

SERMON III.

PREACHED ON THE FIRST COMMUNION SABBATH.

ISAIAH LII. 13, 14, 15.

“13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

“14. As many were astonished at thee ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men :

“15. 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.”

YE hear who are spoken to here. Yesterday, they were called “vessels of honour ;” and this day, they are called “bearers of the Lord’s vessels,” whom the prophet bids be clean. Those who then bore the Lord’s vessels, were the priests and Levites ; and now, all of us are made priests unto God the Father, through Christ, that we may daily offer up to him the sacrifices of prayers and praises ; all of us are now admitted to the altar of incense, to offer up our prayers and praises unto God. Therefore, as yesterday ye were charged to be clean vessels, under the pain of out-casting, so this day ye are exhorted to be clean, as holy priests admitted to the Lord’s temple, that ye may lay on the sacrifice on the altar, Christ Jesus ; ye are directed to separate yourselves from unclean thoughts, to depart from them, and to touch no unclean thing. Which lets us see, how one part of God’s word answers to another. Therefore out of both learn we to study to holiness. Let not the

mockers at godliness look to see God, or to get leave to come near his altar; yea, I debar all such mockers from the Lord's table, except they repent their mocking. But if any have had a sore heart, that they have been so blinded by Satan, as to lend their tongues to chace any away from God who would be at him—even such a villain being penitent, shall not be despised.

In the 12th verse, the Lord's people are bidden go out with displayed banner, not in haste, or as cowards; and the reason is given; Because the Lord will go before them in the vanguard, and behind them in the rearward, and shall so compass them, that they need to stand in awe, or be feared for none. Thus he would have them avowing their Lord, and boldly professing holiness; which reproves many who would be holy, and not let others wit of it. For here, command is given to go out boldly. That holiness is not kindly, that any is ashamed of; and if any will think shame of holiness, beware lest Christ think shame of them. Therefore say, Albeit I be not holy, yet I have a purpose to be holy, and my endeavours shall be that way: for what honour gets Christ, if thou be holy in hidlings? Therefore thou must honour him before the wicked world, and confess him before men, lest he disclaim thee one day.

Ye will say, How shall we win to holiness; how shall we get that banner holden out, avowing holiness, or get holiness wrought? The text that I have read, answers: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently." As if the Lord had said, Lo, I have given you a wise Captain and Master to go before you; he shall guide you prudently, or "he shall prosper," as the old translation has it. As canny wise men use to have success, so shall Christ have: therefore follow him at

the back, and he shall teach you to depart from the world, and from uncleanness; he shall teach you to avow holiness; he shall go before you, as the flower of the flock, or chief of the sheep, and ye may follow as lambs at his back; or as your Captain, and ye as soldiers ranked at his back.

“He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.”—That is, his kingdom and glory shall grow; honour, and dominion, and glory shall follow upon him: and if he be high and honourable, if we follow him we may be sure to get a share; for it is his honour, that they who follow him at the back, should do valiantly, tread their enemies under their feet, fight stoutly, and set their faces to the battle. And then, as Christ is exalted, so needs must his soldiers be: they must prove gallant men, and through him they must do valiantly. Albeit their enemies come about them like bees, yet in the name of the Lord they will destroy them all; they will be victors over sin, and Satan will be shortly trod under foot.

Then ye will speir, How shall Christ and his followers win to this high exaltation and glory? I answer out of the 14th verse, By sufferings. “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” That is, my Son will not get the victory good cheap; dear will it cost him; he will have a blackened, a blue, and a bloody face; his back, side, hands, feet, will be both blue and bloody, ere he get this victory; he will be so shamed, as never man was; he will be so shamefully handled, that it would make any man astonied, yea, affrighted to look upon him; he will be so disfigured with his own blood and blue strokes, that none will know his face, and never

man handled as he. And yet, for all these blue and bloody strokes, and hard and uncouth sufferings, ye shall get glory in the end : for by this blood, he shall sprinkle many nations ; his blood shall wash many a sinful soul ; many nations shall get good of the marring and spoiling of his face ; many souls shall he redeem by his blood. “ The kings shall shut their mouths at him,” that is, they shall count nothing of their crowns and glory, when they consider his, but shall cast all down at his feet. And the reason is, “ Because that which had not been told them shall they see.” When they shall see and hear of Christ’s glory, they shall reverence, admire, and subject themselves, stoop, and fall down before him (verse 15).

Here then those who will bear the vessels of the Lord, and deliver them off their hands with full weight, are directed, 1. To follow Christ ; 2. To consider his victory ; 3. His sufferings ; 4. His glory. Glorious things are spoken here of Christ, and hard to be believed. A fair banquet for feeding of hungry souls is set out in these words, bread enough here and to spare ; therefore crave appetite, that ye may be comforted and refreshed ; that ye may love your Lord and rejoice, giving praises unto the master of the feast, who of outlaws and rebels has brought you into his banquet, and ye who were afar off, and are made near by his blood.

1st, Hereafter that many glorious things are promised in this chapter, we are directed to behold Christ, God’s servant, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. It teaches us, in all the promises made by God, to cast our eye upon Christ, in whom they are all performed, and by whom they shall all be made good to us ; for he, as a wise tutor, has gotten all into his hand,

to give out to us. Thou would think thyself happy, if thou could get that promise applied, that thou shalt be made clean, and that thou shalt come before the Lord, as his High Priest, carrying his vessels, and be made holy, and avow holiness before men. But, lo, here a way to get it. Do look to Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. Take Christ in thy arms, and getting him, thou gettest all the promises for life, salvation, and glorification : and if thou forget the words of a promise that fits thy estate, cast thy eye upon Christ ; then dost thou fall upon the whole bundle of the promises, and out of them, missing the particular promise, thou cannot miss him. Come to him, then, and say, Lord Jesus, thou must perform this to me, for the Father has bidden me behold thee : he has told me, that he has given thee for a “ leader and witness to his people ;” that thou art his elect servant ; that thou art the surety of the covenant, which includes the whole promises : thou art cautioner both for God’s part and my part of the covenant ; therefore perform this promise of making me clean, bringing of me to the temple, making me holy, and giving me victory over my enemies. The Lord has said to me, Behold my servant ; and lo, thou pleasest me well, thou art of mine own flesh. I take thee for the cautioner : pay thy Father’s debt, and perform all that he has promised.

2dly, We see that the kirk is here directed to help herself in the sight of all her difficulties and impossibilities, by beholding Christ ; for this avowing of holiness, and coming forth in the sight of adversaries, imports a thousand difficulties, bogles* to scare and chase away from taking hold of the promise ; against

* Bugbears.

which, we are bidden to behold Christ. Which teaches us to meet all difficulties and obstacles that would hinder us to embrace the promises, by opposing Christ to all, for overcoming of all difficulties within or without; from heaven, hell, or the world, or our own corruptions. Look to Christ, and be victorious over all; give Christ thy hand, and he shall cause thee leap over all impediments; yea, he shall give thee wings, to mount up as eagles over all.

3dly, “Behold my servant, he shall deal prudently.” —We see the whole matter is put over upon Christ, as the doer of all. Albeit we be bidden depart, come out, and touch no unclean thing, yet He must do all the work; which lets us see, that whatever we are bidden do, Christ has gotten commission to do it; the Father has committed us to him, and of him he will crave account. Therefore Christ must perform that which concerns us; he must do all our works; for the whole company of the elect are given to him, to be framed and fashioned by him, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make us clean vessels; as rebels to ransom, enemies to reconcile, sheep to make account of; for he has all by head and by mark, and he says, “This is the will of Him that sent me, that of these that he has given me, I should lose none.” Then, say to Christ, Do thou what I am bidden do: let thy Spirit work all my works, for thou hast power. When the Lord urges thee to do that thou cannot, then urge thou Christ the cautioner to do it. And yet, Christ has not gotten the work to do, as if thou would so take the sluggard’s ease: for thou wilt find it no small work, to waken up thy Lord; thou wilt be put to cry, with Peter, “Save, master, I perish!” Many questions will be ere he answer, or let wit he hears; therefore

still must we put upon him, and urge him till he rise. Therefore be not idle, but still urge Christ, for it is well-pleasing to him. Urge him to present thee spotless and blameless before the Father, for that is his office, and it is his desire to do it; he is God's servant furnished to do it; he only can deal prudently. Give Him no rest, till he make peace betwixt the Father and thee, till he sanctify thee, and make the renovation solid, for this is the right way, by importunate and earnest dealing; and never lose grips with him, till he do all that we should do.

4thly, Ye will say, How will the Father be pleased, when I urge Christ to do what he bids me do? God says, "Behold my servant;" which lets us see, that the work of our redemption is a special point of service to God, wherewith he is well pleased. God counts it good service in his Son, to bring home rebels; and Christ has humbled himself to the estate of a servant, that he may help the helpless, and restore rebels; and nothing will be counted service, but that which he doeth. In this service His soul delights; and he is well pleased that Christ do all the work in our name, that he sanctify us and save us, and we draw life from him. Say not then, What am I if the justice of God will let me get good of Christ, who am guilty of so many sins? Seeing God has bidden thee behold his Servant, and so it is service done to God, when any good is done to thee, doubt nothing but God's good will towards thee is the same with Christ's; for the Father is pleased with all with whom the Son is pleased. Therefore Christ says, "If any love me, my Father loves him, and I and my Father will come, and make our abode with him."

If God count it good service in his Son to help

home souls, then study ye to do the like service, helping home one another. Let Andrew tell Philip and Nathaniel, masters study to draw home their children and servants; strengthen and encourage one another in the country where ye dwell. But specially this is the minister's duty, because he is set apart for the work. It is his duty to shew Israel their sins; and,

5thly, While he shews Christ's prudent dealing, his success and exaltation, he lets us see that Christ is thoroughly furnished and qualified for the service committed to him: for if he be a prudent dealer, then he is wise; if he get victory and glory, than he is strong. It lets us see, that Christ is well qualified for his employment; that there is nothing requisite for the work, but he has it; in his person, office, endowments, he is fully furnished in every thing, that he may be a meet Mediator. He is the Son of God and Son of man, and so a fit man, being sib* both to God and us. If we be blind, he is a prophet to instruct and teach, and reveal God's will unto us; and if we have enemies, he is a king, to controul them, and rule over all our adversaries with a rod of iron; if we be cursed and filthy, he is a priest to bless us. And for his endowments, he has gotten the Spirit without measure, that out of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace; he has wisdom, strength, and ability to do all our work.

So then, we may lippen† our soul upon him, and we may be sure, nothing committed to him shall fall through his fingers; no burden how heavy soever laid on him, shall fall, because of the weight of it; nothing shall be forgot for want of memory. Albeit there were never so many floating on the water ready

* Of kin.

† Entrust.

to perish, he can help all ; for he has large arms to spread over them all at once, so as no other man can do ; he can help and hoist up all their heads at once above the water. Then, let us sit down under his shadow ; and if we want light and comfort, come, and get all supplied in him, for he is fully qualified in all.

6thly, He may be able enough to do all I need ; but what know I, if he be willing to employ his wisdom and strength for me ? *Answer*—He not only has wisdom and strength, but he will deal prudently ; or as the other translation has it, he will prosper, and have success. He shall both deal prudently and prosperously ; he shall leave no strength, wisdom, or any sort of qualification he has, unemployed, that may further the mark. So then we see, there is great canniness and prudent convoy in the Mediator, to further the service he has tane in hand. He foresees all the impediments in his way, and all the inconveniences that can mar the work of man's salvation. Not a wound any of his soldiers gets, but he has convenient salve for it ; no adversary, but he knows how to encounter and meet him ; in a word, there is nothing from eternity to eternity, but he has convoyed all prudently.

Let us shew some points of his prudence :

1. He has the justice of God to encounter with— it shall want nothing. For if it be said, before we be reconciled or get heaven, a just God must be satisfied, our prudent and cautious Lord answers, “ Sacrifices and oblations wouldst thou not, but a body hast thou formed unto me : behold, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, to do thy will, O Lord.” If these men cannot win to heaven till thy justice be satisfied, behold I am come to satisfy

it. And yet the Lord's mercy shall have as great place as it pleases ; for he deals so prudently, that he makes mercy and justice kiss each other. Mercy is letten run like a river, and justice is satisfied—is not that prudent and canny dealing ?

2. The law says, Well, I will take satisfaction of Christ for byganes ; but what obedience shall I have for time to come ? Shall those whom Christ has redeemed, be permitted to break me for time to come ? Prudent Christ answers, “ What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Here, prudent dealing, that while as the law before could get nothing but punishment for the breach of it, now, it gets full obedience of us by Christ ; for Christ came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil the law ; he came only to abolish the *cursing* part of it, but to establish the *obeying* part of it.

3. In comes Satan the jailer, and death with him, and flies upon Christ to get him overthrown : but prudent and cautious Christ destroyed him who had the power of death ; by the means of death, he overcomes him who had the power of death, and says, O death, I will be thy death ! so death lies down in the grave, and all his die, and lie down with him. Thus Satan thinks to get him holden, but he could not be holden of the dolours of death ; therefore he rises, and breaks an opening with him through death—as Samson, he takes away the ports and bars of death, and has left death neither door nor lock to hold us in. Herein is prudence.

4. See his prudent dealing in his coming into the

world. He comes not with pomp or show, but in humble wise. "Behold, your king comes, meek and lowly, riding on an ass's colt." Albeit he was a great king, yet oftentimes he went on foot; and when he rode, it was on a laigh* beast, that any might have stood beside him, and rounded their petition in his ear, as he rode.

5. Prudent dealing in sending forth of his gospel to win home souls. He takes not thunder and fire; but silly weak men, with his word in their mouth, the rod of Zion, and by that dings down proud hearts, and allures others: he puts his heavenly treasure in earthen vessels, and lets them carry it, and takes the glory to himself; he puts up the sceptre of his kingdom in these weak men's mouths.

6. He gives unto kings no occasion of eye-sore, or envying of his kingdom; he gives his ministers neither crowns nor lands, but only bids to give the workman his wages, and to let him that feeds the flock, eat of the milk—as much as to uphold meat and maintenance to his servants. Is not this great prudence, that he troubles not the kings and nobles of the land with his kingdom on earth; for all his office-bearers must be every man's servant? This made Paul to say, "We are your servants, whether Paul, Cephas, or Apollos; all is yours, and ye are Christ's." His kingdom is not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom.

7 He deals so prudently, that the mouth of the reprobate shall be stopped, and have no just quarrel for their condemnation: for either he sends his gospel to them, and so, invites them to repentance; or he makes them know his goodness by fruitful seasons, summer and winter, and use of all his good creatures.

* Low, short-sized.

If they will not make use of these, let them wyte* themselves : they shall be found to have in themselves the cause of their own damnation ; and if some of them grow wicked by hearing of the word, what wyte has Christ ?

8. Great prudence in giving out his doctrine (as ye heard yesterday) while he tells, some are elect vessels of honour, some are rejected vessels of dishonour : for by this peremptory doctrine, he forces the elect to quit their sins, and come in, that they may be vessels of honour ; and propounds his doctrines so, that none in themselves shall find a mark of reprobation, who desire to quit their sins, and come to him : how filthy soever, if they come, he will cleanse them. His doctrine is so wise, that it shall hurt none that would be at him ; but it strikes against those who will not quit their sins.

9. Prudent dealing—the elect's pride may be laid, and they so handled, that they may neither misken God nor themselves ; for still they are made to see their sinfulness, wants, and unworthiness, that they may have his sufferings in high estimation, as their main refuge.

10. Prudent dealing in urging all to believe, and yet he keeps in his own hand the dispensation of sense and comfort ; bids them believe, and yet keeps back the comfort of believing, till they vomit out their sins.

11. Prudent dealing, to call his children to peace, joy, and comfort, and yet fill their flesh with sore burdens, and lay on heavy crosses, lest they debord ; † whereby he comforts their souls, as he is sure also to have their flesh mortified. If he lift them up in himself, he puts them as low as hell in themselves :

* Blame.

† Go to excess.

he lets them not sink into trouble for fault of comforts, nor yet lets them misken him for fault of crosses ; he fills them with comfort, and makes them shed tears for affliction.

12. Great prudence to make a man righteous, and yet that righteousness not to be in himself, nor yet to be of his own keeping. Prudent dealing, to send forth ministers to preach, and dispense heavenly mysteries, and yet to keep the seal in his own hand : for Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God gives the increase ; so, none may lean upon the minister for the blessing.

13. Great prudence to forgive sin, and yet still hold us crying, Lord, forgive us our sins !

14. Still feeding with food that endures to life eternal, and yet still keeps us hungry for it ; holding our mouths to the well, and yet still thirsty.

15. Exalting his own above principalities, powers, crosses, and yet laying them exceedingly low in the sight and sense of their sins : heartily and warmly comforting and refreshing them, making their bed in sickness, and yet keeping them humble, so that the heartier he, the humbler they ; quietly and cannily sliding in consolations into their hearts when none know of it, for his voice is not heard in the streets—still keeping a covered table with rich delicates in the souls of his own, and none know of it, for strangers meddle not with their joy.

I have here told you some part of Christ's prudent and wise dealing ; but it is a deep which cannot be sounded, for even the angels stoop down, to learn his wisdom and prudence. Of the kirk, they wonder at the wisdom of the cross, that by death, so many should be brought to life ; by his shame, there should come so much glory ; by abasing him down to the death,

so many should be brought to heaven; by his becoming cursed, so many should be blessed. This wisdom and prudence cannot be told, therefore I leave it, as a thing that cannot be reached unto. But I would ye should make some use of it; that is, when the work of Christ is not such as ye would have it, then suspect deeper wisdom in it than ye can see; for herein stands his wise and prudent dealing, to dispose to every one's estate according as their case requires. For if he have ado with a thrawn* knotty piece of work, he drives a hard wedge; if he have ado with one that is stubborn, he takes a baton; if with one whose root is fastened in the earth, he takes a sharp knife to cut these roots—if he have a heavy heart, he comforts; lays on such a weight as he overweighs not; lifts up, but not over high; so that every thing is done in wisdom, due time, measure, manner, and might. Therefore thou who wilt say, Alas! I have gotten no good of communion this day; I miss the comfort of it;—fool! I tell thee, if thou got it in the kirk, thou could not contain thyself, but would burst out in the sight of all that look; therefore thy wise and prudent Lord is keeping it for thee, to give in some secret place, where none shall see, or hear, or envy thee.

7thly, That the word signifies also “to prosper.” We see that Christ's prudence is so perfect, that nothing he takes in hand shall misgive, or be marred; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He will do nothing needlessly and superfluously, nor leave anything undone that should be done. The booty or prey he comes to take, he shall carry it with him; the soul that he intends to convert, he shall bring it in due

* Twisted, gnarled.

season : he shall call, draw, direct, admonish, rebuke, comfort, and make that soul hear a voice behind it, "This is the way, walk in it." If the soul that He would convert, will not be won by the word, he will use a rod ; if the rod do it not, he will hound out the devil, to bark and chase in, but yet he has him so muzzled that he cannot bite. He will overcome the most hard heart, and take in the strongest hold : he will use violence, while he will stand at the door and knock ; and whiles he will so brainge,* that he will lay the door on the floor. He will cast out the strongest devil, for he is that strong one who binds that strong man, and casts him out.

If so be he shall prosper in all he takes in hand, let none stand out against him, but yield in time ; for if you delay, it is for a mischief to your own head. He will put you under iron harrows, and make you know, that it is an evil and bitter thing to depart away from him. Delay not, lest for a moment's pleasure, ye undergo eternal pain ; and know, that when ye are come in to Him, he shall keep and preserve you, for none shall reave any of his sheep out of his hand, neither shall be able to seduce his elect. Albeit they be weak, yet he is strong, full of grace and understanding. I know, says Paul, that he will keep that which I have committed to him.

Sthly, "He shall be exalted."—Three words are used in the translation here, but all of them have the same force ; but it had been best translated, to say, "He shall be high ;" which lets us see, that the prudent dealing of Christ is such, as shall bring him great glory, so that his kingdom and glory shall still grow. For his subjects shall be still increased, and never one

* Beat with violence.

that comes in shall die: he shall rule in the midst of his enemies, and turn in greatest foes, and make them friends. His glory shall be high, so very high, that all kinds of glory that can be thought upon shall be his; it shall fill hell, earth, and heaven. With his Father, he shall be exalted among his foes, in the sight of his subjects in this world, at the death of his own, and at the day of judgment; he shall be glorious, who will, who will not. He shall have glory in heaven, for he has gotten a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, both in heaven and earth. Angels, principalities, powers, are made subject to the low man, Christ Jesus, and the angels hold their standing of him: he shall have glory with his Father, for he sits down at his right hand, and it is no robbery for him to be counted equal with God. He shall have glory in hell, for upon the cross, he triumphed over all the powers in hell: he makes Satan fall from heaven like lightning, he robs him of his armour, and inspraith;* the devils stand in awe of him, and tremble, and come out of men at his bidding, and he makes them acknowledge him. He has glory in earth, for when he shews his justice, the most wicked will acknowledge him; Belshazzer shall tremble, and his joints shall shake. He shall reign in the midst of his enemies. If briars and thorns will rise up against Him, he will go through them. What mountain so high, that shall not fall down before Zerubbabel? It is His glory, that if his gospel softens not, it hardens more; and that those who will not come in to him, should be shot far away from him; that those who will not take heaven, should be thrust into hell. "Bring hither," says he,

* Furniture, household goods.

“those my enemies, that would not I should reign over them, that I may slay them.” That lecherous body* who preferred his lusts to me, that greedy worldly body who made gold his god, let his name be written in the earth.

He has also glory among his own, which is the glory wherein he most delights. The crown that his mother made him, the crown of king Solomon, in the day of his espousals, this is the glory which his kirk gives him ; for when they come and crave of him strength, grace, or mercy, he gives it, and they give him glory : they fall into new sins, he pardons and washes, and they give him glory : when they are in bands, he delivers them, as David, “when the bands of hell took hold of me, He delivered ;” therefore he says, “what shall I render unto thee?” And if any will give Him glory for peace, direction, comfort, and liberty to cry, “Abba, Father!” he will give them yet greater cause to give him glory, when he leads them into the palace of his Father, to see that glory which he had with him, before the world was. He gets glory of his own, when their souls are loosed from their bodies, and they are brought to the spirits of just men made perfect ; and glory, when both soul and body are joined and brought to heaven ; and glory at the day of judgment, when all meet him in the clouds, and thence are tane up to heaven, and there get leave to look upon, and speak to him, and sacrifice songs of praise to him. What glory must that be, when a shout of all saved souls praising him shall be raised, that shall never have an end, when they shall have nothing to do, but to sing Hallelujah for ever ? In a word, all Christ’s matters bring him glory, for his wisdom is such, as all of them bring him glory.

* Person.

Verse 14. "As many were astonished."—This follows the way of his coming to glory. It is by sufferings. He must lout laigh,* ere he win so high; he must be abased, ere he win to this glory. We see then, there is a necessity that Christ must first suffer, and then enter into glory; therefore, he said to his disciples, that they were dull and slow to believe; and rebukes them, that they knew not that he behoved first to suffer, and then enter into glory. These his sufferings, were the way to satisfy the law, and remove the curse of it; and, seeing he took on our debt, he behoved also to take on our punishment. By this, all the scandal of Christ's cross is removed; for when we see, that all that Christ suffered, was a concluded matter betwixt the Father and him, and that he was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, if it was fore-agreed betwixt him and the Father, we have no reason to stumble at his sufferings.

"His visage was more marred."—That is, He was an overset† man with the greatness of his sufferings, and his glory was laid by; he was emptied of strength; the buffets and knocks that were laid on his lean face, raised colours on him; the blood that ran down upon it, with the pricks of thorns from his head, marred his face, so that he was without form or beauty; a soldier's pie‡ was put upon him, and they mocked him. He was so poor, that he had not whereon to lay his head; his body so lean, that one might have told all his ribs; his face spitted on and buffeted, and they said, "Behold your king!" his beard plucked out. More than any man's was his humiliation, deeper than any man's his misery, for who ever so trod on as he? Who ever was so abused before a

* Stoop low.

† Overpowered.

‡ Cloak.

judgment-seat as he? The soldiers struck him, and the judge reprov'd it not; all men forsook him, even his own disciples,—not a friend to speak a word for him, not a cup of water to refresh him.

“Astonished at thee.”—Christ’s sufferings astonished the beholders, for they thought he suffered such things, that might put them in doubt if he was that which he called himself. They thought him a man smitten and plagued of God; they think with themselves, Can this be the King of Glory, who is thus shamefully used? Can this be the Redeemer of the world, who is thus bound with cords? Yea, it was a sword through his heart, when his mother thought with herself, Can this be he of whom the angel said to me, Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end? When she sees his sufferings, she is astonished, and made to question if it be he: his plague was so uncouth,* that the disciples were astonished and fled. Whereof we learn, that Christ’s sufferings being seen, will yet astonish carnal reason; for would it not astonish any, that the God of glory should take on the imputation of man’s sin, the fault and punishment of it, and to take on the curse of the law, and the Father’s wrath? Would it not astonish any, that the Word of life, the Upholder of all things, should be so weak, as that he could not bear the tree of the cross, but there must be one gotten to help him? And yet, at the same time, by his power, he was upholding heaven and earth! Thus, he who was God of glory, should be tirred† naked, and exposed to shame, albeit he dark-

* Strange.

† Stripped.

ened the sun for a covering to hide it ; that he should not find so much among men, as to give him a drink of water, when he is suffering for men ; yea, instead of pity, they mock him, and say, “ If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” and so, would have had him desert the work of their redemption.

In the celebration of the sacrament this day, we are met for the commemoration of these sufferings ; and He will have us at this time to remember what he suffered for us, to breed in us love to him, faith in him, and to cast out sin. Then, behold this day the Lord of life a slain man ; him who was higher than the angels, lower than any man, made a worm and not a man, trodden on by men. Behold Him in whom a number of contraries are conjoined : the holiest, and the guiltiest ; the Lord of life, and yet dying ; the Prince of glory, and yet exposed to greatest shame ; the feeder and clother of all, and yet hungry, thirsty, and tirred naked : the Commander of heaven and earth getting neither room in heaven nor earth, but lifted up betwixt them on the cross, God, the devils, and men against him—and yet Redeemer of all !

“ At thee.”—Before, he was speaking to us, and now the person is changed, and he speaks to Christ, to let us see that the promises of the gospel belong to Christ as to us ; to Christ as the head, to us as the members ; to him, that he may have the glory ; to us, that we may get the good of them : first to him, then through him, to us—all spoken to him, promised to him, done to him, and all for our cause : whether God strike Christ or comfort him. all is for our cause.

“ So shall he sprinkle many nations.”—Here we see, how deep soever Christ’s humiliation was, as high

was his exaltation ; and as he was humbled low, so he gets his glory in sprinkling many nations. He took on pain and grief, but he wist well wherefore he did it. He suffered his head to be pricked with thorns, to save us from the pricking wrath of God ; he suffered himself to be spitten on, to cleanse us ; to be cursed, that we might be blessed ; he suffered the pains of hell, to bring us to heaven. In a word, He is sure, whatever pain and torment came upon him, it is holden off us ; for he said, when he was tane in the garden, “ If ye take me, let these go their way.” If He be condemned, it is that we may be absolved ; if he die, it is that we may get life : if he lie in the grave, rise, ascend, all is for us ; and because Christ humbled himself for us thus, therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Yea, His glory goes farther than his shame or his humiliation, for his shame and humiliation were but for a short time, and before some few thousands who saw him crucified ; but his glory and exaltation are before many nations, and for ever. His glory is not like the glory of other kings, for kings reign not over their subjects after their death ; but Christ’s glory is, that he reigns over all while they live and after death, and makes his subjects still to live, and is still gathering more.

2. This sprinkling of many nations is a prophecy this day fulfilled in our eyes, for we are one of these nations.

3. This sprinkling is an action of the ceremonial law, which was used for two ends ; for sealing of the covenant betwixt God and man, and for cleansing ; therefore Moses sprinkled the books of the testimony. So Christ sprinkles, by making a covenant, and re-

counting us to the Father, and sprinkles many foul souls. The marring of his face, makes many a fair face; the spitting and defiling of Christ's visage, clears many a down-casten conscience, and washes many a foul face. Therefore he says, "Let me hear thy voice, and see thy face, for thy voice is pleasant, and thy countenance is comely."

4. "Kings shall shut their mouths"—or stop their mouths, that is, they shall lay their hands upon their mouths, stoop, be silent, wonder, adore, reverence, and subject themselves to Christ, casting down their sceptres at his feet, when they consider his wisdom, power, and glory. It lets us see, that when worldly glory comes in the sight of Christ's spiritual glory, it thinks shame of itself, adheres to his, and wonders at it. So is it with worldly power and wisdom. Then, fall thou down before Christ, and give him glory, when thou countest nothing of thy own at the sight of his.

5. That kings are said to do thus, we see, as it is a glorious thing to Christ when any come in to him, so, especially, when those who have worldly honour, wealth, and dignity. Thou in high place, who hast gotten grace to abase thyself, it is a token to thee that thou hast seen, and shalt see the King in his glory. That thou mayest think little of thy high place, look up to Christ's glory; then, albeit thou wert descended of the blood royal, thou wouldst not glory, because of another higher generation to be sought after.

6. "That which had not been told, they see."—The apostle (Rom. x. 12) explains this of the preaching of the gospel to them who had not heard of it; whereof we learn, that the preaching of the gospel is the way that Christ glorifies himself, amplifies his kingdom, subdues many kings and kingdoms, and

sprinkles many nations. Seek then to be sprinkled and sanctified by the gospel, and preaching of the word, for by the word, the virtue of the blood and Spirit comes.

7. "That which they had not heard shall they consider."—We see, that where the gospel is powerfully preached, and fruitfully heard, men get their eyes open, to see the thing they never saw the like of it, and wisdom to consider the thing they never took up. If then the glory and wisdom of Christ shine in thy eyes, it is a token thou hast seen, heard, and considered what thou knew not before.

8. "Stop their mouths, for they shall see."—This lets us see, that a man cannot submit to Christ, believe in him, adhere to him, nor wonder at his wisdom, power, and goodness, till first he see and consider. Beg open eyes to see the Lord's suffering for you.

SERMON IV.

ON THE MONDAY FOR DIRECTION.

ISAIAH XLI. 14, 15.

"14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

"15. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff."

GOD has threatened the overthrow of idolaters in the former part of the chapter. Now, in this part of the chapter, he promises to do for his true worshippers: that he shall uphold them, deliver them,