the house; that must needs be very great: truly the sin of our nature is such, nothing will cure it but the pulling down the house.

Look what that sin is that is most unwearied, and whereby a man is unwearied in sin, that must needs be very great. The sin of our nature is unwearied, as the fountain is unwearied in sending up water, bubbling up water. A man may be wearied in drawing up water out of the fountain, and so a man may be wearied in sinful actions: but sinful nature is never weary, and that sin that is unwearied is exceeding great.

Look what that sin is that is the ground of all our relapses and returns to sin; that must needs be very great. Now what is the ground of all our returns to evil, after all our repentance and reformation, but our nature? Suppose water be heated; after it is warmed and heated, it cools again. Heat it again, and it cools again; why? Because coldness is its nature. And so what is the reason that men return again and again to their sin, after all their repentance and reformation, but the sin of their nature?

Look what that evil is which is the least lamented, and that whereby our sin is most excused; that is a great and

dreadful evil. Now of all sins the sin of our nature is least lamented, and thereby men's sins are most excused. Bear with me, it is my nature; I am passionate, but it is my nature; I am froward, but it is my nature; men excuse themselves thereby. Now, I say, look what that evil is which is least lamented, and that whereby our sin is most excused; that is a dreadful evil. Thus it is with the sin of our nature.

Again, But as for the sin of our hearts and thoughts, the evil thereof:

Look what that sin is that is the most incurable; that is worst: a secret hidden wound within the body, or a disease within the body, is the most incurable. Such are the sins of our hearts and thoughts, secret sins, and so the most incurable.

Look what that sin is that is a friend, a parent to other sins; that must needs be very evil. Now what are the parents of all our sinful actions but sinful thoughts? What puts life into evil actions but sinful thoughts? So with the godly, and so with the ungodly: with the godly, for saith Abraham, "I thought the fear of God was not in this place," Gen. x. 11. and therefore I said she is my sister; she was indeed his sister, and he lied not in saying so; but he dissembled, and hid the truth, using an unworthy shift for his own preservation; and where began this evil but in a sinful thought? "I thought the fear of God was not in this place." So with the ungodly, Ps. l. 21, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself:" the wicked steal, and commit adultery, and deceive, and slander others, and how are they led into all this, but by thoughts? "Thou thoughtest I was such an one as thyself:" and you know what the Psalmist saith, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression," Ps. xix. 12, 13. Sins of our hearts and thoughts do principiate, and give a being unto sinful actions, and therefore are very evil.

Thereby also, by the sins of our hearts and thoughts, our former sin committed, that was dead, is revived again, and hath a resurrection by our musing on it, contemplating on it with delight. As the witch at Endor called up Samuel that was dead, so a delightful thought calls up a sinful ac-

tion that was dead before. Thereby our sins that were dead before are revived, and have a resurrection.

Thereby also a man may possibly sin that sin in effect, which he never did commit in act, and so the Lord may punish him for it: as the Lord said to David, because it was in thine heart to build me an house, I will build thy house: so says God to a man in a way of punishment, because it was in thy heart to do this evil, though thou didst it not, I will punish thee for it. Possibly, I say, by the sin of our hearts and thoughts, a man may sin that sin in effect, which he never did commit in act, and that is evil.

Thereby a man may or doth repent of his very repentance: a man sins and afterwards is sorrowful, and repents thereof, and then after his repentance he thinks on his sin with delight; what is this but to repent of his very repentance? As by my repentance I am sorrowful for my sin, so by musing on my sin with delight, I repent of my repentance. Now is it not a very great evil for a man to repent of his repentance? Lo, this may a man do, and this men ordinarily do; they repent of their repentance by musing on their sin, and delighting in it in a way of sinful thoughts.

But again, As for the sin of our lives and practice, especially living under the gospel, the evil thereof, that is very great, for,

Sin under the gospel is sinning against the remedy; and of all sins, sinning against the remedy is the greatest; and therefore it is worse for a man to commit adultery that is married, than for an unmarried man to commit fornication; for he sins against the remedy. Now the great remedy against sin is the gospel; therefore for a man to sin under the gospel, he sins against the remedy.

The greater obligations a man sinneth against, the worse and the greater is his sin. By the gospel we are brought under great obligations, and by our sinning under the gospel, what do we? We engage the very mercy of God to become our adversary: by our sinning under the gospel, we sin against mercy and grace, and thereby engage the very mercy of God, our greatest friend, to become our greatest adversary.

Peccatum majus, ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem et peccatum; the more repugnancy there is betwixt the sin and the sinner, the greater is the sin; and therefore it is

worse for a judge to be unjust, than for another, because there is a special repugnancy betwixt the sin and the sinner. Now there is a special repugnancy betwixt the gospel, and a man that sins under the gospel; for he professes the contrary, and therefore sin there is the greater.

Peccatum majus, ubi majus nocumentum; the more hurtful or mischievous any sin is, the greater is that sin: sinning under the gospel is very hurtful, to ourselves, and to others. To ourselves; as poison taken in sack, or something that is warm, is the most venomous, so sin under the gospel is the deadliest poison. Why? Because it is warmed with gospel heat; and it is hurtful to others, because they are hardened; for when men sin under the gospel, others are hardened thereby.

The more able that any sin is to defend itself by knowledge, shifts and distinctions, the worse and greater it is. Now a man that lives under the gospel hath knowledge, and by his knowledge is able to defend his sin by many distinctions; and sins bred under the gospel are able to defend themselves by knowledge fetched from the gospel, therefore the worse.

The more deceitful that any sin is, and the better ends and pretences it hath, the worse it is, and holds the longer. Now sins bred under the gospel are most deceitful, and have the best ends and pretences, and therefore the worse.

The more that a man doth cast contempt upon the great things of God by his sin, the greater and the worse is his sin. Sins under the gospel cast contempt upon the great things of God, the glory of God, the glorious offer of the grace of God. To sin under the gospel, is to cast contempt upon the glory of God and the great things of God, and therefore sin there is the greater.

The more costly and chargeable that any sin is, the greater and the worse it is. Now a man that sins under the gospel cannot sin at so cheap a rate as another, though he sins the very same sin that another commits. Why? "He that knows his Master's will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes," Luke xii. 47. What an evil and dreadful thing is it for men to sin under the gospel, says the apostle, "he shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel," 2 Thess. i. 8. Flaming fire; not painted fire, but real fire; but there

may be real fire in a spark, therefore he doth not say real fire neither, but, "He shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel." Oh, what an evil and dreadful thing is it for a man to sin living under the gospel. Now if there be so much evil in the sins of our lives and practices, living under the gospel; if there be so much evil in the sin of our hearts and thoughts; if there be so much evil in the sin of our nature; if sin hath taken up all the names of all evils; if sin doth separate between God and us; if sin doth unite us to Satan, and make us the children of the devil; if sin did put Christ to death; if sin doth bring a general curse upon the whole creation; if sin doth stain all our glory; if sin doth awaken conscience to that horror that nothing but the blood of Christ can quiet it; if sin doth feed the fire of hell; if the least sin be worse than the greatest affliction; if God doth punish the least sin both in his own and others with the greatest severity; if sin be worse than hell or the devil; and, if sin itself be a punishment, certainly there is abundance of evil and sinfulness in sin. So I have done with the first thing, namely, that there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin.

Secondly, Though there be thus much evil and sinfulness in sin, this doth not appear to a man until he doth convert and turn unto God: till then his sin is dead, but then it is revived; till then the sinfulness of sin doth not appear, for,

Till then a man is in the dark; and who can see the greatness of an evil in the dark?

Till then, grace, the contrary, is not placed in the soul; one contrary doth shew the other: white is best seen by black, grace is best seen by sin, and sin is best seen by grace: till then a man hath no grace, no contrary to illustrate it, to make it appear.

And till then sin is in its own place. *Elementum non gravitat suo loco*; water is not heavy in its own place, it is not heavy in the river; a man may lay at the bottom of the river with all the water upon his back, and yet not feel the weight of it, because it is in its place; but take but a pail-ful of water out of the river, and you feel the weight of it, because then it is out of its place. Now till a man convert and turn unto God, sin is in its own place, and therefore the sinfulness of it doth not appear.

But you will say, How comes this to pass, that sin should not appear in the sinfulness of it, until a man convert and turn unto God?

I answer, Sin is a spiritual thing; I mean a moral, not a natural thing: sin is a spiritual thing, and a man that liveth by sense cannot see what is spiritual.

A man is blind unto what he loves; till a man convert and turn unto God, he loves his sin; he loves it above all the world; and therefore the evil and sinfulness of sin doth not yet appear to him.

The more blinds a man hath that cover his sin, the less he sees it, and the less sin appears to be sinful: now before a man convert and turn unto God, all his duties are but blinds to cover his sin, all his morality is but a blind, all his natural uprightness is but a blind: True, says he, I am a sinner; but I pray, and perform duty, therefore am not so great a sinner; I have such and such moralities, and my heart is as good as any one's, therefore I am not so great a sinner. What are all his duties before he convert and turn unto God, but so many blinds to cover and hide his sin? No wonder therefore that sin doth not appear as it is, until a man doth convert and turn unto God.

The more a man looks upon sin as going into it, the less it appears to be; and the more a man looks upon sin as coming out of it, coming from it, the greater it appears to be; there is a going into sin by commission, and there is a coming from it by repentance. Now when a man is going into his sin, there he sees profit, pleasure, and his own concernments, and this makes his sin appear little; but when he comes out of it, there he sees sorrow, and repentance, and that makes his sin appear great.

Sometimes by the providence of God, sin meets with good events; and holiness meets with bad events in the world: and so the evil and sinfulness of sin is hidden from men.

The less a man is at the work of private examination, the less sin appears to be sin, and the less he sees sin as it is: before a man convert and turn unto God, he is little in the work of examining his own soul in private: no wonder therefore sin doth not appear to him to be sinful, because he is little in the work of private examination. Thus ye see sin

doth not appear in the sinfulness of it until a man doth convert, and turn unto God. That is the second.

Thirdly, Look when a man doth convert and turn unto the Lord, then sin appears in the sinfulness thereof unto his soul. For then,

He is weary and heavy-laden under the burden of his sin ; the more a man is weary and heavy-laden under the burden of his sin, the more sin appears evil and sinful to him : now look when a man doth convert and turn unto God, then he is weary, and heavy-laden under the burden of his sin : "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden," Matt. xi. 28.

Then he sees God, and not till then ; the more a man sees God, the glory of God, the goodness of God, the wisdom of God, the holiness of God, the sovereignty of God : the more sin appears in its sinfulness to him : "Woe is me, I am undone, for I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts," Is. vi. 5. And says Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." What then ? "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 5, 6. Look when I see God, the glory of God, the goodness of God, the holiness of God, the wisdom and the sovereignty of God, then sin appears in its sinfulness to me.

Then also a man comes to see Christ crucified, and not till then ; there is nothing can give us such a sight of sin as Christ crucified : "By the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. iii. 20, but by the sight of Christ crucified, I see the hatred that God hath against sin ; I do not see by the law so much the hatred that God hath against sin as in Christ crucified ; the more I see God's hatred against sin, the more I see the sinfulness of it. Now look when a man doth convert and turn unto God, then he sees Christ crucified.

Look when a man hath gotten the true prospect of hell, and of the wrath of God, then sin appears sinful to him : now look when a man convert and turn unto God in truth, then he sees the wrath of God, and hath the true prospect of hell, from which he is delivered.

The more a man is tired out, and wearied with the dogging and haunting of his sin, that he can rest no where for it, the more the sinfulness of sin appears to him. Now when a man doth convert and turn unto God, what says he ? Ah,

I am never at rest, I am dogged and haunted, and tired out continually with my sin; oh, now it appears very sinful to me.

Look when a man's heart is filled with the love of God, and possessed with the Holy Ghost, then sin appears to him to be very sinful; for what comes the Holy Ghost for? "To convince the world of sin," John xvi. 8. Now look when a man doth convert and turn to God, then comes this convincing work of the Holy Ghost; then his heart is filled with the love of God, and possessed with the Holy Ghost; therefore then sin appears in the sinfulness thereof unto his soul. And thus I have done with the doctrine, namely, that there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin, which doth not appear to a man until he doth convert and turn unto God.

By way of application,

If there be so much evil and sinfulness in sin; behold the power of the grace of God, the grace of God without you, the grace of God within you. If a spark of fire should be preserved alive in an ocean of water, you would think it is some strong hand that did it; if a candle should be kept light in a great wind and storm, you will say, it was a strong hand that kept it light: there is an ocean of sin in our hearts, and that a little spark, or candle of grace should be preserved in us, in the midst of this ocean of sin; oh, the power of the grace of God.

If this be true, behold the riches and the freeness of the grace of God, that you should be delivered from all this evil; sin sinful, and so sinful, and evil, and you delivered from all this evil; oh, the riches, and the freeness of the grace of God.

But if the sinfulness of sin doth not appear until a man convert and turn unto God. Then,

Here we may see some reason, why some men are not sensible of their sins though very great, it is because they are not converted; the commandment never came, the commandment is not yet come: such a poor soul goes on in his sin, and is not yet convinced of the evil of it, for the commandment never yet came.

If this be true, what a sad condition are all those in that are not converted and brought home to God; they are in

their sins, and their sin is in them; "The whole world lies in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. They lie in their sin, and are full thereof; they are full of this evil; this evil is full of evil, and they are full of this evil: they are full of it. For,

They are always filling and never emptying: a vessel that is always filling, and never emptying, must needs be full. Thus it is with a man not converted, not turned to God, he is always filling with sin, and never emptying; yea, when he thinks he is emptying, when he thinks he is repenting and reforming, then he is filling with sin; always filling, and never emptying, therefore must needs be full.

They are full of it, because they sin beyond their temptation: if a beggar begs of me, and I give him more than he begs for; if he begs for sixpence, and I give him a shilling, he will say, I am full, for I give him more than he begged for: so when temptation begs, and a man sins beyond his temptation, what doth this argue but that he is full of sin? Thus it is with men unconverted, they sin beyond their temptation, and what doth this argue, but that they are full of sin.

And full they are, because they are dropping their sin wheresoever they go: you will say a beggar is full of vermin, that drops his vermin wheresoever he goes; so men, not converted, not turned unto God, they are dropping their vermin wheresoever they go: if they come in good company they are dropping their vermin there; if they come in bad company they are dropping their vermin there; why? because they are full of vermin, full of sin.

But again, As men not converted, not turned to God are full of sin, so they are under the power of it. Why, how doth that appear? Because their sin commands them off from their duty. Suppose a company of men sitting at table at meat together, and another comes into the room, and says to one of them, Take your cloak and follow me, and he presently rises from his meat and follows him; you will say, Certainly this man is his master, because he arises from his meat at his command and follows him. So when sin shall command a man off from his duty, from reading the word, from private prayer; what doth this argue, but that he is under the power of sin? As when a man is sinning, and grace comes and calls him off from his sin, it

argues he is under the power of grace ; so when a man is at his duty, and his sin comes and calls him off from his duty, it argues he is under the power of sin ; so it is with men unconverted, they are under the power of their sin.

As a man unconverted is full of sin, and under the power of it, so he knows it not ; for sin doth not appear to a man to be sin until he convert and turn unto God ; it doth not yet appear, as the apostle says in another case, 1 John iii. 2, " It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but it shall appear ;" so say I in regard of sin, It doth not yet appear, but it shall appear to a man's self, and others ; before a man convert and turn to God, it doth not appear ; but to such a one it shall appear : when a man comes to die, and all his hoops be knocked off, then it will appear how full of sin he is : as a vessel that is full of liquor, and the liquor issue through the hoops, you see there is liquor in it, but you do not know how full it is till the hoops are knocked off. But then you will say, Oh, how full was this vessel. Ah, now our hoops are on, and it doth not yet appear how full of sin men are ; only it comes issuing through the hoops, through their duties, but a day is coming when all our hoops shall be knocked off, and then it will appear how full of sin men are.

But again, If this be true, that when a man doth convert and turn unto God, then his sin doth appear in the sinfulness thereof unto him ; then why should we not all labour to get the true sight of sin, to be sensible of sin ? It is the property of a man converted to be sensible of sin ; " then sin revived." As therefore you desire to have upon you the character of a man converted, labour to be sensible of your sin, that it may appear in the sinfulness thereof.

It is the mind of God, that all his converted ones should think much on, and be very sensible of the sins they committed before their conversion. " Such and such were some of you, but ye are cleansed, but ye are washed." 1 Cor. vi. 11. I say it is the mind and will of God, that those that are converted should be very sensible of their sins which they committed before conversion. For,

Thereby they pity others that are in their sins.

Thereby they are kept from future sins : what is the reason that men are not kept from future sins, but because they are not sensible of their former sins.

Thereby also they are kept in the sense of free grace towards them, and so they magnify the free grace of God; I was a blasphemer, a persecutor; such and such a one I was; but I am washed, but I am cleansed, and through grace justified; oh, the freeness of the grace of God. Thus they magnify free grace. Therefore I say it is the mind of God, that those that are converted should be still very sensible of their sins committed before their conversion: and this is a character of a man converted, sin appears to him to be sinful. Now therefore as you desire to have the character of a man converted, labour more and more to see sin in the sinfulness of it.

Well, but then the question is, What shall we do, whether converted or not; what shall we do, that we may be able to see sin in the sinfulness thereof?

Be sure of this, that you look much upon Christ crucified. Christ on the cross is a glass wherein you may see the sinfulness of sin. Study Christ crucified much.

Labour more and more to walk in the presence of God, the shines of God's countenance; for as when the sun shines into the room, you see little motes, so when God shines into your heart, you see little sins: the beams of God's countenance do discover sin in the sinfulness of it; therefore labour to walk more in the presence of God, and in the shines of his countenance.

Labour more and more to examine your own souls; be much in private examination: hardly an ungrowing christian that is much in private examination; hardly a proud man that is much in private examination. Do you desire to see sin in the sinfulness of it? Go alone, call yourself often to account, be much in private examination.

Take as much pains to keep the sense of sin upon your heart as ever you did to get it: some take pains to get themselves into a good frame, but take no pains to keep themselves in it when they have gotten it. As the apostle speaks, they view themselves in the glass of royal liberty, and go away and forget what manner of men they were.

In case you find any particular sin, go round about it; consider the circumstances thereof, aggravate it upon your own soul.

Improve your afflictions this way. God sends afflictions

sometimes to give you the sight of some sin that lay hid before; and sometimes your afflictions have your sin written on their forehead. Improve then your affliction for the discovery of the sinfulness of sin.

Be sure you judge of sin as the scripture judgeth of it, and not as men judge of it: the Scripture judgeth of sin by the consequence thereof, as our Saviour Christ says, "I was an hungred, and ye fed me not; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not." How so? "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me," Matt. xxv. 42—45. Christ judgeth of sin by the consequence of it; therefore if you would see sin in the sinfulness of it, judge of it as Christ judgeth of it, and as the Scripture judgeth of it, and not as men judge of it.

If you desire to see sin in its own colours, in the sinfulness of it; then look upon the commandments of God as great things; the more the commandment of God is greatened to you, the greater will sin be in your eye; if the commandment of God be great in your eye, the sin, contrary to the commandment, will be great in your eye too.

Never think any thing small betwixt God and you; there is nothing small betwixt God and us, for God is an infinite God.

Never look upon sin in the time of temptation; for then you are in the dark, and not fit to see the greatness of sin: labour to know the difference betwixt temptation and corruption, and betwixt the sins of God's people, and others; but never look upon sin in the time of temptation, for then you are in the dark, and cannot see the sinfulness of it.

If you would see sin in the sinfulness of it; then go unto God for the coming of the commandment, that God would set on the commandment upon you, as Paul here; says he, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Some, it may be here, never yet had the commandment set on upon their hearts; Oh then go to God, and pray for the setting on of the commandment upon you; then shall you see sin in the sinfulness thereof.

Now let me add two or three cautions to this, and so conclude.

Take heed that you do not so think on sin as to forget Christ: if you think on sin without Christ you will despair,

if you think on Christ without sin you will presume ; never think on sin without Christ : labour to get the sight of your sin, but never think on sin without Christ ; but look on your sin in the wounds of Christ, and read your sins written out in Christ's blood.

Humble yourselves for sin, though it be never so small ; but do not question your condition for sin though it be never so great ; I do not speak this to those that are unconverted, for they have cause to question their condition for every sin, though never so small ; but being converted and turned unto God, I say, humble thyself for every sin, though never so small ; but never question thy condition for any sin, though never so great.

The more sense you have of sin, and the sinfulness thereof, the more labour to maintain your assurance of the pardon of it : and the more assurance you have of the pardon of your sin, the more labour for a sight and sense of it : let not your sense of sin quench your joy of pardon ; let not your joy of pardon hinder your sight of sin : if both these be true and genuine, the one is an help unto the other.

And, to conclude, the more sense you have of sin, the more do you come to Christ : for in Scripture you shall find, that every good work is not for itself, but some good works are in order to others ; as for example, to instance in the keeping of the Sabbath, you are to rest on the Sabbath, and it is a good work, but not for itself, but in order to prayer, hearing, sanctification, and other duties. So here, sense of sin is a good work ; but it is not for itself, but in order to going to Christ ; therefore now go to Christ, and say, Lord, now I see the sinfulness of sin, let me also see the graciousness of grace, and the fulness of Christ ; yea, now I do come to thee for righteousness, because I see my sin is out of measure sinful.

SERMON II.

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST.

“ Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and

the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light : they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined,” ISAIAH ix. 1, 2.

THESE words do relate to the former chapter, as you may see by the word, nevertheless ; in the end of the former chapter the prophet shews, that great trouble and misery should befall the people of God, “It shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king, and their God, and look upward ; (verse 21) and they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish ; and they shall be driven to darkness : nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation,” &c.

So that in these words you have a greater affliction mentioned, and the mitigation of that affliction : the affliction, or trouble, is more easy, and more heavy ; it hath two parts, a more easy part, and a more heavy part : “at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea.” The story whereof you have in 2 Kings xv. 19,

“Pul, the king of Assyria, came against the land ; and Manahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand, and Manahem exacted the money of Israel : so the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.” There was the more light affliction : but in verse 29, there you have the more heavy affliction : “In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-Pileset, king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbeth-Maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.” Here was the affliction wherewith they were vexed, both more light, and more heavy.

The mitigation follows at verse 2 : “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Here is an alleviation of this affliction by the promise of Christ, which is interpreted of Christ, in Matt. iv. 12, “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into

prison, he departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

So that Christ, and Christ alone is an alleviation to our greatest afflictions.

And so the doctrine that I shall fall in with at this time is this:

There is that in Jesus Christ alone, which may and can and doth afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

For the opening and prosecution whereof,

First, We will inquire into the truth of it; that it is so.

Secondly, What that is in Christ, that may, or can succour, comfort and relieve in the worst of times and conditions?

Thirdly, How far this concerns us?

And so to the application.

First, As to the truth of it; it is said of Christ, "That in him the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily," Col. ii. 9, and there is enough in God to supply all our wants; as there is enough in heaven to pay for all at the last; so there is enough in God to supply all at the present. He is too covetous whom the great God of heaven cannot suffice. When David was in the greatest strait that ever he met with in his life; his wives and goods taken and carried away by the enemy, and his own men and soldiers mutinied, and ready to stone him; how did he comfort himself but in God? "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God," 1 Sam. xxx. 6. There is enough in God to comfort in all conditions, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in Christ; therefore there is that in Christ which may afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

If you look into Scripture you shall find, that the promises and prophecies of Christ are calculated and given out for the worst of times. It was usual with the prophets to

prophecy of Christ; but mark how their prophecies were calculated for the worst of times: in Jer. xxiii. 6, you have a prophecy of Christ, "In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Well, what time doth this prophecy relate to? A very evil time: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture," ver. 1. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel," ver. 2, "Against the pastors that feed my people, ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them:" and then comes in the prophecy of Christ. So in Isaiah xxviii. 16, you have a great prophecy of Christ: "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation:" a plain prophecy of Christ. Well, but how comes this in? Why it was calculated for an evil time; verse 14, "Hear the word of the Lord ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem; because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone; judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand:" a prophecy concerning Christ calculated for the worst of times. So in Ezek. xxxiv. 23, you have another prophecy of Christ, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd;" plainly speaking of Christ. Well, but when doth he speak this prophecy of Christ? Look into the beginning of the chapter, verse 2, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves, should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ye eat the fat, and ye clothe ye with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock." Now in this time comes out the prophecy of Christ; you make mention of *aquavita* at other times, but when there is special mention

made of *aquavitæ*, and the *aquavitæ* bottle in a fainting and dying time; what doth this argue but there is a cordiality in it? The first time that ever Christ was prophesied of, what time was it? Adam fell, and all the children of men were in a most sad condition, what cordial was then brought forth but this? "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15, and this is ordinary; the promises and prophecies of Christ are calculated for the worst of times: why? but to teach us, that there is enough in Christ to comfort, succour, and relieve in the worst of times.

If there was enough in the types of Christ to comfort and relieve the saints and people of God under the Old Testament in the worst of their times; then there must needs be enough in Christ himself to relieve and comfort the saints, and people of God now in New Testament times, in the worst of our times. Now so it was, in the times of the Old Testament, in case they had sinned, what relief had they? A sacrifice to make an atonement, Lev. iv. 20, and so a type of Christ the great Sacrifice, Heb. ix. 26. In case they were in the wilderness and wanted bread, what relief had they? They had there, manna, a type of Christ, "The true bread that came down from heaven," John vi. 50, 51. In case they wanted water, what relief had they? The rock opened, and "that rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. "The rock followed them, and the rock was Christ." In case they were stung with the fiery serpents, what relief had they? They had the brazen serpent, and that was a type of Christ, John iii. 15. Now, I say, if the people of God in Old Testament times had relief in the types of Christ, surely there is relief enough for us now, in New Testament times, in Christ himself.

If all the promises of good things made to us were originated in Christ, and if all the promises that were made unto Christ of good things to come, do descend and run down upon us, more or less, then surely there is enough in Christ to relieve and succour in the worst of times. For what are the promises but divine conveyances? Now all the promises of good things that are made to us, they flow from Christ, "for all the promises are yea and amen in Christ," 2 Cor. i. 20. Yea, that is affirmed; amen, that is confirmed: all the promises made to us are affirmed and confirmed by Christ. And

on the other side, all the promises that are made to Christ do descend upon us. Look into Psalm ii., there is a great promise made to Christ at verse 8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession: thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." A promise plainly given to Christ, and see how it descends and falls upon us. Rev. ii. 26, "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father." Even as I received of my Father; look what promise I have received of my Father, the same doth descend and fall down upon you. Now, then, if all the promises of good things made to us were originated in Christ, and if all the promises that are made unto Christ of good things to come do descend and run down upon us, surely there is enough in Christ to succour and relieve in the worst of times.

One thing more. If that all our want of comfort and satisfaction doth arise from the want of a sight of Christ's fulness and excellency, and all our satisfaction and comfort doth arise from the sight of Christ's fulness and excellency, then this doctrine must needs be true. Now look into Rev. v., and see how John weeps, and upon what account: "I saw (says John) in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals." And at verse 2, "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? and no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth was able to open the book." Then at verse 4, says he, "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." What stilled him; what quieted him? The sight of Christ, at verse 5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David hath prevailed to open the book." So he goes on opening the excellency and the fulness of Christ, and John weeps no more. So that, I say, all our want of comfort doth arise from our want of a sight of the fulness and excellency that is in Christ. Therefore certainly there is enough in

Christ to comfort, succour and relieve in the worst of times. And so you have this first thing.

Secondly, Well, but then what is that in Christ that may or can comfort, succour, and relieve in the worst of times and conditions?

I answer, Look what that good thing is which the world can either give or take away, that is in Christ in great abundance; and if that be in Christ in great abundance which the world can either give or take away, then there is that in Christ that may or can succour, comfort, and relieve in the worst of times. Now what can the world give or take away?

Can the world take away your estate, gold, or silver? Then read what is said in Prov. iii., concerning wisdom, where Christ is called wisdom: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, (verse 13) for the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

Can the world take away your liberty, your gospel liberty? Then you know what Christ says, Rev. iii. 8, "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

Can the world take away your life? You know what Christ saith, "I am the way, the truth and the life," John xiv. 6. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," John v. 40. On the other side, what can the world give to you?

Can the world give you peace, rest, quietness? Then you know what Christ saith, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. "I create the fruit of the lips, peace," Isa. lvii. 19. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you," John xiv. 27.

Can the world give you happiness or blessedness? I am sure Christ can. "Blessed (says he) are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the pure in heart: yea blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you for my sake," Matt. v. It was the work of the high priest to bless the people, and Christ being our great High Priest, it is his work to bless us: he, and he alone can make us blessed. Would you therefore

know what there is in Christ that can succour, comfort and relieve in the worst of times? Look I say whatsoever good thing the world can either give or take away, that is in Christ in great abundance.

There is in Jesus Christ the greatest excellency, under the best propriety. The greatest excellency; for,

If the knowledge of Christ be the most excellent knowledge, then surely Christ himself must needs be most excellent; the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the most excellent knowledge.

It is the most certain knowledge; you know other things by their shapes and species, you know Christ by the Spirit; you know other things by the testimony of men, you know Christ by the testimony of the Spirit; and as the testimony of the Spirit is more certain than the testimony of any man, so the knowledge of Christ is the most certain knowledge in the world.

It is that knowledge that gives you possession of the thing you know; by my knowledge of Christ, I am possessed of Christ; surely therefore it is the most excellent knowledge in the world, and therefore Christ himself must needs be most excellent.

He is called "The desire of all nations," in Hag. ii. 7. Some nations desire one thing and some another, but Christ is the desire of all nations. What is most desirable that is not in Christ? Is gold and silver most desirable? says he, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," Rev. iii. 18. Is wisdom most desirable? "He is the wisdom of the Father," 1 Cor. i. 24. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom," Col. ii. 3. He is wisdom in the abstract; "Wisdom hath builded her house," Prov. ix. 1. and it is in the plural number, wisdoms hath builded her house; he is not only wise, but wisdom, and wisdoms. And he is called, that good thing, Jer. xxxiii. 14: "Behold, the day is come, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and unto the house of Judah." That good thing, with an emphasis, what is that? "At that time will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Christ is that good thing; He is the excellency of Jacob, the greatest excellency.

And this excellency is under the best propriety, insomuch as you may challenge it with a double *my*: “My God, my God,” says David, Psalm xxii. 1. “My Lord, and my God,” says Thomas, John xx. 28. There is such propriety in this excellency as you may challenge it with a double *my*. And it is such a propriety as can never be lost; “None shall take them out of my Father’s hand,” John x. 28, 29. Would you then know what there is in Christ that can comfort, succour, and relieve in the worst of times? I say there is the greatest excellency, under the best propriety.

There is in Jesus Christ the greatest fulness joined with the most communicativeness: some things are empty, and not full: some things are full, but they are full of wind, as the bladders of the creatures are, that the least prick melts them down into nothing; full, but not communicative; and some things are communicative, but not full; as springs, little water springs: but Christ is both full and communicative; he is the “rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys,” Cant. ii. 1. The rose of Sharon, not the rose of a garden, that only some can come and take the sweetness of; but the rose of the field, that every one may come and smell on; his blood is a fountain opened, not a fountain enclosed, but opened; he is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. So that there is not only *plenitudo abundantiae, sed redundantiae*; a fulness of abundance, but a fulness of redundancy; flowing over in Jesus Christ; would you therefore know what there is in Christ that can comfort and relieve in the worst of times? I say there is the greatest fulness joined with the most communicativeness.

There is in Jesus Christ the sweetest love, under the greatest engagement: the sweetest love; “thy love is better than wine; thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee,” Cant. i. 3. “Greater love than this hath no man,” saith Christ concerning his death, John xv. 13. There is love in Christ beyond all dimensions; there is height, and breadth, and length, and depth of love in him, Ephes. iii. 18, 19. There is giving love in Christ, “who loved us, and gave himself for us,” Gal. ii. 20. Ephes. v. 25. There is forgiving and pardoning love in Christ; witness Peter, whom Christ forgave when he had denied him. There is in Christ condescending love, witness Thomas;

“Come Thomas (says he) reach hither thine hand, and thrust it into my side,” John xx. 27. I condescend to thee. There is in Christ accepting love; “I tell thee (says he) wheresoever this gospel is preached, that which this woman hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her,” Matt. xxvi. 13, accepting of what she did. And there is in Christ a sympathizing love; “For he is not such an High Priest as cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” Heb. iv. 15. There is the sweetest love in Christ.

And it is under the greatest engagement; for, is not a brother engaged to help his brother? “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Heb. ii. 11. Is not a father engaged to help his children? “He is the everlasting Father,” Isaiah ix. 6. Is not a husband engaged to help his wife? The church of Christ is his spouse, Cant. iv. 9. And now suppose there were one person that could stand under all these relations; a brother, a father, a husband; how much would that person be engaged to help, that should stand under all these relations? Thus Christ doth; he stands under all these relations. Therefore there is in Christ the sweetest love under the greatest engagement.

There is that in Jesus Christ that suiteth to all conditions: what condition can you come into but there is a promise suited to it; and what are the promises but the veins wherein the blood of Christ doth run? There is no condition but hath a promise suited to it, and so there is that in Christ that suits to all conditions. To instance a little:

Are you poor and needy? “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich,” Rev. iii. 18. Are you naked? says he, “I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” Are you out of the way, wandering? “I am the way,” John xiv. 6. Are you in the dark in reference to any business or your condition? “I am the light, (says he) and the light of life,” John viii. 12. Are you hungry? “I am the bread of life,” John vi. 48. Are you thirsty? “I am the water of life? He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst more,” John iv. 14. Do you need justification? He is “the Lord our righteousness,” Jer. xxiii. 6. Do you need sanctification? “For this cause do I sanctify myself that

they also may be sanctified," John xvii. 19. Do you need consolation? "I will send the Comforter," John xvi. 7. Do you need protection? "He is the Rock of ages; the Lord Jehovah," Isa. xxvi. 4. Are you in a paradise of prosperity? He is the "Tree of Life," Rev. xxii. 14. Are you in a wilderness of adversity? He is "the Manna that came down from heaven," John vi. 50. So, that then, there is that in him that is suited to all conditions.

There is that in Jesus Christ that doth answer to all our fears, doubts and objections. Hearken, if there be ever a poor doubting soul here, there is that in Christ that doth answer to all thy fears, doubts and objections.

Will you say, I am a poor lost creature? Then saith Christ, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost," Luke xix. 10. Will you say, Oh, but I am a sinner, a great sinner? Saith Christ, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," Matt. ix. 13. Will you say, Oh, but I cannot repent? Then see what the apostle saith, Acts v. 31, concerning Christ, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sin;" not only remission of sin, but repentance: it is Christ's work to give repentance as well as forgiveness of sin. Will you say, Oh, but I cannot leave my sins, I cannot turn away from my sins? Then read what the apostle saith, Acts iii. 26, "Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Will you say, Oh, but I cannot come to Christ? Then he tells you that he is come to you: "I came to seek and to save that which was lost:" he brings the lost sheep home upon his shoulder, as in the parable. Will you say, Oh, but his sheep follow him, and I cannot follow him? Then he tells you, "He will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11. He will drive you at your own pace. Will you say, Oh, but I have provoked Christ, and he is angry, and will cast me off? You know what he says then; "Those that come unto me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. He is meek and lowly: he is meek, and therefore will not be angry with you; he is lowly, and therefore will not disdain you: "Learn of me," says he, "for I am meek and lowly," Matt. xi. 29. Will you say,

Oh, but I have sinned to the very utmost? Then the apostle tells you, that "He is able to save to the uttermost," Heb. vii. 25. So that there is plainly that in Christ that answereth to all our fears, doubts and objections.

Yet one thing more. There is that in Jesus Christ which doth and will supply all our wants. What is there that you want; do you labour under desertion? Then saith he, "I will lead you in a way that you have not known," Isa. xlii. 16. "And I will never leave you nor forsake you," Heb. xiii. 5. Do you labour under corruption and bondage to sin? There is freedom in Christ; "Those the Son makes free are free indeed," John viii. 36, indeed really, indeed eminently; "Those the Son makes free are free indeed;" indeed and indeed. Do you labour under great temptations? It is he that "treads down Satan under our feet," Rom. xvi. 20; and says he, "My grace is sufficient for thee," 2 Cor. xii. 9. Do you labour under the want of the means of grace, or the ministry of the word? "He hath received gifts for men;" and what those gifts are the apostle tells you, Eph. iv. 11, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Do you labour under weakness, spiritual infirmity? Then he hath seven horns, and seven eyes, as you find him described, Rev. v. 6, answering to your infirmity or weakness. Or do you labour under any affliction, outward or inward, under persecution from enemies? Then see what is said concerning Christ, Micah v. 5, "And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land." Are you afraid of an enemy coming into the land? "This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land." This man; what man? See at verse 2 it is plainly spoken of Christ: "But thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, and he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and this man shall be the peace:" this man, that is Christ; he shall be our peace when the worst of enemies come into our land.

Aye, but you will say, we see no likelihood of this; mark then what is said at ver. 7, "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, and

as the showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." If a garden be to be watered with a watering pot, it stays for man; but if it be watered with the dew, it stays not for man. So, saith the Lord, shall the remnant of my people be, as the ground that waits upon the dew, that tarrieth not for man; though you see no likelihood of deliverance, no means whereby ye should be delivered, when the Assyrian comes into our land, when the worst of enemies come into our land; yet ye shall be delivered, "For this man shall be the peace:" so that look whatsoever that is which you want, it is all to be had in Christ. And thus now you see in these several particulars, what there is in Jesus Christ that may and can and doth afford sufficient comfort and relief, in the worst of times and conditions. That is the second.

Thirdly, Well but then you will say, This is good in the general, but what is this to us? We know there is enough in Christ to succour, comfort, and relieve in the worst of times and conditions, but what is that to us?

Yes, it is to you, and to you very much; for,

If you be overcomers and do overcome the evil of the times and places where you live, then all this fulness and excellency that is in Christ doth belong to you; for if you look into Rev. ii., and iii., you shall find, that unto every church there mentioned, there is a promise made of giving out some of the fulness and excellency of Christ; and still the promise runs, to him that overcometh, at the end of every epistle: "To him that overcometh;" that is, to him that overcometh the evil mentioned in that epistle; not in the general, but the evil mentioned in that epistle. As now to instance in the church of Laodicea, saith he, Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." What is the thing promised here? Communion with Christ in his kingdom on earth. Well, but who are those that shall partake thereof? Such as overcome; "to him that overcometh." That overcometh what? That Laodicean lukewarmness; the sin forbidden in this epistle is lukewarmness, a mixture in the worship of God: he that overcometh this mixture, he shall have communion with Christ in his kingdom on earth. Now I say, this ful-

ness and excellency of Christ is promised to him that overcometh. Then, friends, you know what the evils of the times are: if you overcome the evils of the times wherein you live and are, then shall you be made partakers of this excellency, and fulness of Christ, and so this concerns you.

If our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath therefore received all this excellency and fulness from the Father, that he may give it out to you; then it concerns you, and much concerns you. Now why hath Christ received all this excellency from the Father; why hath he received the Spirit; why was he anointed with the Spirit? He tells you in Isa. lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me." Why? "To preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound:" for this cause was I anointed. And why hath our Lord and Saviour Christ received gifts? The apostle tells us, and the Psalmist tells us, "for men, for the rebellious also," Eph. iv. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 18. Will you say, Oh, but I am a poor rebel? He hath received gifts for men, for wicked men, even for rebels: Paul was a rebel, and Christ received gifts for Paul, even that rebel. And why hath he received all power in heaven and earth from God the Father, but in reference to your concernments? Matt. xxviii. 18, "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." What then? "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Go ye therefore; mark what a therefore is here: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore." Jesus Christ hath received all power in heaven and in earth in reference to your concernments; therefore it is much to you, that there is that in Jesus Christ whereby he is able to succour, comfort, and relieve in the worst of times.

Yet again, If that our Lord and Saviour Christ doth therefore stoop to your infirmities, because he is clothed with majesty and excellency, and invested with all this power; then this that I have said is to you, and much to you. Now

look into John xiii., you have there an assurance of what you shall find in Christ now, by what he did then when he was to die, verse 3, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself: after that he poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet." Whence doth this arise? See at verse 3, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands;" he was not therefore proud, he did not therefore disdain his poor disciples; no, but he did condescend to them upon this account, and stoops to their infirmity: his humility prompts on his excellency to be good to us. Now if he therefore stoops to your infirmity, because he is clothed with excellency, then this that I have said is to you, and much to you. And so you have the doctrine cleared.

Now by way of application.

If this doctrine be true, that there is that in Jesus Christ alone, which may and can and doth afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions; what a mighty encouragement is here for every one to get into Christ, to get an interest in Christ? Get but an interest in Christ, and you have a standing relief in the worst of times and conditions: no interest in Christ, no relief in the worst of times. Who would not get an interest in Christ? If there be any such here that are yet without an interest in Christ, man or woman, consider what there is in Christ; there is, as you have heard, that in Christ that will afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times; times are evil, oh, be encouraged to get an interest in Christ.

If this doctrine be true, why should we then complain? why should we be discouraged in such times as these, or any time or condition we can come into? "Shall the living man complain?" Lam. iii. 39. Shall a living christian complain that hath a living relief by him? The book of Job says of the wicked, "That in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits," chap. xx. 22, and shall we be in straits in the midst of Christ's sufficiency? Shall we complain or be discouraged when we have Christ's sufficiency for our relief at all times? You have heard of that woman, who when she met with any loss, would still comfort herself thus: True, I have lost such a child, or I have lost such a friend;

such a friend, or such a relation is dead, but still God is alive: and when she had lost her husband, and cried and lamented very much, her child came to her, and asked her: But mother, is your God dead? So may men say to us, while we complain and are discouraged in these times, Is your God dead? is your Saviour dead? But either there is a reality in this doctrine or not; if not, why doth the Scripture speak at this rate as you have heard? and if there be a truth in this doctrine, we should we be discouraged or complain whatever our condition be?

If this doctrine be true, why should we not own Christ in the worst of times? Why should we not confess Christ in the worst of times? Shall Christ be our relief in the worst of times, and shall we not own and confess him in the worst of times? Shall we not own his truth, and ways, and ordinances, and confess them before the sons of men in the worst of times? When the sun shines scorching hot, men run to the shadow of the tree; and when it rains much, men run under the tree for shelter; but when the heat is over, and the rain over, the tree stands alone, and no man looks after it. So long as the sun shines upon the dial, you will run to the dial; but when the sun is off the dial, you come not at it. So when the times shine upon the ordinances, the truths and ways of God, many will run to them, but when the shine is gone, and truth be in the dark, the sun off, how few will own Christ and his truth? But if this doctrine be true, why should we not own and confess Christ in the worst of times?

If this doctrine be true, here you may see, what an evil thing it is to sin against Christ. It is to sin against our remedy, our relief; it is to sin against our succour; of all sins those sins are worst that are against the remedy: therefore, as I use to say, adultery in married persons, is worse than fornication in those that are unmarried, because it is against the remedy. Christ is our remedy, our relief, in the worst of times; therefore to sin against Christ, oh, what a great sin is it? It is to sin against the remedy.

Now look when men offend the weak brethren in things indifferent, the apostle says expressly, they sin against Christ, 1 Cor. viii. 12.

And look when men and women will not believe, notwith-

standing all the offers of grace and love that Christ makes to their souls ; then they sin against Christ.

And look when a professor, a member of a church shall walk scandalously, haunt taverns or alehouses, or deal unjustly, and is a dishonour to the name of Christ, he sins against Christ.

And look when men persecute the ways and people of Christ, they sin against Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. 4. These and many other ways do men sin against Christ ; and oh, what an evil thing it is to sin against Christ ; it is to sin against the remedy, the greatest remedy in the world : take heed how ye sin against Christ.

If this doctrine be true, that there is that in Jesus Christ, which may and can and doth afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions ; then here we may see, what we should do, and whither we should go for relief ; why should we not go to Christ for relief in all conditions, and relieve ourselves in him upon all occasions ? If there were a sovereign water that would cure all diseases, what flocking of people would there be unto that water : here is that water, that sovereign water ; Christ alone, that can cure all diseases, that can succour and relieve in the worst of times : why should we not now come to him, and draw water out of this well of salvation ?

But you will say, I confess indeed Christ is the well of salvation, and there is enough in him to succour and relieve ; but the well is deep, and my line is short, and my arm is weak, and I know not how to get this water : I know not how to improve Christ ; what shall I do that I may be able to draw water out of this well of salvation ? What shall I do that I may improve Christ, for my succour and relief in the worst of times and conditions ?

I answer, If you would draw water out of this well of salvation, and improve Christ for your relief and succour ; be sure of this, that you look upon Christ as the great institution and appointment of the Father for all those succours and reliefs that are in your eye. In John vi., saith Christ, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled : " but at verse 20, says he, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the

meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Where shall I have it? "Which the Son of man shall give unto you." How shall I get it from him? Look upon him as the appointment of the Father, "for him hath God the Father sealed," him hath God the Father appointed; look upon him therefore, and go to him, as the great appointment of the Father for the very thing you want.

Be sure of this, that you make good your interest in Christ: get assurance of your interest in him; else you will be afraid to come at him; "For all things are yours, (saith the apostle) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death:" why? "For ye are Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. But if you be not assured of this, that ye are Christ's and Christ yours; how can ye relieve yourselves in Christ in an evil day? Get therefore an assurance of your interest in Christ.

Observe what those attributes and titles of Christ are which are most suited unto your condition, and lay them much before you, and press your hearts therewithal; it is not enough for us to come to Christ in the general, but we must come to him, and deal with him according to those attributes, or titles, that are suited to our condition: Christ is willing we should do so, and hath on purpose clothed himself with such titles as suit our condition; the iind and iiird of Revelation are a proof of this very thing; all the epistles to the seven churches begin with titles of Christ: in the epistle to the church of Ephesus, there is one title; in the epistle to the church of Smyrna, there is another title, and so to all the seven churches: every epistle begins with a several title of Christ, and according to the condition of the church he writes to, so is the title he begins with. As to instance in the church of Smyrna, verse 8, here his title is, "The first and the last, which was dead, and is alive," Rev. ii. 8. Why this title? He writes to the church in Smyrna that was to suffer hard things, verse 10, "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer, behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison,:" is that all? is the prison all? No, says he, "Be thou faithful unto death, ye shall have tribulation ten days:" relating to the ten persecutions in the primitive times, dying times: what then? Now remember my titles, my attributes; this is my name and title; the first and the

last, which was dead, and is alive: see how this title suited to their condition. And, friends, assure yourselves of this, that Christ will certainly make good his titles that he is clothed with: David assured himself of it, "The Lord is my Shepherd." What then? "I shall not want," Ps. xxiii. 1. He will make good his title, I know I shall not want; he relieved himself in that title of Christ that suited his condition. So do you do this day; as for example: Is there distress among the saints and people of God? Remember his title, he is the "King of saints," Rev. xv. 3. Is there great distress of nations? Remember his title, he is "King of nations," Jer. x. 7. Are you under any dimness or vexation, as it is in this chapter? Remember his title, "A light is risen up, a marvellous light." Thus be sure you deal with Christ according to that title of his that is most suited to your condition.

Be sure of this, that you study Christ and your condition together; some study their condition, stand poring upon their condition, but they do not study Christ, and they are full of unbelief; some think much on Christ, but not on their own condition, and they are given to presumption; but would you find true relief in Christ whatever your condition be? Then study Christ and your condition together, as thus: Christ is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet: if you be ignorant, now think on Christ as a Prophet; if you be guilty, now think on Christ as a Priest; if you be disorderly, now think on Christ as a King. Thus study Christ and your condition together.

Be sure of this, that you put Christ upon it, to succour and relieve you in the worst of times; to do that for you that he hath entituled himself unto: so David did Ps. xxxi. See how he argues, and his argument is exceeding good; "Lord, (says he, verse 2) be thou my strong rock:" why? "for thou art my rock," verse 3. Lord, this is thy name, this is thy title: "Thou art my rock;" then "be my rock:" and says he, verse 4, "Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me, for thou art my strength." I have to deal with enemies, and they have laid their net privily for me; "Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me, for thou art my strength." So now, popish men have laid their net privily for us, and we may go to Christ and

say, Lord, pull us out of the net that they have laid privily for us, for thou art our strength. Thus put Christ upon it to answer his titles.

If you would find succour, comfort, and relief in Christ in the worst of times and conditions; then rest upon him in opposition to all other helps and shifts, or unlawful means of deliverance, in case you come into any strait: Christ is so much yours, as you rest upon him; as our resting on the promise makes it ours, so our resting on Christ makes him ours. And you know how graciously the Lord appeared to the three children; Christ came and walked with them in the fiery furnace, and delivered them, Dan. iii. 25. How so? They rested on him: "We know that our God is able to deliver us, we will not bow down to the idol," whatever comes on us: "We know our God is able to deliver us," verse 17, 18. Here they rested upon him alone in opposition to all unworthy shifts, and unlawful means for deliverance, and then Christ appeared and gave out his succour and relief to them.

If you would find succour, comfort and relief in Christ upon all occasions, and in all conditions, then go to God by prayer; go and beg of God to open your eyes, that you may see this fountain that is by you: it is possible that your eyes may be held, as Hagar's were; Hagar had the fountain by her, but she did not see it, for her eyes were held: and thus it is with many of us, Christ our fountain is by, and we even sit down in despair; why? for our eyes are held. Go then to God and beg of him to open your eyes that you may see this fountain.

And if you desire to draw water out of this well of salvation, and to improve Christ for your relief and comfort in the worst of times; then observe what those promises are that the Lord hath made to his people for the latter times, and be sure that you deal much with them. Christ comforts and relieves by promises: as the devil tempts by promises, so Christ comforts by promises; and when a man is relieved by a promise that Christ hath made, he is relieved by Christ. Now there are nine or ten promises that the Lord Christ hath made to the latter times for the comfort of his people, to be as a relief for his people in these latter times. I will but barely name them, and so conclude.

He hath promised them that they shall have understanding in the times: Dan. xii. 10, "The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

He hath promised that they shall be sealed, set apart, hidden in the worst of times, in antichristian times: Rev. vii. compared with Rev. ix.

He hath promised that though they meet with antichristian tribulation, they shall come out with their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb: Rev. vii. 14, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The Lord hath promised to his people in these latter times, that they shall continue in his temple day and night; that is, they shall enjoy the ordinances of God without interruption; though now they are scattered and driven from the house of God, the Lord hath promised such a time wherein they shall be in the temple day and night without interruption, Rev. vii. 15.

He hath promised to destroy all their antichristian enemies: "Babylon is fallen, it is fallen, and as a millstone is thrown into the sea; so shall Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all," Rev. xviii. 21.

The Lord hath promised that his people shall prophesy, though they be in sackcloth, they shall bear witness to the truths and ways of God, and shall prophesy: Rev. xi. 3, "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days." I will give them power, they shall prophesy and not be silent.

He hath promised, also, that the light and glory of his people shall be more than ever it was: Isa. xxx. 26, "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days." When is this? "In the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

He hath promised to his people that they shall cease from their labour: Rev. xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," that die for the Lord; "henceforth they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

There shall be a time here on earth wherein the saints shall rest from their labours.

The Lord hath promised that the number of his people shall be much increased. When the enemy went about to cut off all the males of the children of Israel, then the Israelites were much increased. And this the Lord hath promised, that in the latter days his people shall be greatly increased. When the witnesses shall rise (I do not mean an insurrection but a resurrection) it is said, "they ascend in a cloud," a company of people as a cloud shall come about them, to gratify them in their rising: "And there shall be a great earthquake, and in the earthquake slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant shall be affrighted, and give glory to God," Rev. xi. 12, 13. There shall be a great increase.

And, lastly, the Lord hath promised that the saints shall rule the world, and the government shall be given unto them; not that any should go about to wrest the government out of the hands of the present powers; but, in Dan. vii. 27, the Lord hath promised, "that the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."

These ten things the Lord hath promised to his people in the latter days. Those that lived in the apostles' days, they comforted themselves in these promises; they comforted themselves in the book of the Revelation then. The book of the Revelation is a book on purpose for the comfort and relief of the people of God in antichristian times: and if it was a comfort and relief to them in the apostles' days, what may it be unto us upon whom the last days are come? Christ comforts by promises; and when a man is comforted and relieved by a promise made by Christ, he is comforted by Christ; and Christ hath given out these great promises for the latter times. Now you see into what times we are fallen. Are the times evil? Do they grow worse; and will they yet grow worse before they grow better? Then remember this doctrine, and comfort yourselves therein. There is that in Jesus Christ alone, that may, and can, and doth afford sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions. Go then to Christ

upon all occasions; do not let relief stand by and not use it; Christ takes it kindly that you make use of him, and the more you use him the more kindly he takes it.