

CHRIST CRUCIFIED,

W.H. 37

OR, THE

MARROW of the GOSPEL,

Evidently set forth in

LXXII SERMONS

ON

The whole 53^d CHAPTER of ISAIAH,

WHEREIN

The Text is clearly and judicially opened, and a great many most apposite, truly spiritual, and very edifying Points of Doctrine, in a delectable Variety, drawn from it, with choice and excellent practical Improvements thereof.

WHEREIN ALSO

Several Adversaries of the Truth, as Socinians, Arminians, Arians, and Antinomians, are solidly and fully refuted.

BESIDES,

Many Errors in Practice incident to Professors, otherwise Sound and Orthodox in their Opinions, are discovered; and many grave, deep, and very important Cases of Conscience, satisfyingly discussed.

By that able Minister of the New Testament,

The late Rev. Mr. *JAMES DURHAM*.

One of the Ministers in Glasgow, and Professor of Divinity in the University there.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY ALEX. ADAM,

For JOHN JOHNSTON, in the Caltoun
of GLASGOW, the Publisher.

M DCC XCH.

THE Works of this very pious and learned Author are so well known, and have deservedly obtained such a reputation in the Church of God, that there needs no more to recommend a Book, than to say, it was wrote by Mr. James Durham. There are none of his Writings, but must have a testimony in the hearts and consciences of all serious and experienced Christians, to their eminent usefulness and service. Some of these lead us into the mind of the Holy Ghost in the prophetical book of the Revelations, and that mystical Song of Solomon, of both which, its well known, the Author has given us an elaborate exposition. Another of these unfolds to us the great and glorious mystery of our redemption by the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. This the Author does in these Sermons of his, upon the whole 53^d. of Isaiah; a Work, which (if it may be allowed to make a comparison) equals, at least, if it does not exceed his other Writings. This valuable Piece was grown very scarce, and much out of print. There were frequent calls for it, which could hardly be answered at all, or not without much difficulty; which being observed by some serious and well disposed persons, they judged the reprinting of these Sermons might be of service to the Church of Christ; and having communicated their thoughts to some others, they readily concurred with them therein, not doubting, but whoever should promote this good Work, would think themselves obliged to those that first set the design on foot; since upon their perusal of these Sermons, they will not fail to meet with those things that will as much answer their expectation, as they exceed any commendation that can be given them by others.

Having said thus much, we conclude, praying that the blessing of him who gave this seed to the sower, may make it singularly useful to their souls, who shall seriously peruse it.

JEREM. SMITH,
JOHN NESBIT,
MATTH. CLARKE,
W. TONG,
B. ROBINSON
THO. REYNOLDS,
THO. RIDGLEY,
JOHN FOXON,

ISAAC WATTS,
JOSEPH HILL,
JOHN CUMMING,
JOHN ASTY,
DANIEL WILCOX,
JABEZ EARLE,
PATR. RUSSEL,
JAMES GALLOWAY

THO. BRADBURY,
JAMES WOOD,
THO. HALL,
JENKIN LEWIS,
JOHN MITCHEL,
EDWARD WALLIN,
THO. HARRISON,

Unto the afflicted and serious

CHRISTIANS,

And more particularly to the

Right Honourable and truly Noble Lord,

WILLIAM, Earl of CRAWFORD.

IT is one of the greatest practical debates and contests betwixt God and his own people, who are privileged with a special interest in him, and which they are naturally inclined longest to keep up, and are most unwilling to let fall, *viz.* Whether he guide and govern them, and mark out their lot to them, while they sojourn here in the world, as he in his own wisdom shall think fit; having (as it were) a blank submission put by them into his hand, to be filled up with what kind and quality, with what measure and quantity, and with what continuance and duration of troubles, trials, and afflictions, himself pleaseth? Or, whether he should, as to some things at least, consult their will and pleasure, and as it were take their advice, and allow them a liberty to prescribe to him, how he should guide and dispose of them? And indeed to be here denied to their own will, and absolutely submit to the will of God, is one of the highest and most difficult practicable points of self-denial. (To which notwithstanding all the disciples and followers of Christ are expressly called; and wherein he
hath

hath great delight and complacency, as favouring strong of intire trust and confidence in him.) Yet if we consider these few things, it will be found, that there is all the reason in the world, why they should come, and sweetly submit themselves to his will in all things, how cross soever to their own inclination, without any the least sinful reluctancy, or contradiction; which is our privilege, and the restoration of our degenerated nature, to its divine and primitive integrity.

First, If it be considered, That he hath a most sovereign, absolute, and uncontrollable dominion over you, as the potter hath over the clay, for *ye are the clay, and he is the potter*: Nay, he hath more absolute dominion over you, than the potter hath over his clay; for the potter maketh not the clay, both the clay and the potter being made by him. But *he hath made you, and not you yourselves. Ye are all the work of his hands*, Psal. c. 3. Isa. lxiv. 8. He hath made you living creatures, rational creatures, and new creatures; *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. which is the very flower of the creation: And, *ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. If therefore it be unsuitable, and incongruous, for the clay to say, to him that fashioned it, *What makest thou?* Or, for a man's work to say to him, that he hath no hands, Isa. xlv. 9. Its sure much more for you to say, to your great potter and fashioner, *What makest thou of us? Why dealest thou so and so with us? Woe to him that striveth with his Maker; let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Hath not the potter power over the clay? And are you not in the hand of the Lord, as the clay is in the hand of the potter?* Rom. ix. 21. Jer. xviii. 6. He might have made you *vessels to dishonour, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction*; without being justly chargeable with any injury done to you. And when he hath in the sovereignty of his most wonderful

derful free grace, made you *vessels to honour*, and *vessels of mercy*, which he hath afore prepared unto glory. Will ye dare to quarrel with him, for his disposing, in his own way, of your external condition in this world, and of those moveables, and accessories, that are wholly extrinsic, and not at all essential to your salvation, and true happiness? (For, let all the pleasures, riches, and honours of the world, even all the delights of the sons of men in their very extract, spirits, and quintessence, be as it were distilled in a lembic, till they be made to evaporate the purest perfumes of their utmost perfections, and heaped on the Christian; as they make him no better Christian, nor make any addition at all to his true happiness: So when he is deplumed and stripped naked of them all; every bird as it were of these earthly comforts taking back again from him its own feather; he is made never a whit the worse Christian, nor his happiness in the least impaired.) It were certainly much more becoming you to say, It is the Lord, who can do us no wrong, and who hath, undeservedly, done us much good; let him do to us what seemeth good in his sight.

Secondly, If it be considered, That he is of infinite wisdom, and knows much better what is good for you, than you do for yourselves, who often mistake what is good for you, through your corruption, ignorance, partiality, or prejudice; but he, by the most absolute perfection of his blessed nature, is infinitely removed from all possibility of mistaken what is good in itself, or good for you; and if you will adventure your estate and livelihood in the world, on able and faithful lawyers, when ye yourselves are much unacquainted with, and ignorant of law, and are disposed to think, that the suit that is commenced against you will ruin you, while they think otherwise. And if you will commit your health and life, to skilful physicians or surgeons, and receive from the one ma-
ny

ny unpleasant and loathsome potions, and pills, and suffer from the other such painful incisions and injections; such searchings, lancements, and pancings; such scarifications, cauterizings, and amputations: From all which ye have so great an averſation, if not abhorren-
 rency. Will ye not much rather and much more confidently commit the conduct and care of yourselves, and of all that concerns you, to him *of whose understanding there is no search*, as to what is good for his own people, and whose faithfulness in his dealing with them, *reacheth to the very clouds, and never faileth?* Psal. xxxvi. 5. Psal. lxxxix. 33. The skilfullest of these may mistake, none of them being infallible, and the most faithful of them may possibly at sometimes, and in some things, be found unfaithfully neglective, none of them being perfect: But it is simply impossible for him, either to mistake, or to be unfaithful; for otherwise he should deny himself, and so cease to be God, whereof once to admit the thought, is the highest blasphemy. Let therefore your confident trusting of men, in their respective professions and callings, make you blush at, and be ashamed of your distrusting of God, and of your quarrellings with him, even when ye know not, for the time, what he is doing with you, and when what is done would have been none of your own choice, but doth very much thwart and cross your natural inclinations. Is it not enough that he is infinitely wise in himself, and for you? may you not therefore safely trust in him, and with unsollicitous confidence, commit the conduct of yourselves, and all your concerns to him? As knowing that he cannot himself be misled, nor misgovern you: May you not in faith without distrustful and perplexing fear follow him? As faithful *Abraham followed him, not knowing whither he went*, Heb. xi. 18. And cast all your care on him, *who careth for you*, 1 Pet. v. 7. and hath made it your great care, *to be careful for nothing*, Phil. iv. 6. and thus even sing care away.

Thirddly,

Thirdly, If it be considered, That ye have in your own experience (as the rest of the people of God have in theirs) found, that in all past dealings with you, even those that for the time were most afflicting; his will and your true welfare, have been unseparably joined together, and that but very seldom and rarely, your own will and welfare have met together. So that ye have been constrained, upon calm reflection, to bless him that you had not your will in such and such things; however, for the time ye were displeased with the want of it, and have been made to think, that if ever ye had any good days, or hours, along your pilgrimage, your cross and afflicted ones, wherein God took most of his will, and gave you least of your own, have been your best days and hours. Dare you say, upon serious and just reflections, that it hath been otherways? Or that ye have not reason, as to all past cross-providences, even the most apparently crushing of them, since the day that ye were first brought under the bond of his covenant to this day, to set up, as it were, your stone, and to call it *Ebenezer the stone of help*, saying, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us?* 1 Sam. vii. 12. May you not, and should you not, then humbly and confidently trust him, that ye shall, through grace, have reason as to present and future ones, how sad and surprizing soever they are, or may be circumstantiated, to say, Jehovah-jireh, *The Lord will see, or provide*, Gen. xxii. 14. O! but it will be a sweet, pleasant, spiritual, wholesome, and refreshing air, that breathes in that walk, betwixt Ebenezer, and Jehovah-jireh; wherein a few turns taken, by the most afflicted Christians, in their serious, composed, spiritual, and lively contemplation, would, through God's blessing very much contribute quickly to reconcile them to all their respective crosses, how cross soever, and to the keeping them in better, and more constant spiritual health.

Fourthly, If it be considered, That by your pettish,
B
fretful,

fretful, male-contented and unsubmissive contentings, strivings and strugglings with him, ye will not help yourselves, ye may well make your own burden the more uneasy, and your chain the heavier; *Should it be according to your mind? Job xxxiv. 33. Shall the earth be forsaken for you? or shall the rock be removed out of his place? Job xviii. 4. will ye disannul his judgment? will ye condemn him, that ye may be righteous, Job xl. 8. will ye strive against him, who giveth not account of any of his matters? Job xxxiii. 13. Will ye tax his wisdom, as if he did not understand what is convenient for you? will ye teach God knowledge? Job xxi. 22. Is it fit that he should come down to your will, rather than you should come up to his? Shall God change and break all his wisely laid measures and methods of governing his people, and take new ones to gratify your peevish humours? He will not be diverted from his purpose, when he is in one way, who can turn him? what his soul desireth that he doth, for he performeth the thing that is appointed for you, Job xxiii. 13, 14. He is more just to himself, (to speak so) and more merciful to you, than to degrade as it were his infinite wisdom so far as to suffer himself to be swayed against the dictates of it, by such short-sighted and forward tutors as you; the great physician of souls is more compassionate and wise than to permit his distempered, and sometimes even in a manner distracted patients, to prescribe their own course of physick; but he will needs do, what he thought fit and resolved to do, *whether ye choose, or whether ye refuse, Job xxxiv. 33. only he would (to say so) have your consent unto, and your approbation of what he doth for the greater peace and tranquility of your own minds; Surely therefore it is meet, inekly and submissively to be said to God, whenever and however he chastiseth, I have born chastisement, I will not offend any more, that which I know not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more, Job**

xxxiv. 31, 32. It is the surest and shortest way to have our will formed so as may be for our welfare, to allow him to take his own will and way with us : For he hath a special complacency in this, and therein wonderfully discovers the bowels of his tender compassion toward his chastised and humbly submissive children: Surely (saith he) *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God: surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth: Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant child, for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him saith the Lord, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.* Thus when ye come submissively to his hand, he comes as it were sweetly to yours, and as ye gain nothing by your striving with him, so ye lose nothing, but gain much by your willingly stooping and silently submitting to him: If ye *humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, he shall lift you up, Jam. iv. 10. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, 1 Pet. v. 6.*

Fifthly, If it be considered, That ye stand in need of all the troubles and afflictions that ye meet with; whenever ye are in heaviness through one or more, or manifold temptations, it is always, and only, if need be, 1 Pet. i. 6. And if ye be well acquainted with the state and posture of your soul affairs, what graces of the spirit are to be quickened and drawn forth into more lively and vigorous exercise, what of those precious spices in your gardens are to be blown upon, not only by the more gentle and soft south-winds of consolations, but also by the more sharp and nipping north-winds of afflictions, and to be beaten as it were

in the mortar thereof, that they may send forth their pleasant and fragrant smell; what religious duties are either much neglected, or but very lifelessly, coldly, formally, lazily, superficially and heartlessly performed, and to what a higher pitch of spirituality in the manner of performing them, they are to be wrought up unto; what lusts and corruptions are to be further mortified and subdued; how little your hypocrisy, your self-love and self-seeking, your pride, passion, impatency, unpliableness and unsubmittedness to the will of God, your carnalness, earthly-mindedness, your immoderate and inordinate love to the things of the world, your murmuring, and fretting at, your dissatisfaction and discontent with your present lot; how little these, and many other corruptions are crucified and brought under; if, I say, you are well versed in the knowledge of your spiritual condition, ye will upon serious and thorough reflections find, that ye stand in need of every affliction ye meet with, as to all the circumstances thereof: or if ye do not, in so far ye are unacquainted with, and strangers to yourselves, and to the state and posture of your spiritual affairs; yet, ye will easily find, that all, even your heaviest crosses and afflictions, have enough to do to work you up to what you should be; and though sometimes ye may be disposed to think, that ye could hardly bear any more, yet ye will upon due search find that ye could have wanted nothing of what ye meet with, without a greater prejudice than the cross hath brought along with it: We are naturally froward and peevish, bent to fretfulness and discontent, inclining either to restless endeavouring, to have our lot brought up to our spirits, than to be at suitable pains, to have our spirits brought down to our lot, and therefore have much need to be tamed and calmed by the cross; this rugged and uneasy temper of spirit, being the great hinderer, yea, opposite of that stayed and sweet contentment of heart, with, and in every state: which

is the very life of a Christian's life *consisting* (as the Lord saith) *not in the abundance of the things which we possess*, Luke xii. 15. but in our satisfaction with them, whether abundant or not; to the attaining unto which blessed temper, the shortest and most compendious way, is in the *first* place to be well-pleased and satisfied with God himself, and with a solidly secured interest in him, and to endeavour in the *next* place, to be well-pleasing in his sight, to be gracious in his eyes, to stand well in his thoughts, even *to do always those things that please him*; John viii. 29. to which desirable frame of soul, if we were once through grace brought (whereto our bearing of the yoke, and putting our shoulders under the cross is not a little thro' God's blessing contributive;) O! how good natured then, and easy to please would we be found to be, and how ready to construe well all he doth to us? seldom out of humour (to speak so.) Now if we stand in need of all the afflictions we meet with, in all their most sad and sorrowful circumstances (as certainly we do, because God, who cannot lie, or mistake, hath said it,) why should we not submit ourselves to his will, in measuring them out to us? Or what just reason can there be, to be dissatisfied with, or to complain of God's giving to, and ordering that for us, whereof we stand in need, which we cannot want, unless being considerably prejudiced and worsted by the want?

Sixthly, If it be considered, That in all your chastisements and afflictions, God is graciously carrying on the blessed design of your spiritual *good* and *profit*, making them *all to work together* for that desirable end, causing them *turn to your salvation, through the help of the prayers* of others of his people, *and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ*, Rom. viii. 28. Phil. ii. 19. Giving you assurance by his faithful word of promise, that thereby *your iniquity shall be purged, and that this shall be all the fruit* (O! strange and admirable

ble

ble condescension of grace, *all the fruit*) *to take away sin*; Isa. xxvii. 9. and that he will not chastise you *as parents according to the flesh do their children*, to wit, *for their own pleasure*; who, however they may have a general design of good to their children in their chastising of them, yet through a remainder of corruption in the best of them, they are often subjected to such hurries and transports of passion, when it comes to the act of chastisement, that they much forget to consult the good and advantage of the chastised child, and too much gratify their own pleasure and humour; but that he will chastise *for your profit, that ye may be made partakers of his holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. Now, if this be his design in chastising, and if this be the promised fruit of your chastisements and afflictions, why should ye not therein submit to his pleasure, which hath your own profit inseparably joined with it? If ye yourselves do not sinfully lay obstructions in the way thereof, as otherwise, so particularly by your being displeased with this his pleasure, which yet his grace in his own people, suffers not to be invincible nor final. I do not say, that our chastisements and afflictions do of themselves produce this profit, and bring forth this fruit; for alas! We may from doleful experience have ever now arrived at a sad persuasion, that we are proof against all applications, excepting that of sovereign, efficacious and all-difficulty conquering free grace, and that nothing will prevail save that alone: whatever means be made use of, this only must be the efficient producer of our profit: It is a piece of God's royal and incommunicable prerogative, which he hath not given out of his own hand to any dispensation, whether of ordinances, never so lively and powerful in themselves, or of providences never so cross, loudly alarming and clearly speaking, abstractly from his own blessing, effectually *to teach to profit*, Isa. xlviii. 17. and therefore he doth (as well he may) claim it to himself alone, as his peculiar privilege,

vilege, while he saith, *I am the Lord thy God that teacheth thee to profit.* Since then this is his design in all the chastisements inflicted on his own people, and since he only by his grace can make it infrustrably take effect, let him have our hearty allowance and approbation, to carry it on vigourously and successfully, and let us pray more frequently and fervently, that by his effectual teaching, our profiting may be made more and more to appear under our chastisements; and withal *in the multitude of our sad thoughts* about them, let *his comforts delight our souls*, and this comfort in particular, that in them all he graciously designs and projects *our profit*, even the making of us more and more to *partake of his holiness*.

Seventhly, If it be considered, That all our trials and troubles, are but of time-continuance, and will period with it; they are but *for a season*, 1 Pet. i. 6. yea, but *for a moment*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *He will not contend for ever*, knowing well, if he should do so, *the spirits would fail before him, and the souls which he hath made*, Isa. lvii. 16. though they should follow close on you, and accompany you to your very dying day, yet then they will leave you, and take their last good night and everlasting farewell of you; *sorrow and sighing will then for ever fly away*, and *all tears* on whatsoever account, *shall then be wiped from your eyes*, Rev. vii. 17. and xxi. 4. It is a great alleviation and mitigation of the most grievous affliction, and of the bitterest and most extreme sorrow, to think, that not only it will have a term, day and date of expiration; but it will quickly in a very short time, even in a moment be over and at an end; (as a holy martyr said to his fellow-sufferer in the fire with him, *It is but winking, and our pain and sorrow is all over*) and that there shall be an eternal lease of freedom from it, and that everlasting solace, satisfaction and joy without any the least mixture of sorrow and sadness, shall succeed to it, and come in the room thereof: It is
but

but for the little space of *threescore years and ten, or fourscore* (Psal. xc. 10.) which length most men never come, that his people are subjected to trouble, and what is that very short moment and little point of time, being compared with vast and incomprehensibly long eternity? In respect of which ‘a thousand years are but as one day, or as a watch in the night, when it is past’, Psal. xc. 4. And no doubt the little whiles trouble, sadness and sorrow of sojourning and militant saints, is in the depth of divine wisdom, ordered so, that it may the more commend and endear that blessed calm and tranquility, that fulness of purest joys, and those most perfect pleasures at his right hand, that triumphant saints shall for evermore enjoy.

Eightly, If it be considered, That all along the little moment that your trials and afflictions abide with you, they are, even the saddest and most severe of them, moderate, and through his grace portable and *light*; ‘In measure he debateth with you, and stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind’, Isa. xxvii. 8. And whatever difficulty ye sometimes find under fore pressures, to get it solidly and practically believed, yet ‘God is faithful, who hath promised, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it’, 1 Cor. x. 13. *He is a God of judgment* (Isa. xxx. 18.) and discretion, that suits his people’s burthens to their backs, and wisely proportions their straits to their strength: *He puts not new wine into old bottles*, Matth. ix. 17. *Neither doth he break the bruised reed*, Isa. xlii. 3. And even ‘when he hides his face, and is wroth with his children, and smites them for their iniquity, Isa. xlii. 17, 18. It is only fatherly wrath; and however dreadful it may be, and difficult to be born, yet there is nothing vindictive in it; it is a father’s anger, but contempered with a father’s love, where also love predominates in the contemperature. And indeed the
most

most extreme, and the very heaviest of all our afflictions are moderated, and even *light* compared, *first*, With what your sins deserve, exceedingly far *beneath the desert whereof ye are punished*, Ezra ix. 23. Even so far, that ye may without all compliment, most truly say, ‘That it is because his compassions fail not, that ye are not consumed,’ Lam. iii. 22. that ye are kept out of hell, and free from everlasting burnings, to which your many, various and grievously aggravated provocations, have made you most justly liable: So that ye have reason to think any affliction short of everlasting destruction from the presence of God, to be a highly valuable piece of moderation, and to say, ‘Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?’ Lam. iii. 39. ‘We will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him,’ Mic. vii. 9. *2dly*, With what others of the people of God have readily met with, for ‘ye have not resisted unto blood striving against sin,’ Heb. xii. 4. We have it may be all this while been but *running with the footmen*, when they have been put *to contend with horses*, Jer. xii. 5. *3dly*, With what ourselves have sometimes dreaded and been put to deprecate, when horrid guilt hath stared us in the face, and when we apprehended God to be very angry, even threatening, ‘to smite us with the wound of an enemy, and with the chastisement of a cruel one, to run upon us as a giant, to break all our bones: And again to shew himself marvellous upon us, by taking us by the neck and shaking us in pieces,’ Jer. xxx. 14. Job xvi. 14. and 12. Job x. 16. *4thly*, With what our blessed Lord Jesus suffered for his people, who all the while he sojourned here on earth, was *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*, Isa. liii. 4. and might most justly have said beyond all men, ‘I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath: Is there any sorrow like unto mine, in the day when the Lord hath afflicted me?’ And,

5thly, Being compared with that ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which they work for you,’ 2 Cor. iv. 14. Seeing then that the sharpest and forest of your afflictions are in these, and many other respects very moderate, gentle, easy, and light; Is there not reason why ye should in them, without grudging, sweetly submit yourselves to his will? Cheerfully saying, it might have been much worse, this falls infinitely short of what we have deserved, blessed be God that it is only thus, and no worse.

Ninthly, If it be considered, That often when in any more than ordinary spiritual and lively frame of soul, ye have in prayer desired the Lord, that he would take any way, and make use of any means he pleased (wherein your sin might not be) to make you more serious in the exercise of godliness, more effectually to mortify your corruptions, and to further your conformity to his image in holiness: And that ye should, through his grace, be content, putting, as it were, a blank in his hand, to be filled up as himself in his own infinite wisdom should think fit, declaring, that ye were satisfied on the terms proposed by Jesus Christ, to be his disciples, and to take up not only *a cross*, or *the cross* in general, but, Matth. xvi. 24. *your cross* in particular, the cross that should be shaped out for you, however circumstantiated: And when under some very sad affliction he on the matter bespeaks thus, I am now about to grant you your own desire, though it may be in such a way, and by such a mean as either would have been none of your own choosing, had it been left to your choice, or possibly such as ye did not think of: Will ye be displeased with me, or mistake my hearing of your prayers, fulfilling of your petitions, and granting you according to your own heart’s desire, because I do it in my own way, and by means of your own choosing, wherein ye left and allowed to me a latitude, and not in your way and by your means, which ye
then

then renounced, as not thinking yourselves competent judges thereof? Alas! here we are often found at best to border upon a practical rewing, retracting, and lifting up again of the blank-submission which we professed to lay down before him; and to say by our fretting, repining, dissatisfaction, immoderate heaviness, and despondency of spirit, that we were somewhat rash, and not so well advised when we subscribed, and gave in such a submission and surrender of ourselves to him: That we did not think he would have taken such advantage of us, or would have put us so sore to it; and, that if we had thought he would have done so, we would have been better advised, before we had thus submitted to him, and with our consent put ourselves in his reverence; and that if it had been any thing *but this* we could have borne it (whereas he saith, nothing *but this*;) whereby we do not only reflect not a little upon him, as dealing unkindly, and doing what we would not have expected at his hand; but also make a sad and humbling discovery of much unsoundness in ourselves, as to our offering up of such general desires, and as to our making of such absolute submissions to him. Let us therefore, in order to the justifying of him as both righteous and kind, and to the vindicating of ourselves, at least from allowing of any unsoundness, dissimulation, or unfair, and merely complimentary-dealing with God, in our submitting ourselves to him in the general, without any *but's* or *if's*, any *restrictions* or *exceptions*, hold to the submission given; sharply expostulating with, and severely chiding ourselves for this discovered practical contradiction and contravention, and we shall find that he hath done nothing unworthy of himself, nor in the least prejudicial to us, but what is according to our own most deliberate desires, and greatly to our advantage.

It were a very great mistake, from what is discoursed in this *consideration* if any should conclude, that

we intend either to commend or allow Christians, praying directly and expressly for crosses and afflictions, or for such and such afflictions in particular: For, beside that we neither find it commanded in the scriptures, nor allowedly (if at all) presided or practised by the saints recorded there; and that it seems to be a sinful limiting of the sovereign God to a particular mean; we may easily know from sad experience, with what difficulty, repining, and fainting we often bear those crosses and afflictions that we are most clearly called to take on, and that are unavoidably laid upon us; and how lamentably little for the most part we profit by them. What hope or assurance could we then have that we should either carry Christianly under, or make suitable improvement of such crosses as we should unwarrantably seek, and pray for to ourselves? It is true, we find some of the saints, and those, stars of the first magnitude, as Moses, Job, Elias, David, and Jonas, in their distempered malcontent or fainting fits, passionately, preposterously, and precipitantly praying, or rather wishing for death (for which they were not for the time in so good case) but that was not for death under the notion of affliction, but rather to prevent future and further afflictions, or to have a period put to presently incumbent ones. If it should here be said, why may not saints pray for afflictions since they seem to be promised in the covenant of grace, as Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. Hos. ii. 6, 7. and ver. 14. And since God hath graciously promised to bless all the afflictions of his people, and to make them turn to their spiritual good, profit, and advantage, as Rom. viii. 28. and Heb. xii. 10. and elsewhere? To the *first* part of the objection, it may be briefly *answered*, that these and other such are not properly and formally promises of the covenant of grace, but rather covenant-threatnings (for the covenant of grace hath its own threatnings suited to the nature thereof, as well as the covenant

of works hath its) though dipped (so to say) in covenant-grace and mercy. And to the *other* part of it as briefly, that God hath promised to bless and to cause to profit by such afflictions and chastisements as himself thinks fit to inflict and lay on; but not those which we seek and pray for to ourselves. Neither doth that scripture, Psal. cxix. 75. *I know—that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me*, say any thing towards strengthening the objection, or invalidating the answers given to it: For the Psalmist only there humbly and thankfully acknowledgeth God's faithfulness in fulfilling his threatening, in afflicting him when he went astray, and in performing his promise in blessing his affliction to him, for preventing his after-straying, and making him learn better to keep his commandments; in both which he is faithful. All that is either exprest or meant in this consideration, is, That the saints often pray God, that he would take his own way, and use his own means to bring about these great ends mentioned; wherein there is indeed at least a tacit insinuation, that if he in his wisdom see it meet to make use of the rod and affliction in order thereto, that they will not allow themselves to decline the same, nor to mistake him in it; but that rather they shall through grace be satisfied with, and bless him for fulfilling their petitions, and granting them according to their own hearts desires, though it be by such means: which is not praying for affliction, but a resolved and declared submission to infinite wisdom's love-choice of his own means, to effectuate and bring to pass the prayed for ends.

Tenthly, If it be considered, That it now neither grieveth nor troubleth any of all the glorified, triumphing company, who have palms in their hands, and are now before the throne of God, and of the Lamb, that they were exercised with so many, and so great trials and tribulations, while they were here below. It troubles not John the Baptist that he was
imprisoned,

imprisoned, basely murdered and beheaded there in a hole, without having any access to give any public testimony before his death; and at the desire of a wanton dancing damsel, through the instigation of her adulterous and incestuous mother: Nor Stephen (commonly called the proto-martyr) that he was stoned to death as a blasphemer, for giving testimony to the most precious and comfortable truth of Christ's being the Messiah: Nor Paul that he was thrice beaten with rods, and received five times forty stripes save one, that he was in so many perils by sea and land, in the city, in the country, and in the wilderness, by the Heathen, by his own country-men, and by false brethren; that he was stoned, and suffered all those other things, whereof he gives an historical abridgement in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. xi. Nor doth it trouble any of all those *worthies, of whom the world was not worthy*, that they were cruelly mocked, imprisoned, scourged, tortured, or tympanised, and racked, stoned, tormented, sawn asunder, killed with the sword, tempted, driven to dens, and caves of the earth, and put to wander up and down in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, whose martyrology the apostle briefly compendeth, Heb. xi. Nor doth it trouble any other of all the martyrs, saints, and servants of Jesus, who have in the several ages of the church suffered so many and so great things while they were in the world: Nay, all these their sufferings go to make up a considerable part of their song of praise in heaven: (Where the history of these wars of and for the Lord, will be very pleasant to them to read, however sore and bloody they were on earth :) And not only so, but those of them who have suffered most, wonder much that they have suffered so little, and that they are come to so excellent and glorious a kingdom, through so little tribulation in the way to it. Believe it there will be as much matter of thanksgiving and praise to God found treasured up under the

the plaits and foldings (to say so) of the most cross and afflicting providences, that ever the people of God met with here in the world, as under those that for the time were more smiling and satisfying. Let us then, valuing all things we meet with, according to the aspect they have on our spiritual and eternal state, (which is sure the justest and safest valuation of them) heartily allow him, to take his own will and way in afflicting us.

Eleventhly, If it be considered, That as this submission to the will of God, in cross and afflicting providences, is chronicled in the sacred records to the perpetual commendation of several of the saints; namely of Aaron, of whom it is said, when God had slain his two sons in a strange and stupendious manner, even by fire from heaven, for their presumptuous offering of strange fire before him, that *he held his peace*, Lev. x. 3. Of old Eli when he received a sad message, concerning himself and his house by the hand of young Samuel, who said, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. Of Job, after, by four several messengers (each of them coming immediately on the back of the other, so that he scarcely got leave to breathe betwixt, to finish his lamentable narration) the terrible alarming tidings were brought him, the plundering of his oxen and asses by the Sabeans, and the killing of the servants with the sword; concerning the consuming of his sheep and servants by the fire of God falling from heaven upon them; concerning the carrying away of his camels, and the killing of his servants by the Chaldeans; and concerning the smothering to death of all his sons and daughters, while feasting together, by the falling of the house upon them; who said, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job is not sinning, nor charging God foolishly*, Job i. 21, 22. Of David, who in a croud of crosses, saith to God, *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, be-*
cause

cause thou didst it, Psal. xxxix. 9. 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. and who, when forced to flee from Jerusalem, by his unnatural and rebellious son Absalom, and sending back the ark thither, with admirable composure and sweet submitting of soul, said, 'If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation: But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good to him:' of Hezekiah, when that heavy message was brought to him by the prophet Isaiah concerning the Babylonish captivity, wherein his royal posterity were to have their deep share, who said, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*, who said moreover, *Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?* 2 Kings xx. 19. if the threatned doom and sentence shall be for a while suspended, and not presently executed: And of those Christians, who, after they had with much weeping earnestly intreated the apostle Paul, deservedly very dear to them, not to go up to Jerusalem, where the prophet Agabus had foretold he should be apprehended, and put in bonds, and perceived that he was inflexibly resolved at any rate of hazard to go thither, ceased, and submissively said, *The will of the Lord be done*, Acts xxi. 14. As, I say, it is thus chronicled to their commendation, so it is a piece of most beautiful and amiable conformity to the practice of our blessed Lord Jesus, of whom we ought *to be followers as dear children*, Ephes. v. 1. in all those things, wherein he is proposed as a pattern for our imitation, who in a great and grievous agony of trouble, and when most terribly assaulted by a strong combination of cross and afflicting providences, and after conditionate deprecating of that bitterest cup and blackest hour, pleasantly, sweetly, and submissively subjoined, and said to his father, *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done: Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Luke xxii. 42. Matt. xxvi. 32.

Twelfthly,

Twelfthly, and finally, If it be considered, That when the whole contexture and web of providences, and more especially about the catholic, visible, militant church, and every individual member thereof shall be wrought out, and in its full length and breadth (as it were) spread in the midst of all the redeemed, perfected, glorified, and triumphant company of saints, standing round about, and with admiration beholding it; there will not be found (to say so) one misplaced thread, nor one wrong set colour in it all, but every thing will be found to have fallen in, in the fittest place, and in the most beautiful season and order thereof: O! so rare, so remarkable, so renowned, and so ravishing a piece; as it will by them all unanimously, and with one voice be judged and declared to be, even worthy of the most exquisite art and infinite skill of the great worker thereof; the severest critics and most difficultly satisfiable of them all, while here below, about more public, and more particular cross-providences, will then fully, and to the height be satisfied; and withal, without any the least hesitation or jarring, readily and chearfully bear him this concordant testimony, that *he hath done all things well*, Mark vii. 37. every thing in particular, and all things in general, though when he was doing of them, they often presumptuously took on them rashly to censure, and to offer their impertinent and crabbed animadversions on, and their amendations and alterations of several of them, and will most cordially bless him, that he wrought on in his own way, about his church, and each of themselves, without consulting them, or following their way, which would have quite marr'd the beauty, and darkned the lustre and splendour of that most close and curious divine contexture.

Every one of these considerations hath much reason in it, to persuade you to this entire and absolute submission to God's will and pleasure, in what is cross

to you, afflicted and sorrowful Christians! But O! how much weight and strength of sound spiritual reason is there in them all united together (besides the many other excellent considerations, dispersed up and down these choice sermons, filled full with strong cordials, fitted both to recover and to preserve you from fainting, under your many several afflictions) powerfully to persuade and prevail with you, even the most averse, untoward, and most stubborn of you all, without further debate, demur, or delay, in those things that are most afflicting to you, and do most thwart your inclinations, to come into his will, and pleasantly, without any the least allowed reluctancy, or gain-saying, to submit to him? How might you thus possess your souls in patience, and how quiet, calm, sedate, and composed might ye be, more especially in troublesome times, amidst those things where-with others are kept in a continual hurry, almost to the hazard of being distracted by them?

Let them all, my *Noble Lord*, prevail with your Lordship in particular, reverently to adore, silently to stoop unto, and sweetly to acquiesce in, the Lord's sovereign, holy, and wise ordering your many and various complicated trials, and more especially his late removing your excellent Lady, the desire of your eyes, the Christian and comfortable companion of your youth, by his stroke. As indeed all the ties of nearest and dearest relations, betwixt husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, &c. are capable of dissolution, and will all ere long by death be actually dissolved; there being but one tie and knot of marriage-union betwixt precious Jesus Christ and the believer, that by divine ordination is eternally incapable of any dissolution, even by death itself; which, though it dissolve the strait-union that is betwixt the soul and body, yet doth not at all loose the straiter bond of union that is betwixt him and both of them, but it remains still inviolable; and by
virtue

virtue thereof the believers vile dead body, shall be raised again at the last day, conformed to his own glorious body, and be re-united to the perfected soul, which two old intimates will then meet in far better case than when they were parted and pulled asunder; for he is an husband that cannot grow old, sick, or weak, neither can he die: he is a husband whose bride and spouse is never a widow, neither hath he any relicts. The drawing on of which matchless match and marvellous marriage, is one great design of these sweet sermons, wherein pregnant reasons are produced by this *friend of the bridegroom*, to persuade sinners to imbrace the offer thereof made to them in the gospel; and to make them, who, by his own gracious and powerful insinuations on their hearts, have entertained his proposal, toward making up, and final closing of the match, to blis themselves in their choice, and to blis him, that ever he was pleased to stoop so very low as to become a suiter to them, with a peremptory resolution to admit of no refusal, but infrustrably to carry their heart's consent to take him for their Lord, Head, and Husband, to be to them a Saviour, a Physician, and Treasure, even their *all in all*, their *all above all*, which day of espousals, as it was *the day of the gladness of his heart*, so it will never be any grief of heart to them. Let all mutinous thoughts about his dealings with you be silenced with, *It is the Lord*; let not too much dwelling on the thoughts of your affliction, to the filling of your heart still with sorrow, incapacitate you for, nor divert you from, humbly asking the Lord, what he aims at by all these dispensations, what he would have you to learn out of them, what he reproveth and contends for, what he would have you amending your hands in, and what he would have you more weaned, self-denied, and mortified in, and what he would have you a further length, and a greater proficient in. He hath told you *the truth, that these things are expedient*

for you ; study to find them to be so in your own experience. Sure he hath by them, written in great, legible, and capital characters, yea, even as with a sun-beam, vanity, emptiness, uncertainty, mutability, unsatisfactoriness, and disappointment upon the forehead of all creature-comforts, and with a loud voice called your Lordship, yet more seriously than ever, to seek after solid soul-satisfaction in his own blessed and all-sufficient self, where it is most certainly to be found, without all peradventure or possibility of mistaking. Make haste, my Lord, yet to come by a more close confining of all your desires and expectations of happiness and satisfaction to your soul, to God only, contracting and gathering them in, from the vast and wearisome circumference of earthly comforts, and centering them all in himself as their point ; study through grace in a sweet soliloquy, to bespeak your soul thus, *My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him*, Psal. lxii. 5. O blessed confinement of desires and expectations of happiness and satisfaction to the soul ! where it is as impossible to meet with disappointment, as it is impossible not to meet with it from every thing here whence it is looked for. Alas ! it is the scattering of our expectations and desires of happiness among other objects beside him, that breeds us all the disquiet, anxiety, and vexation, whereas if we kept ourselves through grace under a more close and constant confinement to him, when this and that, and the other creature-comfort, whether person or thing were taken from us, there would be no deduction made from, nor any diminution made of our true happiness ; none of these, how dear and desirable soever, being essentially constitutive of it, nor so much as bordering thereupon ; and he in whom only all our happiness lies, being *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without any variableness or shadow of turning*. There are some whom he loveth so well, that he cannot (to speak so) find in
his

his heart to see them thus to lay out their affections, and to dote upon any painted imagery happiness in creature-comforts; and therefore with design, he doth either very much blast them, as to the expected satisfaction from them; or quite remove them, that by making such a vacuity, he may make way for himself to fill it, and happily to necessitate the person, humbly, powerfully, and believingly, to put him to the filling of it; and it is a great vacuity that he *who fills heaven and earth* cannot fill, a little of whose gracious presence and manifested special love, can go very far to fill up the room that is made void by the removal of the choicest and most desirable of all earthly comforts and enjoyments. Happy they, who when they loose a near and dear relation, or friend, or any idol, they are fond of, are helped of God to make Jesus Christ, as it were, succeed to the same as its heir, by taking that loss as a summons, to transfer and settle their whole love on him; the object incomparably most worthy of it, as being *altogether lovely, or all desires*, Cant. v. 16. There is no earthly comfort, person, or thing, but hath somewhat in it that is not desirable, and that it would be better to want, but there is nothing in him that is not truly desirable, nor any thing out of him that is worthy to be desired.

I am, my *Noble Lord*, the more easily prevailed with and encouraged, to address the Dedication of these Sermons to your Lordship more particularly, when I remember *the unfeigned faith that dwelt in your grand-mother*, as another Lois; and in your mother, as another Eunice; and more lately, in your own choice Lady, who as another beloved Persis, *laboured much in the Lord*; and though she had a very short Christian race, (in which she was much encouraged by coming into your Noble Father's family, and her beholding, how hard your blest mother did run and press toward the mark, even when in the last stage,

and

and turning in a manner the last stoop of her christian course;) yet it was a very swift one, wherein she did quite out-run many that were in Christ long before her; (all three Ladies of honour almost, if I need say almost) without parallels in their times, in the serious and diligent exercise of godliness, and patterns worthy to be imitated by others, and I trust in your Lordship's self also; yea, and in several others of your elder and younger noble relations, for grace hath such a draught of souls amongst you, as it useth not often to have in societies of so noble extract (*for not many noble are called;*) which, as it deservedly draweth respect to such of you, as are thus privileged, from the observers of it, so it layeth a mighty strong obligation upon you, to be much for God, and in service to your generation according to his will. Further, when I observe your Lordship's christian and exemplary carriage, under such a conjunction and combination of so very cross, and almost crushing calamitous providences, choosing rather contentedly and satisfiedly to be (if it so please the Lord, and O! that it may not) the last of that ancient and honourable family, than to be found endeavouring to keep it from sinking by any sinful and unwarrantable course, particularly by defrauding just creditors (though the debt was not of your Lordship's own contracting) under whatever specious pretexts and advantages of law; whereof many make no scruple, who, if they may keep up their superfluities, care not if they ruin their friends who are engaged in suretyship for their debt, and to live on the substance of others. Moreover, when with great satisfaction I take notice how much your Lordship makes it your business to follow your noble ancestors, in so far as they were *followers of Christ*; which many great men, even in the Christian world, alas! do not much mind; not considering that it is true nobility, where God is the chief, and head of the kindred, and where religion is at the bottom;
and

and what renowned Rauleigh saith, *Hinc dictus Nobilis quasi præ aliis virtute notabilis* : And what another saith, *Qui ab illustrium majorum splendida virtute degenerarunt nobilia portenta sunt*. And finally, when I consider, that in your Lordship's retirement and abstraction from wonted converse and dealing in business, you will have access at leisure to read them, whereby you may, through God's blessing, be sweetly diverted from pensive, and not so profitable poring on your affliction, and be much instructed, convinced, reformed, directed, edified, strengthened, and comforted. Read them then, my Lord, carefully, as I take it for granted you will, ponder and digest them well, and I hope, that they will, through grace, prove contributive to the bringing you to a considerable growth in holiness, and to the making of *your ways and doings* more than ever such, that others of his people observing the same, *shall be comforted, and made to think, and say, verily God hath not done in vain all that he hath done to this noble-man*.

That these substantial gospel-sermons may come to you all, nay, to all the readers of them, and to your Lordship more particularly, with showers of gospel-blessings, is the earnest desire of,

Dearly beloved, afflicted Christians,

and my very noble Lord in particular,

your companion in tribulation,

desirous also to be in the kingdom

and patience of Jesus Christ,

and your servant, in the gospel, for his sake,



U N T O T H E
R E A D E R S,

And more particularly unto the

INHABITANTS OF THE CITY OF
GLASGOW, OF ALL RANKS.

THOUGH the whole field of the sacred and infallibly inspired scriptures, be very pleasant and beautiful (a spiritual, cool, and cleansing, a fructifying, fresh, refreshful, and wholesome air, breathing continually there) yet if we may compare some parts thereof with others, those wherein the treasure, precious Jesus Christ, lieth most obvious and open, are certainly most pleasant and beautiful. And amongst these, such as hold forth his sufferings, and himself as crucified, most evidently before men's eyes, have a particular and surpassing pleasantness and beauty in them. If so, then sure this *fifty third chapter* of the prophecy of Isaiah cannot but be looked on, as a transcendently pleasant, beautiful, sweet-smelling, and fragrant piece of divine scripture-field, wherein the evangelic prophet discourseth of the sufferings of Christ, as particularly and fully, as plainly and pathetically, even to the very life, as if he himself had been a spectator and eye-witness of them. However, this delightful chapter from beginning to end, as also the three last verses of the foregoing, are, by the very learned Grotius, most miserably perverted, while he industriously diverts it from the Messiah, and by stretching

stretching and curtailings thereof at his pleasure (as the cruel tyrant Mazentius did the men he laid on his bed, to make them of equal length with it,) and wholly applies it to the prophet Jeremiah only, in the first place not denying that it hath accommodation to Christ, of whom he takes but little or no notice in all his annotations thereon. The impertinencies and wrestings of which application, are convincingly held forth by famous Dr. Owen, that strenuous opposer of Socinians (in his *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ* against Biddle, and the Racovian catechism) who looks on this portion of scripture as the sum of what is spoken in the Old Testament, concerning the satisfactory death of Jesus Christ. He was a burning and shining light in the reformed churches, though, now alas! to their great loss, lately extinguished. And indeed the dealing of the very learned Grotius, professing himself to be a Christian, with this most clear, and to all true Christians, most comfortable scripture, is the more strange, and even stupendious, considering, 1. That several passages in it, are in the New Testament expressly applied to Christ, Matt. viii. 17. Mark xv. 28. Luke xxii. 27. Acts viii. 28, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 22. and 24. but not one so much as alluded to, in reference to Jeremiah. 2. That the ancient Jewish doctors, and the Chaldee Paraphrast, (as Dr. Owen, in the afore-said learned and favourable book, gives an account) do apply it to him. 3. That a late doctor, of great note and honour among the Jews, Abrabinel affirmeth, That in truth he sees not how one verse of the whole (several of which he toucheth on) can be expounded of Jeremiah; and wonders greatly, that any wise man can be so foolish as to commend, much more be the author of such an exposition, (as one Rabbi Gaon had been) which is, saith he, so utterly alien, and not in the least drawn from the scriptures. 4. That several Jews do profess, that their Rabbins could easily have extricated themselves from all other places of

the prophets, (a vain and groundless boast) if Isaiah in this place had but held his peace, as Hulsius, very lately, if not present, Hebrew professor at Breda, declares, some of them did to himself. 5. That a Rabbi, by his own confession, was converted from a Jew to a Christian, by the reading of the fifty third of Isaiah, as the excellent Mr. Boyl, in his delicate discourses on the stile of the Holy Scriptures, informs us; yea, that divers Jews have been convinced and converted to the Christian faith, by the evidence of this prophecy, as learned and laborious Mr. Pool affirms, in his lately published *English Annotations* on this scripture. 6. That the Socinians themselves have not dared to attempt the accommodation of the things here spoken of, to any other certain and particular person than the Messiah, though being so much tortured thereby, they shewed good will enough to it. And, 7. That himself had before written a learned *Defence of the Catholic Faith concerning Christ's satisfaction against Socinus*; wherein also he improved to notable purpose several verses of this same chapter: But in these latter Annotations, being altogether silent as to making any use of them that way, he, as much as he can, delivers that Desperado, and his disciples, from one of the sharpest swords that lies at the very throat of their cause (for if the chapter may be applied to any other, as he applies it wholly to Jeremiah, no solid nor cogent argument can be drawn from it for confirming Christ's satisfaction) and by his never reinforcing of that Defence of his, against the assault made upon it by the Socinian Crellius, though he lived twenty years after, he seems, for his part, quite to have abandoned and delivered it up into the hand of these declared enemies of Christ's Satisfaction, yea, and of his Godhead. It is true indeed, that the learned Vossius defends that Defence against the assault of Ravenspergerus, a groaning divine, but it is on a quite different account from that of Crellius. By
which

which annotations of his, as by several others on other scriptures, how much, on the matter at least, great Grotius hath by abusing his prodigious wit, and profound learning, subserved the cursed cause of blasphemous Socinus, and further hardened the already, alas ! much and long hardned poor Jews ; and what bad service he hath done to our glorious Redeemer, and to his church satisfied for, and purchased by his blood, by his sad sufferings, and sore soul-travel, most clearly and comfortably discoursed in this chapter, let the Lord himself, and all that love him in sincerity, judge : I wish I could, and had reason, to say no worse of this admirably learned person here, than that, *Quandoque dormitat Homerus.*

Very many and various, very great and most grievously aggravated sufferings, were endured by Christ, not only in his body, nor only in his soul, by virtue of the sympathy it had with his body from the intimate and strict union betwixt them : but also, and mainly, in his blessed human soul immediately ; since he redeemed, satisfied for, and saveth his peoples souls as well as their bodies. And the soul having principally sinned, and being the spring and source of sin ; sinners withal deserving punishment in their souls as well as in their bodies ; and being, without the benefit of his mediation, to be punished eternally both in their souls and bodies, and mainly in their souls ; there is no doubt, the same cogent reason for the Mediator's suffering in both parts of the human nature assumed by him, that there is for that nature's suffering which sinned : which, his sad complaints of the exceeding trouble of his soul, putting him to say those strange and stupendious words, *What shall I say ?* And of the great sorrow and heaviness thereof, even to death, his amazement, strong cries, and tears, with his agony and sweat of blood, Joh. xii. 27. Mat. xxvi. 38. Mark xiv. 33. Luke xxii. 44. Heb. v. 7. (and that before any pain was caused to his body by men)

and his conditional deprecating of that bitter cup, put beyond all reach of rational contradiction. And to think, or say, that only the fear of his bodily sufferings quickly approaching him, did make these sad impressions upon him; and draw these strange expressions from him, would make him who is Lord and Master to be of far greater abjectness of spirit than many of his servants the martyrs were, and to fall vastly below that holy heroic and magnanimous courage and resolution, wherewith they adventured on extreme sufferings, and most exquisite torments; which would be very unworthy of, and a mighty reflection upon him, who is the valiant *Captain of salvation, made perfect through sufferings, who drank of the brook in the way, and therefore lifted up the head*, Heb. ii. 10. Psal. cx. 7. But here is the great and true difference betwixt his sad and sorrowful deportment under his sufferings and their solacious, cheerful, and joyful deportment under theirs; that they through his suffering and satisfaction, were persuaded and made sensible of God's being pacified towards them, and were mightily refreshed by his gracious comforting presence with them amidst their sufferings; while he, on the contrary, looked upon himself as one legally obnoxious to punishment, fixed before the terrible tribunal of the justice of God, highly provoked by, and very angry at the sins of his people, who was in a most signal manner pouring out upon his soul the vials of his wrath and curse, which made him lamentably, and aloud, to cry out of desertion, though not in respect of the personal union, as if that had been dissolved, nor yet as to secretly supporting, yet as to such a measure at least of the sensibly comforting and rejoicing presence, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Here faith was in its meridian, though it was dark mid-night as to joy; wherewith as such, his body could not be immediately affected, spiritual desertion not falling under bodily sense. Whence we
may

may see how justly the doctrine of Papists is to be exploded, who deny all suffering in his soul immediately, to save their darling dream of his local descent as to his soul, while his body was in the grave, into hell, and to *Limbus Patrum*, to bring up thence into heaven the souls of the fathers; whom, without giving any reason, or alledging any fault on their part, they foolishly fancy, after their death till then, to have been imprisoned there, though quiet and under no punishment of sense, yet deprived of all light and vision of God, and so under the punishment of loss, the greatest of punishments, even by the confession of some of themselves, whereby they put those holy and perfected souls (for there they say there is no more purgation from sin, that being the proper work of their profitable *purgatory*) in worse case all that length of time after their death, than they were when alive on the earth, where doubtless they had often much soul-refreshing fellowship with God, and the light of his countenance lifted up upon them.

Neither were these his sufferings in soul and body, only to confirm the doctrine taught by him, if that was at all designed by him as an end of his sufferings, which were so much stumbled at in that time, which yet I will not debate, nor peremptorily deny, his doctrine being rather confirmed by his miracles and resurrection. Nor were his sufferings only to leave us an example and pattern how we should suffer, as non-christian and blasphemous Socinians aver, which were mightily to depretiate, and disparage, nay, to enervate and quite make void his sufferings, by attributing no more to them than may be attributed to the sufferings of his servants and martyrs. Its true, his example was an infallible directory, the example of all examples, but theirs not so: yet this doth not at all influence any alteration of the nature of the end. But they were chiefly undergone by him for his people, and in their stead, and sustaining their persons,

persons, room, and place, truly and properly by the sacrifice of himself to satisfy divine justice for their sins. And who I pray can put any other comment on these scripture-expressions, without manifest perverting and wresting of them; *He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree,* 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. (which is by the apostle subjoined as a superior end of his sufferings to that of leaving us an example, discoursed by him immediately before.) *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him: The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all; for the transgression of my people was he stricken; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin: he bore the sins of many; in whom we have redemption through his blood; who is the propitiation for our sins,* Isa. liii. 5, 6, 8, 10, 12. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. 1 John ii. 2. and the like.

Nor did he undergo these sad sufferings for all men in the world, to satisfy justice for them, and to reconcile them to God, but only for the elect, and such as were given unto him.

For, First, *The chastisement of their peace only was laid on him, who are healed by his stripes,* as it is, ver. 5. of this fifty-third of Isaiah, *For the iniquities of my people was he stricken,* saith the Lord, ver. 8. The same who are called the Mediator's people, Psal. cx. 3. (For saith blessed Jesus to his Father, John xvii. 10. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*) *Who shall, without all peradventure or possibility of misgiving, be made willing in the day of his power. He only bare the iniquities of those whom he justifieth by his knowledge,* ver. 11. For otherwise the prophet's reasoning would not be consequent: *He only bare the iniquities of as many transgressors as he makes intercession for,* verse 12. And that he doth not make intercession for all, but for

for those only who are given to him, that is, all the elect, is undeniably manifest from John xvii. 9. where himself expressly saith, *I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me.* Now God's eternal, electing love, and his giving the elect to the Mediator in the covenant of redemption, to be satisfied for, and saved by him; and his intercession for them, are commensurable and of equal extent, as is most clear from John xvii. 6. where he saith, *Thine they were* (to wit, by election) *and thou gavest them to me,* to wit, in and by the covenant of redemption (God's decree of election being in order of nature prior to this donation, or gift of the elect in the covenant of redemption) compared with ver. 9. where he saith, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me, for they are thine.* It is observable, that he saith twice over, *I pray for them,* manifestly and emphatically restricting his intercession to them, and excluding all others from it. Why then should not this sacrifice (the price of the redemption of those elected and given ones, agreed upon in that covenant betwixt those two mighty parties) be commensurable with the former three? especially since he saith, ver. 19. *For their sakes sanctify I myself,* or separate myself to be a sacrifice. 2. Christ's satisfaction and his intercession being the two parts of his priestly office, and his intercession being founded on his satisfaction, as it is clear, ver. 12. of this fifty-third of Isaiah: Yea, a very learned man affirms, That Christ's appearance in heaven, and his intercession, are not properly sacerdotal acts, but in so far as they lean on the virtue of his perfected sacrifice. What just, good, or cogent reason can there be to make a disjunction betwixt those parts of his office, and to extend the most difficult, operose, and costly part to all men, and to narrow the other, which is the more easy part, as that whereby he only deals for the application of what he had made a purchase of by his satisfaction, which

which, put him to much sad and sore soul-travel, to secure it to the elect and given ones? 3. Doth not the scripture hold forth his death, and the shedding of his blood, as the great demonstration of his special love to his own elect people? As is clear else-where; so particularly, John xv. 13. *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Nay, purchased reconciliation through the death of Christ, is, by the Holy Ghost, made a greater evidence of divine love in some respect, than the glorification of the reconciled, according to what the apostle saith, Rom. v. 10. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* 4. All the other gifts of God to sinners, even the greatest spiritual ones, fall vastly below the giving of Jesus Christ himself, *that gift of God*, by way of eminency, as the apostle reasoneth irrefragably, for the comfort of believers, Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Will he give the greatest gift, and not give the lesser? as justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification; which, how great soever in themselves, are yet lesser than the giving of Christ himself to the death; and if it be undeniably certain that he giveth not these to all which are the lesser and lower gifts, why should it be thought that he hath given the higher and greater? 5. Shall that grand expression of the special love of God, be made common, by extending it to all the world, the greatest profligates and atheists not excepted, no not Pharaoh, nor Ahab, nor Judas the traitor, nor Julian the apostate, nay, nor any of all the damned reprobates, who were actually in hell, when he died and shed his blood? 6. If he died thus for all, it seems that the new song of the redeemed, Rev. v. would have run and sounded better thus, *Thou hast redeemed us all and every man, of every kindred*

kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, to God by thy blood, than as it there stands, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* But who may presume by such an universality to extend and enlarge what he hath so restricted, and to make that common to all which God hath peculiarized to a few favourites? but the Author having spoken much, to better purpose, on this head in these sermons, I need add no more here.

I shall only further say of these astonishing, in a manner non-plussing and surpassing great sufferings of blessed Jesus, that, as they were equivalent to what all the elect deserved by their sins, and should have suffered in their own persons throughout all eternity, consistently with the innocence and excellency of his person, and with the dignity of his mediatorial office. Therefore it is said, verse 9. *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,* or as it is in the original, *in his deaths*, in the plural number, as if he died the death of every one of the elect; or as if there had been a conjunction and combination of all their deaths in his own death; and verse 6. *That the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*, or as the word is, *Made the iniquity of us all to meet on him*, there having been a solemn appointment and rendezvous (as it were) of all the iniquities of all the elect; more common and more peculiar, in all their various aggravating circumstances, not so much as one committed since Adam's first transgression, or to be committed to the day of judgment, being absent in the punishment of them upon his person. No wonder that such a load of innumerable thousand and millions of iniquities made him heavily to groan, and that the consideration thereof made great Luther say, *That Christ was the greatest sinner in the world*, to wit, By imputation of the guilt of the sins of the elect to him,

and by his having had the punishment of them all laid upon his person. So we may from them be instructed in these things.

First, Concerning the height of the holy displeasure and detestation, that the majesty of God hath at sin, the only thing in the whole world that his soul hates, and which in the vile and abominable nature of it, hath an irreconcilable antipathy to, and enmity against his infinitely pure, holy, and blessed nature, and hath a tendency, could it possibly be effected, to seek after the destruction and annihilation of the very being of God, and is interpretatively *Deicide*; the language of it being, *O that there were not a God*; that he cannot behold it in his own sinless, innocent, and dearly beloved Son, though but by imputation (for he was not made formally the sinner, as Antinomians blasphemously aver) but he will needs, in so terrible a manner, testify his great dislike of, and deep displeasure at it, and take such formidable vengeance on it, even in his person. Ah! the nature of sin, which God, who is of purer eyes, cannot, where-ever it be, behold, without perfect abhorrency of it, is but little thoroughly understood and pondered: Would we otherwise dare to dally and sport with it, or to take the latitudes in committing of it at the rates we do? I have some times thought, that it is an error in the first concoction (to say so) of religion in many professors of it, and pretenders to it, that we have never framed suitable apprehensions of the most hateful, vile, and abominable nature of sin (which hath a great influence on the superficialness and carelessness in all duties and practices of religion) and that many of us had need to be dealt with, as skilful school-masters use to deal with their scholars that are foundered in the first principles of learning, lest they prove but novices all their days; to bring them back again to these, even to be put to learn this first lesson in religion better, and more thoroughly to understand the jealousy
of

of God, at this cursed thing *sin*; for which, though he graciously for the sake of these sufferings of Christ pardons the guilt of it to his people, and hears their prayers, yet will needs *take vengeance on their inventions*, Psal. cxix. 8. be they never so seriously, holily, and eminently serviceable to him, and to their generation according to his will, whereof Moses, the man of God, is a memorable instance. That *ancient* conceived rightly of the nature of sin, who said, *That if he behoved necessarily, either to commit the least sin, or go to hell to be tormented there eternally, he would rather wish to desire to go to hell, if he could be there without sin.*

Secondly, Concerning the severity of divine justice in punishing sin, whereof its punishment in the person of the Son of God at such a rate, is one of the greatest, clearest, and most convincing evidences imaginable, to whom he would not abate one farthing of the elect's debt, but did with holy and spotless severity exact the whole of it; and though he was the *Father's Fellow*, yet he would needs have him *smitten with the awaked sword*, Zech. xiii. 7. of sin-revenging justice and wrath: As if all the executions that had been done in the earth on men for sin, as on the old world of the ungodly, drowned by the deluge: On the miscreant inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of those other cities, upon whom he showered down liquid flames of fire and brimstone, even somewhat of hell in a manner out of heaven (*cælum pluebat Gehennam*) burning them quick, and frying them to death in their own skins: On Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their associates, upon whom the earth opened and swallowed them up in a most stupendious manner alive, the rest being consumed by fire sent down from heaven: On the one hundred eighty-five thousand men of Senacherib's army, all slain in one night by an angel: And on the Israelites, who, by many and various plagues were wasted and worn out to the num-

ber of six hundred thousand fighting men in the space of forty years; reflections on which made Moses, a witness of all, with astonishment to cry out, *Who knows the power of thy anger?* Psal. xc. 11. As if, I say, all these terrible executions of justice, had been done by a sword asleep, or in the scabbard, in comparison of the execution it did on Jesus Christ the elects surety against whom it *awakened*, was unsheathed, furbished, and made to glitter: So that we may say, had all the sons and daughters of Adam, without the exception of so much as one, been eternally destroyed, it would not have been a greater demonstration of the severity of the justice of God in punishing sin.

Thirdly, Concerning the greatness, incomprehensible vastness, and unparalleledness of the love of God to the elect world, which he so loved (O wonderful *so!* Eternity will be but sufficient to unfold all that is laid up in that mystery *so*; an *οὐτως* that hath not an *ως*, an *ita* that hath not a *sicut*, a *so* that hath not an *as*) *That he gave his only begotten Son*, John iii. 16. to suffer all these things, and to be thus dealt with for them: And of the Mediator who was content, though *thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, to empty himself, and be of no reputation, to take on him the shape of a servant*, Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, to be chastised, smitten, wounded, and bruised for their iniquities, Isa. liii. 3, 5. To step off the throne of his declarative glory, or of his glory manifested to the creatures, and in a manner to creep on the foot-stool thereof in the capacity of a worm, and to become obedient even unto the death, the shameful and cursed death of the cross; This is indeed matchless and marvellous love, *Greater than which no man hath, to lay down his life for his friend*, John xv. 13. But he being God-man, laid down his life for his enemies, that he might make them friends, Rom. v. 10. O! the height, and depth,
and

and length of the love of Christ! Eph. iii. 9, 10. whereof when all that can be said is said, this must needs be said, *That it is love that passeth*, not only expression, but *knowledge*, its dimensions being altogether unmeasurable: We may say, if it had seemed good to the Lord, and had been compatible with his spotless justice, and with his infinite wisdom, as supreme rector and governor of the world, giving a law to his creatures, to have pardoned the sins of the elect in the absoluteness of his dominion that knows no boundary, but what the other divine attributes set to it, without any intervenient satisfaction to his justice at all (which needs not to be debated here, especially since God hath determined, and in the scriptures of truth made publication of his determination, that he will not pardon sin without a satisfaction, and particularly without this satisfaction made by Jesus Christ;) it would not have been a greater and more glorious demonstration of the freeness of his love than he hath given, in pardoning them through the intervention of so difficult and toilsome, of so chargeable and costly a satisfaction, as is the sad sufferings, and the sore soul-travel of his own dear Son; who yet is pleased to account sinners coming to him, and receiving good from him, a satisfaction for all that soul-travel: And indeed, which of these is the greatest wonder, and demonstration of his love, whether that he should have undergone such soul-travel for sinners, or that he should account their getting good of it, satisfaction for the same, it is not easy to determine, but sure both in conjunction together make a wonderful, even a most wonderful, demonstration of love.

Fourthly, Concerning what dreadful measure all they may look for, who have heard of these sufferings of Christ, and make not conscience in his own way to improve them, for their being reconciled to God thereby, and whose bond to justice will be found still standing over their heads uncanceled in their own name,

name, as proper debtors without a surety. When the innocent Son of God, *who had never done wrong, and in whose mouth no guile was ever found*, Isa. liii. 9. having but became surety for the elect's debt, was thus hotly pursued, and hardly handled, and put to sad soul-trouble, and to cry, *What shall I say?* John xii. 27. And falling on the ground with tears in his eyes, in much sorrow and heaviness even to death, and in a great agony, causing a sweat of blood, tho' in a cold night, and lying on the earth, conditionally to pray for the passing of that cup from him, and for his being saved from that hour; so formidable was it to his holy humane nature, which had a sinless aversion from, and an innocent horror at what threatened ruin and destruction to itself simply considered; and which, had it not been mightily supported by the power of the Godhead united thereto in his person, would have quite shrunk and fallen under such an heavy burden, and been utterly swallowed up by such a gulf of wrath: What then will sinners, even all the bankrupt debtors, not having seriously fought after, nor being effectually reached by the benefit of his suretiship, do, when they come to grapple with this wrath of God, when he will fall upon them as a giant, breaking all their bones, and as a roaring lion, *tearing them to pieces when there will be none to deliver?* Psal. l. 22. *Will their hands be strong, or their hearts be able to endure in the day that he shall deal with them?* Ezek. xxii. 14. Then, O! then they will be afraid, and fearfulness will take hold of them, and make them say, *Who can stand before the devouring fire, and who can dwell beside the everlasting burnings?* Isa. xxxiii. 14. and to cry unto the hills and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb, and of him that sits on the throne, for the day of his fierce wrath is come, and who is able to stand? Rev. vi. 16, 17. then it will be found in a special manner to be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 31.

All

All such may see in the great sufferings of Christ, as in the clearest glass, what they are to look for, and most certainly meet with; for if it was thus *done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* Luke xxiii. 31. O! it is a sad, even one of the sadest subject of thought, to think, that a rational creature shall be eternally supported, preserved, and perpetuated in its being, by the one hand of God's omnipotency, that it may be everlastingly capable of terrible vengeance, to be inflicted by the other hand of his justice.

Fifthly, Concerning the very great obligation that lieth on believers to love Christ Jesus, who hath thus commended his love to them, by undergoing all these sad sufferings for their sakes; even out of love to them to become a curse, to bleed out his precious life, and to pour out his soul to death for them; which to do he was under no necessity, nor in the least obliged by them, being infinitely removed from all possibility of being reached by any obligation from his creatures, whom he loved, and for whom he designed this grand expression of his love, the laying down of his life for them, before they or the world had any being; nay, being by their sins infinitely disobliged. Ah! that most of these whom he loved so much, should love him (who is altogether lovely) their duty, his friends and interests for his sake so little! even so very little, that if it were possible he could rue and repent of what he hath done and suffered, to commend his love to them, they would tempt him to it; and indeed there is nothing that more speaks forth the freeness of his love than this, that he should love them so fervently, and continue thus to love them, even *to the end*, who are often so very cool in their love to him. Sure when such are in any measure themselves, they cannot but love themselves the less, and loath themselves the more, that they love him so little, and earnestly long for that desirable day, wherein he shall be *admir-*
ed

ed in and by all them that believe, and when he shall be loved as well as ever they desired to love him, and as well as he shall will them to love him, and when they shall be in an eternal extasy and transport of admiration at his love.

Sixthly, Concerning the little reason that believers have to think much of their small and petty sufferings undergone for him: For what are they all, even the greatest and most grievous of them, being compared with his sufferings for them? They are but as little chips of the cross, in comparison of the great and heavy end of it that he bore, and not worthy to be named in one day with his: All the sad and sorrowful days and nights that all the saints on earth have had under their many and various, and sadly circumstantiated crosses and sufferings, do not by thousands of degrees, come near unto, and far less equal that one sad and sorrowful night, which he had in Gethsemane (besides all the sorrows and griefs he endured before that time) where he was put to conflict with the awakened sword of sin-revenging justice, that did most fiercely attack him, without sparing him: which terrible combat lasted all that night, and the next day, till three o'clock in the afternoon, when that sharpest sword, after many fore wounds given him, killed him outright at last, and left him dead upon the place, who yet, even then when seemingly vanquished and quite ruined, was a great and glorious conqueror, having by death overcome and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and having spoiled principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in his cross, Heb. ii. 14. Col. ii. 15. The spoils of which glorious victory believers now divide, and shall enjoy to all eternity. Ah! that ever the small and inconsiderable sufferings of the saints, should so much as once be made mention of by them, where his strange and stupendious sufferings offer themselves to our notice.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Concerning the unspeakably great obligation that lieth on believers, readily, pleasantly and chearfully, not only to do, but also to suffer for Christ, as he shall call them to it, even to do all that lieth in their power for him, and to suffer all that is in the power of any others to do against them on his account, who did willingly, and with delight do and suffer so much for them. They have doubtless good reason heartily to pledge him in the cup of his cross, and to drink after him, there being especially such difference betwixt the cup that he drunk, and that which they are put to drink. His cup was thick with the wrath of God, having had the dregs thereof in a manner wrung out to him therein, so that it was no wonder that the very sight of it made him conditionally to supplicate for its departure from him, and that the drinking of it put him into a most grievous agony, and cast him in a great sweat of blood; yet saith he on the matter, either they or I must drink it, they are not able to drink it, for the drinking of it will distract them and make them mad, will poison and kill them eternally; but I am able to drink it, and to work out the poison and venom of it, and though it shall kill me, I can raise up and restore myself to life again; therefore Father, come with *it*, and I will drink it up and drink it out: this to the everlasting welfare of these dear souls; *Not my will, but thine be done*; for thus it was agreed betwixt thee and me in the covenant of redemption. When as there is love from bottom even to brim in our cup (whatever mixture may sometimes be of paternal and domestic justice, proper and peculiar to God's own family, and which, as the head and father thereof, he exerciseth therein) not so much as one dram of vindictive wrath being left therein. Ah! it is both a sin and a shame, that there should be with such, even with such, so much shyness and shrinking, to drink after him in the cup of his cross, especially considering that there is such a high

degree of honour put upon the suffering believer for Christ, above and beyond what is put on other believers in him, so that in the scripture account, the suffering believer is not *only* but *also*, according to what the apostle saith, Philip. i. 29. *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.*

Eighthly, Concerning what mighty obligation lieth on believers to mourn and weep, to be sad and sorrowful for sin. How can they look on him whom they have thus bruised, wounded, and pierced by their sins without tears in their eyes, without mourning for him, and being in bitterness as a man is for his first-born, and for his only begotten son? when they think (as all of them on serious consideration will find reason to think) that if their sins kept the appointment and rendezvous, when all the sins of all the elect did meet and were laid on him, then sure there came no greater company, and more numerous troop of sins, to that solemn rendezvous from any of all the redeemed than came from them; and that he had not a heavier load and burden of the sins of any than he had of theirs, whereby he was even pressed as a cart is pressed down under the sheaves, and was made most grievously to groan, even with the groanings of a deadly wounded man; and that if he was wounded and pierced by their iniquities, then surely he was not more deeply wounded and pierced by the iniquities of any than by theirs. O! what mourning should this cause to them? Even such mourning as was at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, on the occasion of the sad slaughter and death of that good and desirable king Josiah? This is indeed one of the most genuine and kindly, one of the most powerful and prevalent, one of the sweetest and strongest springs of, and motives to, true gospel-repentance, sorrow and mourning for sin.

Ninthly, Concerning the notable and non-such obligation

ligation that lieth on believers, to study the crucifixion and mortification of sin. Was it not their sins that crucified and killed precious Jesus Christ, the prince of life? Was it not their sins that violently drove the nails through his blessed hands and feet, and thrust the spear through his side, to the bringing forth of water and blood? Shall they not in their burning zeal and love to him, and in the height of holy indignation at themselves, be avenged on that which brought such vengeance on him? Shall they not seriously seek to be the death of that which brought him to death, and whereof the death and destruction, was one of his great designs therein, on which he was so intent, that in the prosecution of it, he did amidst his dying pangs and agonies breathe out his soul. O! let it never be heard, for shame, that ever any of them shall find the least sweetness in that accursed thing, that was so bitter to him; that ever any of them shall be found to dally with, or hug that serpent and viper in their bosom, that so cruelly stung him to death.

But this being the great subject of these following sermons, wherein *the preacher* being in a good measure wise, hath *sought to find out acceptable words*, Eccles. xii. 10, 11. *and words*, I hope, *of uprightness and truth*; (O that they may be to the readers *as goads and nails fastened by him, who is the master of assemblies*) I shall insist no farther, only I may humbly say, That to my knowledge, none have preached on this whole *chapter* to better purpose every way. Many may have done virtuously, but it is probable, he will be found to *excel them all*: Nay, if I should say, that for any thing I know, this book is amongst the best books of this nature the world hath seen, I suppose hardly will any judicious Christian, thoroughly exercised to godliness, after he hath read it all over, and pondered it, think that I have greatly, if at all, hyperbolized.

There are in these choice sermons, depths as it were for elephants to swim in (whereof his surprising, sublimely spiritual, and very deep divine discourses, concerning the nature of Christ's *intercession*, and the right improvement of it, in the last six sermons, is a notable instance) and shallow for lambs to wade in. There is in them *milk for babes in Christ*, and *stronger meat for such as are of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*, Heb. v. 13, 14. Nay, I may in a good measure, say of these sermons, as it is said of the learned discourse of a late great man, *That in the doctrinal part of several of them, ye will find the depth of polemical divinity, and in his inferences from thence, the sweetness of practical; some things that may exercise the profoundest scholar, and others that may edify the weakest Christian; nothing readily is more nervous and strong than his reasonings, and nothing more sweetly and powerfully affecting than his applications.* There is in them much for information of the judgment, for warming the affections, and for direction toward a gospel-becoming conversation; there is much for clearing and resolving the doubts and difficulties of more weak and darkened Christians, and much for edifying, confirming, and establishing of more grown ones; there is much for conviction, reproof, warning, humbling, for stirring up and provoking to the serious exercise of godliness, and much for the comforting and refreshing of such as stand in need, and are capable of consolation; there is much for discovering, rousing, awakening, and alarming of carnal, secure, unsound, hollowed-hearted, and hypocritical professors of religion, and much for beating and hammering down of the pride of conceited, self-justifying professors; much for training up of young beginners, and much for advancing and carrying on in their Christian course such as are entered into it, and have made any tolerable progress therein: In a word, he doth in a great measure *approve himself*

to God as a work-man that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and as a skilful and faithful steward, giving to every one his portion in *due* kind, measure, and season.

It may be some readers will think, that there are in these sermons, several coincidences of purposes, and repetitions: To which I shall but presume to say, That beside that there is a great affinity amongst many of the purposes delivered by the prophet in this piece of his prophecies, if not a holy co-incidency of them, and a profitable repetition now and then of the same thing in different expressions; as there is in some other scriptures, without any the least imputation to them, as that truly noble and renowned gentleman Mr. Boyle, sheweth in his elaborate, eloquent, and excellent *considerations, touching the style of the Holy Scriptures*: And that the same means, and almost the same expressions, may very pertinently be made use of, to clear and confirm different points of doctrine: It will be found, that if there be in so many sermons, or discourses, on subjects of such affinity, any co-incidences, or repetitions, they are at such a convenient distance, and one way or other so diversified, and appositely suited to the subject of his present discourse, that the reader will not readily nauseate, nor think what is spoken in its place, impertinent, superfluous, or needless, though somewhat like it hath been said by him in some other place: or if there be any not only seeming, but real repetitions of purposes and expressions, as *they have not been grievous* (Phil. iii. 1.) to the preacher, so he with the apostle Paul judged them *needful* at the time for the hearers.

And now, as for you, *much honoured, right worthy, and very dearly beloved inhabitants of the city of Glasgow*, let me tell you, that I have sometimes of late much coveted, to be put and kept in some capacity, to do the churches of Christ, and you in particular, this piece of service, in putting to the press these
sweet

sweet sermons on this choice scripture before I die. And indeed after I had gone through a good number of them, not without considerable toil, and difficulty (having all along, had no notes of his own, but the sermons as they were taken hastily with a current pen from his mouth, by one of his ordinary hearers, no scholar, who could not therefore so thoroughly and distinctly take up several of the purposes handled by the preacher) the Lord was pleased to give me a stop, by a long continued sharp affliction, not altogether without some little more remote and gentle threatnings of death: But he to whom the issues of death do belong, graciously condescended to spare me a little, that I might gather some strength to go thro' the remainder of them. I have much reason to think, that if I had been preaching the gospel to you, these twenty years past, wherein we have been in holy providence separated (which hath been the more afflicting to me, that ye were in my heart to have lived and died with you; and if it had so seemed good in the eyes of the Lord, it would have been to me one of the most refreshing and joyful providences I could have met with in this world, to have had fair access through his good hand upon me, and his gracious presence with me, to have preached the gospel to you, a while before my going hence and being no more) I should not by very, very far, have contributed so much to your edification, as these few sermons may, and, I hope through God's blessing shall. Several of you heard them preached by him, when he was alive amongst you, and now when he is dead, he is in a manner preaching them over again to you (O that such of you as then were not taken in the preaching of them might be so now in the serious reading of them!) and by them speaking to those of you that did not then hear them, who, as I suppose, are now the far greatest part of the city-inhabitants. You will find yourselves in them again and again ranked and placed,

placed, according to your different spiritual estates, and the various cases and conditions of your souls, and wonderful discoveries made to yourselves of yourselves, that I something doubt, if there be so much as one soul amongst the several thousands that are in Glasgow, but will find itself, by the reading of these sermons, spoken to, suitably to its state and case, as if he had been particularly acquainted with the person, and his spiritual condition (as indeed he made it a considerable part of his work, as the observing reader will quickly and easily perceive, to be acquainted very thoroughly with the soul-state and condition of such at least of the inhabitants as were more immediately under his own inspection and charge) and, as if he had spoken to the person by name. O! how inexcusable will such of you be, as had your lot cast to live under the ministry of such *an able minister of the New Testament*, of such *a scribe, very much instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who as a good householder, knew well how to bring out of his treasure, things new and old*, Matt. xiii. 52. if your were not bettered and made to profit thereby? God and angels, and your own consciences, will witness, how often and how urgently the Lord Jesus called to you by him, and ye would not hear. And how inexcusable will ye also be, that shall disdain or neglect to read *these sermons* (as I hope none of you will) that were sometime preached in that place by that faithful servant of Christ, who was your own minister, which layeth some peculiar obligation on you, beyond others, to read them; or if ye shall read them, and make no conscience to improve them to your soul's edification and advantage, which contain more genuine, pure, sincere, solid, and substantial gospel than many thousands have heard, it may be, in an age, though hearing preaching much all the while; even so much, that if any of you should be providentially deprived of the liberty of hearing the gospel any more preached,

ed, or should have access to read no other sermons or comments on the scriptures, these sermons, through God's blessing, will abundantly store and enrich you in the knowledge of the *uncontrovertably great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and *according to the scriptures make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. much insisted on in them? I would therefore humbly advise (wherein I hope ye will not mistake me, as if, by this advice, I were designing some advantage to myself, for indeed, I am not at all that way concerned in the sale of them) that every one of you that can read, and is easily able to do it, would buy a copy of these sermons; at least, that every family that is able, wherein there is any that can read, would purchase one of them. I nothing doubt, but ye will think that little money very well bestowed, and will find your old minister, desirable Durham, delightful company to discourse with you by his sermons, now when he is dead, and you can see his face, and hear him speak to you by *voice* no more. 'The voice of Christ by him, was, I know, very sweet to many that are now asleep, and to some of you yet alive; who, I do not doubt, never allow yourselves, to expect with confidence and comfort to look the Lord Jesus in the face, but as seriously and sincerely ye make it your business, to be found in his righteousness, so much cleared and commended to you, and in the study of holiness in all manner of conversation, so powerfully pressed upon you here.

That these sweet and savoury gospel-sermons may come to you all, and more particularly to you, my dear friends at Glasgow, *with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel* (Rom. xv. 29.) even of *the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified* (Acts xx. 32.) is the serious desire of,

Your servant in the gospel,

J. C.



S E R M O N I.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the
arm of the Lord revealed?*

WE hope it is not needful to insist on opening the scope of this chapter, or in clearing to you of whom the prophet speaks: It was once questioned by the Eunuch, Acts viii. 32. when he was reading this chapter, *Of whom doth the prophet speak this, of himself, or of some other man?* And it was so clearly answered by Philip, who, from these words, began and preached Jesus Christ to him, that there needs be no doubt of it now: To Christians these two things may put it out of question, that Jesus Christ and the substance of the gospel are abridged and summed up here. 1. If we compare the letter of this chapter with what is in the four evangelists, we shall see it so fully, and often so literally, explained of Christ, that if any do but read this chapter, and compare it with them, they will find the evangelists to be commentators on it, and setting it out more fully. 2. That there is no scripture in the Old Testament so often, and so convincingly, applied to Christ as this;

H

there

there being scarce one verse, at least not many, but is by the evangelists or apostles explained as a prophecy of Christ.

If we look then to the words of this chapter, they take in the sum and substance of the gospel, in these two points. 1. The right description and manifestation of Jesus Christ; and, 2. The unfolding and opening of the covenant of redemption. Where these two are, there the sum of the gospel is; but these two are here, therefore the sum of the gospel is here. For Jesus Christ is described, 1. In his person and natures: as God, being eternal; as man, being under sufferings. 2. In all his offices: as a priest, offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy justice; as a prophet, uttering his knowledge to the justifying of many thereby; and as a king, dividing the spoil with the strong. 3. In his humiliation, in the cause of it, in the end of it, in the subject of it, and in the nature and rise of all, God's good pleasure. And, 4. In his exaltation, and the blessed issue promised him of all his sufferings and humiliations.

2. The covenant of redemption is here described and set forth. 1. In the particular parties of it, God and the Mediator. 2. As to the matter about which it was, the seed that was given to Christ, and all whose iniquities fell on him. 3. As to the mutual engagements on both sides, the Son undertaking to make his soul an offering for sin, and the Father promising that the efficacy of that his satisfaction, shall be imputed and applied for the justification of sinners, and the terms on which, or the way how this imputation and application is brought about, to wit, *By his knowledge*; all are clearly held forth here.

This is only a touch of the excellency of this scripture, and of the materials (to say so) in it, as comprehending the substance and marrow of the gospel; we shall not be particular in dividing the chapter, considering that these things we have hinted at, are interwoven in it.

The

The first verse is a short introduction, leading us to what follows. The prophet had in the former chapter been speaking of Christ as God's servant, that should be extolled and made very high, and before he proceeds more particularly to unfold this mystery of the gospel, he cries out, by way of regret, *Who hath believed our report?* Alas! (would he say) for as good news as we have to carry, few will believe it; such is mens unconcernedness, yea, malice and obstinacy, that they reject it. *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* This points at the necessity of the power of God to accompany preaching, and even the most lively ordinances, to make them effectual: How few are they, that the power of God captivates to the obedience of this truth?

For the first part of this verse, *Who hath believed our report?* To open it a little, take these four or five considerations before we come to the doctrines.

Consider, 1. The matter of this report in reference to its scope: It is not every report, but a report of Christ, and of the covenant of redemption and of grace. In the original it is, *Who hath believed our bearing* actively; that is, that which we have proposed to be heard; and the word is turned *tidings*, Dan. xi. 44. and *rumour*, Jer. li. 46. It is the tidings and rumour of a suffering Mediator, interposing himself betwixt God and sinners; and, it may be, *bearing* is mentioned to point out the confidence which the prophet had in reporting this news; he first heard it from God, and in that was passive; then actively proposed it to the people, to be heard by them. 2. Consider that the prophet speaks of this report, not as in his own person only, but as in the person of all that ever preached, or shall preach this gospel; therefore this report is not peculiar to Isaiah, but it is *our report*; the report of the prophets before, and of those after him, and of the apostles and ministers of the gospel. 3. Consider that Isaiah speaks of this report, not only

in respect of what he met with in his own time, but as foreseeing what would be the carriage of people in reference to it in after-times ; therefore John xii. 38. and Rom. x. 16. this same place is alledged to give a reason of the Jews unbelief ; because Isaiah foretold it long before. 4. Consider, that when he complains of the want of faith to the report and tidings of the gospel, it is not of the want of historical faith, as if the people would not give Christ a hearing at all, but of the want of saving faith ; therefore John xii. 37, 38. it is said, *Though he had done many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him* ; and this prophetic scripture is subjoined as the reason of it, *That the saying of Isaiahs might be fulfilled, who said, Lord, who hath believed our report ?* Applying the *believing* spoken of here, to that saving faith whereby people believe and rest upon Jesus Christ. 5. Consider, that tho' there be no express party named to whom the prophet complains, yet, no doubt, it is to God ; therefore, John xii. 38. and Rom. x. 16. when this scripture is cited, it is said, *Lord, who hath believed our report ?* So it is the prophet's complaint of the little fruit he himself had, and that the ministers of the gospel should have in preaching the gospel, regretting and complaining of it to God, as a grievous matter, that it should come to so many, and so few should get good of it, so few should be brought to believe, and to be saved by it.

Though these words be few, yet they have four great points in them ; to which we shall reduce them, and speak more clearly of them. 1. That the great subject of preaching, and the preacher's great errand is, to report concerning Jesus Christ, to bring tidings concerning him. 2. That the great duty of hearers (implied) is, to believe this report ; and by virtue of it, to be brought to rest and rely on Jesus Christ. 3. That the great, though the ordinary sin of the generality of the hearers of the gospel, is unbelief, *Who*
hath

hath believed? that is, It is few that have believed; it is a rare thing to see a believer of this report. 4. That the great complaint, burden, and grief of an honest minister of the gospel, is this, That his message is not accepted; that Christ is not received, believed in, and rested on: This is the great challenge ministers have against the generality of people, and the ground of their complaint to God, That whatever they report concerning Christ, he is not welcomed, his kingdom does not flourish.

That we may speak to the first, considering the words with respect to the scope, we shall draw five or six doctrines from them: The first whereof is more general, That the discovery of Christ Jesus, and the making him known, is the greatest news, the gladest tidings, and the most excellent report, that ever came, or can come to a people: there is no such thing can be told them, no such tidings can they hear. This is the report that the prophet speaks of by way of eminency; a report above, and beyond all other reports. This is news worthy to be carried by angels; *Behold*, saith one of them, Luke ii. 20. *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:* And what are these tidings so prefaced with a *behold*? *For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* These are the good tidings, That Jesus Christ is come, and that he is the Saviour by office. We shall not insist on this; only, 1. We find a brief view of this subject in the following words; which hold forth clearly Christ, God and man in one person, completely qualified, and excellently furnished for his offices. 2. It is also clear, if we look to the excellent effects that follow his being so furnished; as, his satisfying justice, his setting captives free, his triumphing over principalities and powers, his destroying the works of the devil, &c. there cannot be more excellent works or effects spoken of. 3. It is clear, if we look to him
from

from whom this report comes, and in whose breast this news bred, (if we may speak so) it is 'the result of the counsel of the Godhead; and therefore, as the report here is made in the Lord's name, so he is complained to, when it is not received at the prophet's hand. And, 4. It is clear, if we look to the mysteriousness of this news, angels could never have conceived it, had not this report come; these things shew, that it is great, glorious and good news, glad tidings, as it is in the end of the former chapter, *That which hath not been told them shall they see, and that which they have not heard shall they consider.*

The first *use* is, To draw our hearts to love the gospel, and to raise our estimation of it. Peoples ears are itching after novelties, and ye are much grown out of conceit with this news; but is there in any news such an advantage as in this? when God sends news to men, it must be great news; and such, indeed, is this.

Use 2. Therefore be afraid to entertain a loathing of the plain substantial truths of the gospel: if ye had never heard them before, there would probably be some Athenian itching to hear and speak of them; but they should not be the less valued, that they are often heard and spoke of.

Use 3. Therefore think more highly of the gospel, seeing it contains the substance of this good news and glad tidings; and value gospel-ordinances the more, whereby these good tidings are so often published and made plain to you.

2. More particularly *observe*, That Jesus Christ, and what concerns him, the glad and good news of a Saviour, and the reporting of it, is the very proper work of a minister, and the great subject of his preaching; his proper work is to make him known: or take it thus, Christ is the natural subject on which all preaching should run. This is the report the prophet speaks of here; and, in effect, it was so to John and
the

the other apostles, and should be so to all ministers; Christ Jesus, and what concerns him, in his person, natures and offices; to know, and make him known to be God and man; to make him known in his offices, to be priest, prophet, and king; to be a priest, in his suffering and satisfying justice; to be a prophet, in revealing the will of God; to be a king, for subduing our lusts and corruptions; and to know, and make him known, in the way by which sinners, both preachers and hearers, may come to have him to be theirs, as follows in this chapter. This, this is the subject of all preaching; and all preaching should be levelled at this mark. Paul is, 1 Cor. ii. 2. peremptory in this, *I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*: As if he had said, I will meddle with no other thing, but betake myself to this; not only will he forbear to meddle with civil employments, but he will lay aside his learning, eloquence and human wisdom, and make the preaching of Christ crucified his great work and study. The reason of this is, Because Christ stands in a fourfold relation to preaching. 1. He is the text, to say so, of sermons: all preaching is to explain him, Acts x. 43. *To him give all the prophets witness*; and so do the four evangelists, and the apostolic epistles, which are as so many sermons of him; and that preaching which stands not in relation to him, is beside the text. Mark 2. He is holden out as the foundation and ground-work of preaching; so that a sermon without him, wants a foundation, and is like the building of a castle in the air, 1 Cor. iii. 10.—*I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth, for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*; importing, that all preaching should be squared to, and made to agree with this foundation-stone. 3. He stands as the great end of preaching, not only that hearers may have him known to their judgements,

judgements, but may have him highest in their hearts and affections, 2 Cor. iii. 4. *We preach not ourselves*, that is, we not only do not preach ourselves as the subject, but we preach not ourselves as the end of our preaching; our design is not to be great, or much esteemed, but our end in preaching is to make Christ great. 4. He stands, in relation to preaching, as he is the power and life of it; without whom, no preaching can be effectual, no soul can be captivated and brought in to him. Hence, 1 Cor. i. 23. the apostle saith, *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block*, they cannot abide to hear him; *and to the Greeks foolishness*; *but to them that are saved, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

The first *uses* are for ministers, which we shall not now insist on; only, 1. Were Christ more the subject and substance of our report, were we more diligent in displaying his excellencies, it is like it might go better with us. 2. There is great need of being wary, that the report we make of him suit well with the foundation. And, 3. The neglect of this may be the cause of much unsuccessful preaching, because Christ is not so preached, as the subject matter and end of preaching requires; many truths are, alas! spoke without respect to this end, or but with very little respect to it.

Particular *uses* for you that are hearers are these; 1. If this be the great subject of ministers preaching, and that which ye should hear most gladly; and if this be most profitable for you, I shall be particular in some few directions to you, which will be as so many branches of the use. And first, Of all the truths that people ought to welcome and study, they should welcome and study those that most concern Christ and the covenant of grace, as foundation-truths, and seek to have them backed by the spirit. We are afraid there is a fault among Christians, that most plain and substantial truths are not so much regarded; but some things

things that may further them in knowledge, or tickle their affections, or answer a case, are almost only sought after. These things, it is true, are good ; but if the plain and substantial truths of the gospel were more studied and made use of, they have in them what would answer all cases. It is much to be lamented, when people are more taken up with notions and speculations, than with these soul-saving truths ; as, that Christ was born ;* that he was a true man ; that he was, and is king, priest, and prophet of his church, &c. and that other things are heard with more greediness : But, if these be the great subject of ministers preaching, it should be your great study to know Christ, in his person, natures, offices and covenant ; what he is to you, and what is your duty to him, and how you should walk in him, and with him. This was Paul's aim ; *I count (saith he) all things loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, &c.* Phil. iii. 8, 9, 10. As if he would say, It is my design, not only to make him known, but to know him myself. There is little faith in Christ, and distinctness in making use of his offices ; people take but little pains to know these things ; therefore, on the one side, let me exhort you to make this more the subject of your enquiry ; and on the other side, take it for a reproof, that there is such a readiness to snuff when plain truths are insisted on, or when they are not followed in some uncouth or strange way, which shews, that we are exceeding unthankful to God for giving us the best things to speak, hear, and think of.

2. Think highly of the preaching of Christ ; and to have ministers to preach him. He is the best news ; and God hath sent ministers on this errand, to make it known to you. Had he sent them to tell you all the secret things to come that are in God's purpose, and all the hidden works of nature, it had

not been comparable to this news. What would ye have been? O what would sabbath-days and week-days, your lying down and rising up, your living and dying been, if this news had not been sent? Ye must have had a sinful and sad life, and a most comfortless and terrible death: therefore reckon this gospel a thing of more worth than ye do; and count their feet beautiful on the mountains, that bring these news and glad tidings, as it is, Isa. lii. The good report of making peace betwixt God and sinners should be much thought of and prized, and counted a greater favour than we use to reckon it. 3. By this ye may know who thrives and profits best under the gospel, even those that learn most of Christ, which consists not in telling over words. But, 1. In actual improving of him, as it is Eph. iii. 20. *We have not so learned Christ*, but so as to improve what is in him. 2. In an experimental feeling these effects in us, that are mentioned to come by Christ; which is what the apostle means, Phil. iii. 10. *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; that I may be conformable to his death.* I am afraid, that of the many that hear this gospel, there are but few that know Christ this way. But if he be the great thing that should be preached by us, and that ye should learn, 1. What is the reason that so many should be ignorant of him, that the most part look rather like Turks and Pagans than like Christians? God help us, what shall we say of the condition of most part of people, when the preaching of the gospel has not gained so much ground on us, as to make us know Christ, in his person, natures and offices, our need of him, and the use we should make of him? But, 2. If we try how the knowledge of him is improved, it is to be feared there be but very few that know him in this respect. Do not many men live as if they had never heard of them. Though they hear that pardon of sin is to be had through him, and that

that virtue to subdue sin must flow from him, yet they live as if no such thing were in him. If, besides the evidences that are in your practice, such a question were put to your consciences, this would be found to be a sad truth. And, 3. If we will yet try further, what experience people have of Christ; what virtue they find flowing from his resurrection; what fellowship there is in his sufferings; what conformity to his death; what benefit redounds to them from his offices of king, priest and prophet, to the subduing of sin, and quickening to holy duties; what benefit of fruit from his death; alas! no more of this is to be found with most, than if he had never died: what profit or real influence, as to any spiritual change, do any considerable number find in themselves: and think ye all these things to be but words? they know him not, that feel not something of the efficacy of his death and resurrection in themselves.

3. *Observe*, That the report concerning Christ, is the main subject and errand that has been, and is, and will be common to all the ministers of the gospel, to the end of the world. It is *our report*; it was the report of all the prophets, Acts x. 43. *To him bear all the prophets witness, That through his name, whosoever believeth on him, should have remission of sins.* They all agree, and give a joint testimony in these things that follow. 1. In one subject, Christ, and the same things concerning him; as, that the pardon of sin is to be obtained in him, and through faith in him, and no other way, &c. 2. In one commission: they have all one commission, though they be not all equal. All are not apostles, yet all are ambassadors. There is the same authority for us to report, and you to receive the gospel, as if Isaiah or Paul were preaching. The authority depends on the commission, and not on the persons of men who carry it. 3. In one common end which they all have, and in one common object they are sent to preach to. 4. In this, that

they all hold of one common master, being gifts of one and the same Mediator, Eph. iv. *When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive; and gave gifts to men, to some apostles, &c.*

The first use is, To teach you not to think the less of the testimony, or matter testified, because of those that testify it to you. If Isaiah or Paul were testifying to you, ye would get no other tidings, though their life and way would be of another sort and stamp than ours are. Alas! for the most part, we are warranted, as well as they, to make Christ known to you: therefore take heed of rejecting the testimony of this Christ that we bear witness unto; it is the same Christ that the law and the prophets bear witness to; *There is not another name given under heaven, whereby a sinner can be saved*: It is through him, that whosoever believes on him, may receive remission of sins. In this ye have not only us, but the prophets and apostles to deal with, yea, Jesus Christ, and God himself; and the rejecting of us, will be found to be the rejecting of them. It is the same testimony for the matter that it was in Isaiah's time; and therefore, tremble and fear all ye that slight the gospel. Ye have not us for your party; but all the prophets, and Isaiah among the rest, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath said, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*. There will be many aggravations of the guilt of an unbeliever, and this will be a main one, even the testimony of all the prophets that concur in this truth which they have rejected. Take heed to this all ye Atheists, that know not what it is to own your sins; and all ye hypocrites, that coin and counterfeit a religion of your own; and all ye legalists, that lean to your own righteousness. What will ye say, when it shall be found that ye have rejected all these testimonies? Ye must either say, ye reckoned them false witnesses, which ye will not dare to say; or that ye accounted them true, and yet would not receive

receive their testimony: and the best of these will be found bad enough; for if ye counted them true, why did ye not believe them? this will be a very pungent dilemma.

Use 2. For comfort to poor believers. They have good ground to receive and rest upon Jesus Christ. There is never a prophet, apostle, or preacher of the gospel, but he hath sealed this truth concerning Christ. What needs any sinner be fearful to close with him? Will ye give credit to the testimony of Isaiah, and of Peter, Acts x. 43. and of the rest of the prophets and apostles? then receive their reports; and be you yourselves among the number of believers, that their testimony may be rested on. We are persuaded, there is one of two things that will follow on this doctrine; either a strong encouragement to, and confirmation of believing, and resting on Jesus Christ for pardon of sin; or a great ground of aggravation of, and expostulation with you for your guilt, who care not whether ye receive this report or not. We shall say no more now, but God bless this to you.



S E R M O N II.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

THE prophet Isaiah is very solicitous about the fruit of his preaching, when he preached concerning

cerning Christ : As, indeed, it is not enough for ministers to preach, and for people to hear, except some fruit follows. And now, when he has been much in preaching, and looks to others that have been also much in that work, he sadly regrets the little fruit it had, and would have among them, to whom Christ was and should be spoken of. A thing, that in the entry should put us to be serious, lest this complaint of Isaiah stand on record against us ; seeing he complains of the hearers of the gospel, not only in his own time, but in ours also.

We told you there were four things in this first part of the verse. 1. The great errand that ministers have to people : It is to report concerning Christ. And besides what we observed from this head before, looking still to the scope, we shall observe further :

1. The end that ministers should have before them in preaching Christ and the gospel is, That the hearers of it may be gained to Jesus Christ by hearing, so as they may be brought to believe on him : It is, in a word, to gain them to saving faith in Christ.

It is implied, That Jesus Christ only is to be proposed as the object of faith, to be rested on by the hearers of the gospel ; and that he is the only ground of their peace. There is no name that can be mentioned for the salvation of souls, but this name only ; and there is no other gospel can be proposed, but that which holdeth him out to the people.

3. *Observe*, (Which is much the same with the former observation, but I would speak a little more particularly to it.) That by preaching the gospel, Jesus Christ is laid before the hearers as the object of their faith, and proposed to be believed in by them, else there would be no ground of this complaint against them : But wherever this gospel is preached, there Christ is laid, as it were, at the heart or door of every soul that hears it, to be believed and rested on. This is the great errand of the gospel, To propose to people

people Jesus Christ as the object and ground of faith, and to represent him as the only one to be rested on for that very end. When the apostle speaks, Rom. x. 8. of the doctrine of faith, he saith, *It is not now, Who shall ascend into heaven? nor, Who shall descend into the deep? But the word is near thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.* What word is that? *The word of faith which we preach.* Now, saith he, Christ, by the preaching of the gospel, is brought so near us, that he is brought even to our hearts and mouths; so near, that (if we may so speak) people have no more to do but to stoop and take him up, or rest themselves entirely on him; yea it bringeth him into their very heart, that they have no more to do but to bring up their heart to consent to close the bargain, and with the mouth to make confession of it. And these words are the more considerable, because they are borrowed from Deut. xxx. where Moses is setting death and life before the people, and bidding them chuse: though he would seem to speak of the law; yet, if we consider the scope we shall find him speaking of Jesus Christ, holden forth to that people under ceremonial ordinances, and shewing them that there was life to be had in him that way; and, according to God's intent, they had life and death put in their choice.

I know there are two things necessary to the acting and exercising of faith. The first is objective; when the object or ground is proposed in the preaching of the gospel. The second is subjective; when there is an inward, spiritual, and powerful quickening and framing of the heart to lay hold on, and make use of the object and offer. It is true, that all to whom the offer cometh are not quickened; but the doctrine saith, That to all to whom the gospel cometh, Christ is proposed, to be believed on by them, and brought near unto them: so that we may say, as Christ said to his hearers, *The kingdom of God is come near unto you.* Both Christ and John brought and laid the kingdom

dom of heaven to the Jews ; and it is laid as near to you in the preached gospel. This is it then that the doctrine says, 1. That the gospel holdeth forth Christ as a sufficient ground of faith to rest upon. And, 2. With a sufficient warrant to those who hear it, to make use of him, according to the terms on which he is offered. And, 3. It brings him so expressly home, as he is laid to the doors and hearts of sinners who hear the gospel ; that whoever hath the offer, he must necessarily either believe in, and receive Christ, or reject him, and the report represented of him in the gospel.

I shall, *First*, a little confirm this doctrine ; and then, *Secondly*, make use of it.

First, I shall confirm it from these grounds. 1. From the plain offers which the Lord makes in his word, and from the warrant he gives his ministers to make the same offers. It is their commission to pray them to whom they are sent, to be reconciled : to tell them, *That God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself*, as in 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. and, in Christ's stead, to request them to embrace the offer of reconciliation : To tell them that Christ died for those sinners that will embrace him, and that he will impute his righteousness unto them : and chap. vi. 1. *We beseech you* (saith he) *that ye receive not this grace in vain ;* which is not meant of saving grace, but of the gracious offer of grace and reconciliation through him. This is ministers work, to pray people not to be idle hearers of this gospel ; *For* (saith he) *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee : Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.* The force of the argument is this, If ye will make this gospel welcome, ye may get a hearing ; for now is the day of salvation, therefore do not neglect it. So Psalm lxxxi. 10, 11. (where God makes the offer of himself largely) *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* The offer is of him-
self,

self, as the words following make clear; *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me*; for they that refuse his word, refuse himself. And hence, Isa. lxxv. 1. he saith, *I am found of them that sought me not*; *I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name*: And to the Jews, *I have stretched out my hands all day long to a rebellious people*. 2. We may clear and confirm it from these similitudes; by which the offer of this gospel is as it were, brought to the doors of people. And there are several similitudes made use of to this purpose; I shall name but four. 1. It is set down under the expression of wooing; as, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. This is ordinary, and supposeth a marriage; and a bridegroom, that is by his friends wooing and suiting in marriage: So that (as we shew) where ever the call of the gospel comes, it is a bespeaking of souls to him; as, Cant. viii. *What shall we do for our sister in the day that she shall be spoken for*? 2. It is set forth under the expression of inviting to a feast; and hearers of the gospel are called to come to Christ as strangers, or guests are called to come to a wedding-feast; Mat. xxii. 2, 3, 4. *All things are ready, come to the wedding, &c.* Thus the gospel calleth not to an empty house that wants meat, but to a banqueting-house where Christ is made ready as the cheer, and there wants no more but feasting on him. So it is represented under the similitude of eating and drinking, John vi. 27. *He that eats me, even he shall live by me*. 3. It is mentioned often under the expression or similitude of a market, where all the wares are laid forth on the stands, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsts come to the waters, &c.* And lest it should be said, or thought, that the proclamation is only to the thirsty, and to such as are so and so qualified, ye may look to what followeth, *Let him that hath no money come; yea, come buy without money, and without price*; and to the offer that is made to those of

Laodicea, Rev. iii. who, in appearance, were a hypocritical and formal people, yet to them the counsel and call comes forth, *Come buy of me eye-salve, and gold tried in the fire, &c.* It says, the wares are even in their offer, or offered to them. 4. It is expressed under the similitude of a standing and knocking at a door, because the gospel brings Christ a knocking and calling hard at sinners door, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* So Cant. v. 2. By the sleepy bride it is said, *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh.* And Psalm xxiv. last four verses, it is cried out, *Lift up your heads ye gates, and be lift up ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in :* Which is an earnest invitation to make way for Christ Jesus, wanting nothing but an entry into the heart ; whereby we may see how near Christ comes in the gospel, and is laid to our hand. 3. We may confirm it from the nature of faith, and of the obedience that is required to be given to the command of believing. Where ever this gospel comes, it tieth and obligeth all the hearers to believe on Christ ; that is, to receive and welcome him : and there could be no receiving of him, if he were not making an offer of himself. Thus it is said, John i. 11, 12. *He came unto his own, but his own received him not ; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.* He came to both, these who received him, and to these who received him not ; but he gave to believers only this privilege of sonship. If we look to all the names of faith, as, *Coming to Christ, eating and drinking of him, receiving of him, resting on him, &c.* they all suppose that Christ is near to be caught hold of, and within terms of speaking and meeting, to people that hear the gospel. 4. It may be confirmed from the many sad complaints that the Lord makes for not receiving him, and not believing his word,

and

and from the dreadful descriptions, by which he holds out the sin of unbelief; all which will make out this, That God lays Christ at the door of sinners in his word. Hence, John v. 40. our Lord says, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may get life*: And Mat. xxxiii. at the close, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and ye would not*. This was what did aggravate their sin, That he would, and they would not. So Psalm lxxxix. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me*. And Luke vii. it is said, the scribes and the Pharisees *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*. And Acts xiii. 54. when the Jews rejected Christ, it is said, *They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life*; and therefore the apostles say, that they will *leave them, and turn to the Gentiles*. 5. We may confirm it from this, That in respect of the gospel, and offer made in it, Christ comes alike near to all that hear it; for if he be near to some, then he is near to all, I mean in regard of an objective nearness, there is the same warrant to speak and make the offer to all, before there be some discovery made for qualifying the doctrine to some. It is true, there is a difference in respect of the power that accompanies the gospel; but as it layeth out the offer of Christ, and life thro' him, it comes alike near to all the hearers of it: invitation comes to all, and in the same terms, to them that refuse, as well as to them that receive him, the same gospel is preached to both. A sixth confirmation is from the nature of God's administration of his external covenant, which is sealed in baptism to both; not one covenant to one, and another covenant to another, but the same covenant on condition of believing to both. Behold then, in the preaching of this gospel, that Christ comes near you, even to your door, in respect of the mediate ordinances; as near as he did to Abraham and David; although God had his extraordinary ways of manifesting himself to them,

not common to others; yea, this day the gospel is more clear objectively to you, than it was to Abraham, who rejoiced to see Christ's day afar off, when it was veiled; yea, the gospel is as clearly preached to you, as those who are now before the throne of God had it preached to them, as to the matter of it, though we will make no equality as to the manner of it.

Use 1. Advert to this, when ye come to hear the gospel preached, and think how you are in meeting terms with God, and how near Christ comes unto you: the word of faith lays him so near, that ye have no more to do but to receive the offer of him, to believe in and close with him, and come as living stones to be built upon him as a sure foundation.

But it will be asked, How comes this gospel so near? how does it bring Christ so near to sinners? *Answer;* In these five steps: 1. As it makes the report of Christ, and brings the tidings of such things; as, that he is born, and that he hath suffered, and for such an end, and that we may partake of the benefit of them on such terms: It makes the proclamation by way of narrative; and tells what he did, what good may be got of him, and how we may come by it. 2. As it brings an offer of these good things on the terms on which they are to be got: So that it never tells that Christ is come, but it says also here is life to be got by him for him for you, if ye will take the way proposed to come by it. Therefore when the proclamation comes forth, *That all things are ready;* the next word is, *Come to the wedding:* And when in the one word he says, *I stand at the door and knock;* at the next he says, *If any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me:* And when, Isa. xxviii. it is said, *He is a precious corner-stone, a tried foundation-stone laid in Zion;* the next word is, *He that believes on him shall not make haste;* or, as the apostle hath it, *shall not be ashamed or confounded.* This makes
the

the gospel glad tidings, because it comes always with an offer of Christ, and of life in him. 3. When the offer is made, and the precious wares are exposed to sale in this proclaimed fair of grace, a command comes out, chuse life, come buy the wares, believe, receive the offer, as is clear in all the places we named before: It leaves not people indifferent to receive or not, but chargeth them as they would be obedient to a command to receive him, 1 John xxiii. 3. *This is his commandment, That ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* This is the great gospel command; and ministers have not only the telling of this news, and warrant to make the offer, but a commission to command people to receive it, and therefore the neglecting and slighting of the offer is a sin opposite to the command. 4. It not only makes the offer, and backs the offer with a command to embrace it, but it sweetens the command with many gracious promises knit to it, as Isa. lv. *Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:* And whenever the command of believing come out, it is always with a promise; as Paul deals with the jaylor, Acts xvi. *Believe and thou shalt be saved:* And Mark xvi. towards the close, the Lord says, *They that believe shall be saved,* to encourage to faith in him. 5. It presses the offer, and commands the embracing of it with a promise and with a threatening; for the offer is not conditional, but alternative, Mark xvi. *If ye believe not, ye shall be damned:* So Deut. xxx. death and life are proposed, and they are bid chuse. If the gospel be not effectual in its commands and promises, it will be effectual in its threatnings: The word of God will triumph one way or the other, and not return to him void, as is very clear, Isa. lv. 11. and 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. It triumphs in some while they are brought by the promise to give obedience to the command of believing, and to them it becomes
the

the favour of life unto life : and to others it triumphs as to the execution of the threatenings on them for their unbelief, and to them it becomes the favour of death unto death. In a word, Christ Jesus comes so near people in this gospel, that he must either be chosen, and life with him, or refused, to the destruction and death of the refuser. Ye have the same Christ, the same word, the same covenant, the same obligation to believe, proposed to you, that believers from the beginning of the world had, and another ye will not get ; and what more can the gospel do to bring Christ near to you ? When it brings him so near, that ye have him in your offer, and the authority of God and his promises interposed, to persuade you to accept the offer ; and threatenings added, to terrify you, that if ye accept it not, ye shall perish : In which respect we may say as the prophet Isaiah doth, chap. v. *What could God do more to his vineyard which he hath not done ?* as to the holding forth of the object of faith, Jesus Christ, to be rested on by you.

But some, it may be, will object here, 1. If there comes not life and power with the offer, it will not do the turn : we cannot believe, nor receive the offer. *Ans.* Whose fault is it that ye want ability ? It is not God's fault ; ye have a sure ground to believe : his word is a warrant good enough ; the promises are free enough ; the motives sweet enough : the great fault is a heart of unbelief in you, that ye will not believe in Christ, nor open to him when he is brought to your door. I doubt, yea, I put it out of doubt, when all that ever heard the gospel shall stand before the throne, that there will not be one found that shall dare to make this excuse, that they were not able to receive Christ : The gospel brings Christ so near them, that they must either say yea or nay : It is not so much I cannot, as I will not believe ; and that will be found a wilful and malicious refusal.

2. It may be objected, But how can this gospel
come

come to all alike, seeing it cannot be that those that never get good of the gospel have it as near to them, as these that gets the saving fruit of it? *Ans^w.* Not to speak of God's purpose, or what he intends to make of it, nor of the power and fruit that accompanies it to some, and not to all; it is certain the gospel and Christ in its offer comes alike near to all that hear it: It objectively reveals the same glad tidings to all, with the conditional offer of life, and with the same command and encouragement, and certification in threatnings as well as promises. In these respects Christ is brought alike near to all; and when God comes to reckon, he will let sinners know in that day that the gospel came to their door, and was refused; yea it comes, and where it comes will take hold of some to pluck them out of the snare, and be ground of faith to them; and to others it will be a ground of challenge, and so the favour of death unto death: For though it takes not effect as to its promises in all, nor in its threatnings to all; yet, as to either death or life, it will take effect in every one; so as life be refused, death comes in the room of it.

But it may be asked, Why will God have Christ in the offer of the gospel brought so near the hearers of it? *Ans^w.* 1. Because it serves to commend the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus, when the invitation is so large that it is to all; it speaks out the royalty of the feast, upon which ground, 2 Cor. vi. 1. it is called *grace*, the offer is so large and wide. 2. Because it serves for warranting and confirming the elect in the receiving of this offer; for none of the elect could receive him, if he were not even laid at their door. It is this which gives us warrant to receive that which God offers. It is not because we are elected or beloved of God before time, or because he purposed to do us good, that we believe; these are not grounds of faith, being God's secret will: But we believe, because God calleth and maketh the offer, inviteth

viteth and promifeth, knowing that he is faithful, and we may trust in him. Hence David fays, *I will never forget thy word, and in God will I praise his word*; for the word in its offer fpeaks alike to all, and to none particularly. Indeed when it comes to the application of promifes for confolation, that is to be made according to the qualifications in the perfons, but the offer is to all. 3. Becaufe by this means the Lord hath the fairer access to found his quarrel and controverfy againft unbelievers, and to make their ditty and doom the clearer in the day of the Lord, when it is found that they never received the offer; *My people would not hearken to my voite, and Ifrael would none of me; therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lufts, and they walked in their own counfels.* And this is an approbation given to juftice here; it is but juft, feeing they would not receive thee, that they get worfe in thy room.

Ufe 2. Seeing Chrift comes near you in this gofpel, and this is one of the market-days, I intreat you, while he is near, receive him; call upon him while he is near; or take it in the plain words of the apoftle, open to him, take him in, give him welcome while he urges himfelf to fay fo on you. There is not a confcience in any man that hears this gofpel, but he will have this testimony from him in it, That he came near them, was in their fight, and within their reach and power, as it were, if they would have put out their hands to receive him. And feeing it is fo, O receive this gofpel! give him room: while he is content to fup with you, take him in; make fure union with him. This is the end why this report is made, and Chrift is laid before you, even that you may caft yourfelves upon him.

I would follow this *ufe* a little, by way of exhortation and expoftulation jointly, feeing the doctrine will bear both; for when Chrift is brought fo near, even to the mouth and to the heart, it will be great ground

ground of reproof and expostulation, if he be rejected. Be exhorted, therefore, to be in earnest; seeing,

1. It is a matter of such concernment to you. Many nations, kings and kingdoms, have not had Christ so near them as you have; neglect not such an opportunity. Do ye think that all that is said in the gospel concerning this, is for nothing? Is it for no use that such a report is made, and preaching continued so long among you? and if it be for any use, is it not for this, that ye may receive the report; and may, by doing so, get your souls for a prey? To what use will preaching be, if this use and end of it be missed? will your hearing the gospel make your peace with God, if Christ be not received?
2. Consider the advantages you may have by receiving the gospel, that others have not. Is it a little thing to be called to God's feast, to be married to Christ, to be made friends with God, and to enjoy him for ever? The day comes when it will be thought an advantage; and are there motives to persuade to any thing, like those that are to induce to that?
3. Consider what it is that we require of you: it is no strange nor hard thing; it is but believing; and this is nothing else, but that the report concerning Christ be received, yea, that he be received for your own good. This is what the gospel calls you to, even to betake you to a physician for cure, to betake you to a surety for your debt. If you could escape a reckoning and wrath another way, it were something; but when there is no other way to obtain pardon of sin, and peace, or to escape wrath, and obtain favour and friendship with God, but this; and when this way (to speak so) is made so easy, that it is but to stoop down, and to take up Christ at your foot, as it were, or to roll yourselves on him, how inexcusable will you unbelievers be, when you shall be arraigned before his tribunal? But,
4. Look a little farther to what is coming: If you were to live always here, it were hard enough to live at enmity with

L

God;

God: But have ye faith of a judgment after death? If so, how will ye hold up your faces in that day, that now refuse Christ? Will not horrible confusion be the portion of many then? and will any ground of confusion be like this, the slighting of Christ? when he shall be seen coming to judge the slighsters of him, what horror will then rise in consciences, when he shall appear, and be avenged on them that were not obedient to this gospel? As is most clear, 2 Theff. i. *When our Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, with his mighty angels from heaven, to take vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the gospel.* 5. Consider, that death and life are now in your offer, chuse or refuse: I speak not, nor plead here for free-will, but of your willing choice of that which ye have offered to you; for one of two must be, either shall ye willingly chuse life, which is a fruit of grace; or refuse life, and chuse death, which will be found the native fruit of your corruption. Ye may have life by receiving Christ, who is laid at your door; and if ye refuse him, death will follow it: As now in hearing this gospel, ye behave in chusing or refusing, so will the sentence pass on you at the great day; and so your sentence, in a manner, is written down with your own hand, as it is said, Acts xiii. 46. *Ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life;* not out of humility, but maliciously. Now when the matter is of such concernment, beware of playing the fool. If ye will continue presumptuous and secure, following your idols, what will the Lord say, but let it be so, ye are not wronged when ye get your own choice; and he, as it were, does but ratify the sentence which ye have past on yourselves. I shall add but this one word more, and beseech you that ye would seriously lay this to heart, as a weighty thing, considering the certification that follows on it: it is not only death, but a horrible death, wrath, and wrath with its aggravation from this ground; like that of Capernaum, that
was

was lifted up to heaven in this respect, having Christ brought so near them. To whom this gospel is not the favour of life unto life, it shall be the favour of death unto death. And think not this a common motive, though it be commonly used; it will bring wrath upon wrath, and vengeance upon vengeance on the hearers of this gospel, beyond that of Sodom, if ye be still rejecters of it. Sure none of you will think it an easy thing to be punished as Sodom was, nor digest well the curse that came on them. Is there any of you but would think it uncouth and strange, yea stupendious, to enter into their judgment, and to have your lands turned to a stinking lake, and yourselves eternally tormented with them? But there is more wrath and vengeance following on the sin of unbelief, and rejecting of Christ, when he comes to your door in this gospel. To close up all, Consider that Christ is near you, and hath been long near you, and wooing you; ye know not how many years ye shall have; how soon this gospel may be taken from you, or ye from it; how soon ye may be put in the pit, where ye will gnash your teeth, gnaw your tongues, and blaspheme God: Therefore be serious while Christ is in your offer, and roll yourselves upon him while ye have him so near you; welcome this *bearing or report*, while it sounds in your ears, that there may be no just ground of this complaint against you, *Lord, Who hath believed our report?*

S E R M O N III.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom the is-
arm of the Lord revealed?*

THE most part of men and women do not much esteem the preached gospel; yet if it were considered, what is the Lord's end in it, it would be the most refreshing news that ever people heard; to hear the report of a Saviour, is, and should be, great and glad tidings of great joy to all nations; And we should be so composed to hear such news from God, concerning his will and our own welfare, as to be suitably affected with them. It is a wonder that God sent such a report to people, and in it hath brought Christ so near them, that he puts him home to them, and lays him before them, even, as it were, at their feet; and as great a wonder, that when the Lord hath condescended to give such a Saviour, and brought him so near, that all he calleth for is faith to believe the report, or rather faith in him of whom the report is given: which is the second thing in the words.

The second thing then is, The duty that lies on people to whom the Lord sends the gospel, or this report, concerning Christ; and ye may take it in this general, That it lies on all that hear the gospel to believe the report that it brings concerning Christ, and
by

by faith to receive him who is holden forth to them in it. This is clearly implied : Ifaiah and all ministers are sent to report concerning him, and to bear witness of him ; and it is the duty of all hearers to believe it : and this is the ground of his and their complaint, when people do not believe it. By comparing this text with Rom. x. 16. and John xii. 38. we find it to be saving faith that is here to be understood.

I shall open up this doctrine in three branches, which we find in the words, and will make way for the use. 1. That a people to whom Christ is offered in the gospel, may warrantably accept of Christ ; or, the offering of Christ in the gospel is warrant enough to believe in him ; otherways there had been no just ground of exhortation and complaint for not believing ; for though the complaint will not infer that they had ability to believe, yet it will infer they had a warrant to believe ; for the complaint is for the neglect of the duty they were called to. 2. That they to whom Christ is offered in the gospel, are called to believe : It is their duty to do it. Thus believing, in all that hear the gospel is necessary by necessity of command, even as holiness, repentance, &c. are. 3. That saving faith is the way and means by which those that have Christ offered to them in the gospel, come to have a right to him, and to obtain the benefits that the scripture report to be had from him. Thus believing is necessary as a means to the end of getting Christ, and all that is in him. This is also here implied in the regret made of the want of faith, which deprives men of Christ, and of the benefits of the gospel.

We shall briefly dispatch the *first* of these, which is, That all that hear the gospel preached, have warrant to believe and receive Christ for their eternal peace, and for making up the breach betwixt God and them : this preached gospel gives you all a warrant to accept of Jesus Christ ; and ye should not seek
after,

after, nor call for another. I shall first premise two distinctions to clear this, and then confirm it. As for the first of the two distinctions that serve to clear it, we may take the gospel more largely and complexly, in a covenant form, holding forth Christ and his benefits on condition of believing; or we may take it as it hold out a promise without particular mentioning of a condition. Now when we say, that the gospel commands and warrants all that hear it to accept the offer, we do not mean the last, That all that hear the gospel have warrant to accept the promise without a condition, but the first; that is, That all the hearers of the gospel are commanded to accept of Christ offered. There is, by the preaching of it, a warrant to close with the report, and take hold of the promises, and the things promised: so that it is the gospel conditionally proposed that gives warrant to believe, as believing rests on Christ for obtaining life in him. The second distinction is, That we would consider faith, as it rests on Christ for obtaining union with him, and right to the promises; or, as it applies and makes use of the benefits to be got in and by Christ. The offer of the gospel gives not to all a warrant to apply the benefits to be gotten by Christ instantly; but it warrants them to close with him first, and then to apply his benefits.

Secondly, For confirmation of this truth. That the general preaching of the gospel is a warrant for believing and exercising faith on Jesus Christ, for making our peace with God, it is clear from these grounds. 1. From the nature of the gospel. It is the word of God, as really inviting to do that which it calls for, as if God were speaking from heaven: It is the word of God, and not the word of man, and hath as real authority to call for obedience, as if God spake it immediately from heaven; and the word of promise is as really his word, as the word of command; and therefore to be rested on and improved, as well
as

as we are to endeavour obedience to the command. And if we think that God's testimony is true, and if we lay any just weight on these three witnesses testifying from heaven, and on these other three testifying from earth, 1 John v. 7. then we may rest on Jesus Christ offered in this gospel, and believe that those who rest on him shall have life; for it is, as we said, as really God's word, as if he were speaking it audibly from heaven. 2. It may be confirmed from these solemn things, the *word* and *oath* of God, whereby he hath mightily confirmed the external offer of the gospel, even by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie; that those who are fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, may have strong consolation, as in Heb. vi. 18. And God having thus said and sworn about this external covenant for this very end, that the hearers of the gospel may know, that they who receive Christ offered therein shall have life, it is warrant sufficient to believe on him for life. It is also for this end that he hath put seals to the covenant, circumcision and the passover in the Old, and baptism and the Lord's-supper in the New Testament; which are extended, not only to the elect, but to professors in the visible church, that every one who is baptized and admitted to the communion, may have confirmation, that the offer that God maketh of life through Christ, is a true and real offer, and will be made good to the persons that shall receive it, and so perform the condition. 3. It may be confirmed from the end for which God hath appointed the word and ministry in his church, even to make the offer of Christ, and life through him; John xx. 31. *These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name:* The word is both written and preached for this very end. 4. And *lastly*, It is confirmed from the experience of all the saints, and from the ground on
which

which they believed, which was the same that we have : They had no other ground but the same gospel and word that we have : It was not the secret operation or instinct of the spirit, it is that indeed which works faith, but it was the word which was the ground of their faith ; for there is no warrant for faith but in the word : and as many believers as have gone before us, are as so many instances and experiences to confirm this truth to us.

Use. It serves for good use to such as may come to doubt and dispute what warrant they have to believe. We say, ye have as good warrant as Abraham, David, Paul, or any of the godly that lived before you had : Ye have the same gospel, covenant and promises. It was always God's word preached which was the ground of faith : and there needs not be much disputing what is God's purpose ; for we are not called to look to that in the matter of believing, more than in the matter of our duty : and as it were evil reasoning to dispute what may be God's purpose in the matter of our duty when we are called to it, it is as bad reasoning to dispute his purpose in the matter of faith. And therefore we leave this use with a word of advertisement, that this gospel, as it lays Christ before you, it gives you warrant to receive him, and rest upon him ; and we may say as Paul did, Acts xiii. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins ; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* There is the way held forth for obtaining pardon of sin and peace : the Lord hath made the offer, and laid a fair bridge over the gulf of distance betwixt God and sinners ; though ye should never get good of it, and though ye should never set a foot on the bridge. None needs to fear to step forward : Behold, our Lord Jesus hath holden out the golden sceptre : His call may be warrant enough to come :

come: the preaching of this gospel stops all disputing, and banishes debating of the business: it calls all the hearers of it, and gives them warrant to come forward: and it is such a warrant, as they will be found flighters of the great salvation offered, who had this door opened to them and did not step forward; for, as the apostle says, 2 Cor. vi. *Behold, now is the day of salvation; behold, now is the accepted time.* And Heb. xxii. *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, &c.* It is the same gospel that from the beginning hath been preached to sinners; and this is the reason why the gospel is called *grace* in, 2 Cor. vi. 1. *We beseech you that ye receive not this grace of God in vain;* and Gal. ii. at the close, *I do not frustrate the grace of God;* for many get the warrant and pass to come and receive Christ, who put it up in their pocket as it were, and make no use of it, as the man that hid the talent in his napkin: the bans of marriage are proclaimed, and the warrant given forth, and yet they halt and come not to the wedding.

We shall add the second branch, which is, That this gospel, where it comes and offers Jesus Christ to sinners, men and women are not only warranted to come, but required and commanded to come: the great duty that the gospel calls for is believing. It leaves it not indifferent to believe or not, but peremptorily lays it on us as a command. Ye hear many sermons, and Christ often spoken of; now this is the great thing called for from you, even believing in Christ; and while it is not performed, there is no obedience given to the gospel.

We shall first confirm, and then make the uses of this branch of the doctrine.

1. For confirmation, take these grounds, 1. From
M the

the manner how the gospel proposeth faith : It is by way of command in the imperative mood, *Behold, Come ye that are weary, &c. Come to the wedding, open, &c.* wherein somewhat of the nature of faith is held forth ; all these being the same with believing.

2. It is not only commanded, as other things are, but peculiarly commanded, and there is a greater weight laid on the obedience of this command, than on the doing of many other commanded duties. It is the sum of all Christ's preaching, Mark i. *Repent, and believe the gospel.* It is the only command which Paul proposes to the jaylor, Acts xvi. *Believe in the Lord Jesus, &c.* 3. It is, as it were, the peculiar command that Jesus Christ hath left to his people,

1 John iii. 22. *This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ :* And this command of believing on him, is the peculiar command left to, and laid on ministers to press.

4. It will be clear, if we consider that the great disobedience that he quarrels for, is, when they do not believe, when sinners will not come to him. This is his quarrel, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* And here, *Who hath believed our report ?* So Mat. xxiii. *I would have gathered you, and ye would not.* And John xii. 37. *Though he did many mighty works among them, yet they believed not on him.*

5. Look to the nature of the offer made by Christ, and to the end of it, and ye will find, that the great thing called for, is the receiving of it, which is nothing else but believing ; and all our preaching of Christ, and of his benefits, are useless without it. Without this, he wants the satisfaction he calls for, for the travel of his soul ; and without it, the hearers of this gospel profit not ; 1 Pet. i. 9.

Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. The subordinate end of preaching, to wit, the salvation of our souls, cannot be attained without faith.

The *uses* are three. 1. It serves as a ground for us to propose the main gospel-duty to you, and to teach you what is the great and main thing ye are called to; it is even to believe in Jesus; to exercise faith on him. It is not only that your life should be civil and formal; that ye should read, pray, frequent ordinances; learn the catechism, and such like: But this is it, To believe on Jesus Christ for the obtaining of life, and remission of sins through him. And it is not a thing indifferent to you, but commanded, and with this certification, That if ye believe not, ye shall never get life nor pardon of sin; and therefore, as we tell you, that remission of sins is preached to you through Christ; so we command and charge you to believe on him, and receive this gospel, wherein he is offered for the remission of sins.

For clearing of this *use*, and that we may have the more ready access to application, we shall speak a word to these three things. *First*, To several kinds of true faith, three whereof are not saving; or to the ordinary distinctions of faith. *Secondly*, To the scripture expressions that hold out the nature of saving faith. *Thirdly*, To some difference betwixt this saving faith, and false and counterfeit faith; or to these acts of true faith more generally taken, which yet are not saving.

For the *first* of these, When we speak of faith, we shall draw it to these four kinds ordinarily spoken of, and shall not alter nor add to the common distinctions of faith, though more may be given. The *first* is *historical* faith, which may be called true, being that whereby we assent to the truth of a thing, because of his supposed fidelity that telleth it; as when an author writes a history, we give it credit upon report that he was an honest man that wrote it: So historical faith is, when people hearing the word preached or read, they assent to the truth of 'it all; and do not question but that Christ came into the world, that he

was God and man in one person, that he died and rose the third day, and ascended to heaven, that they that believe on him shall be saved, &c. and taking the word to be God's word, they may give to it a higher assent than they give to any man's word; because God is worthy, infinitely worthy of more credit than any man, yea than all men, and angels too: There may be, I say, in this historical faith of divine truths, a higher or greater assent than there is in believing of any human history, which may be the reason why many mistake historical faith, and yet it is but of the same kind, and a thing which many reprobates have, as John ii. at the close, it is said, *Many believed on him when they saw the miracles which he did, but Jesus did not commit himself unto them.* They were brought to believe from the signs which they saw, that he was more than a mere man, and that it was the word of God which he spoke, and yet it was but an historical faith; yea, this faith may be, and is in devils, who are said, James ii. 9. *to believe and tremble.* There are many, who, if they believe Christ to be God and man, and the word to be true, think it enough; yet James having to do with such, tells them, that the devil believes as much as that, and more thoroughly than many that have this historical faith: He knows God to be true, and one that cannot lie, and he finds it to his loss; he knows that such as believe cannot perish, for he cannot get one of them to hell; he knows that there is a time set when Christ will come to judge the world, and therefore he says often to him, *Torment me not before the time.* And as the devil hath this faith, so there are many in hell that have it too, The rich glutton had it, therefore he bids go tell his brethren, that they come not to that place of torment; and it is told him, *They have Moses and the prophets, &c.* which implies, that he then felt the truth of many things he would not believe before. This I speak, that ye may know

know that this historical faith is the first step of faith ; but it may be in hell, and so in many in whom saving faith is not. It is really a wonder, that people who are called Christians should own this to be saving faith, and think they are well advanced, when they are only come the devil's length in believing ; yea, there are many that never came this length, else they would tremble more. The *second* sort of faith is, The faith of *miracles* ; which is often spoken of in the New Testament, as when the Lord saith, *If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye should say to this mountain be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it should be done.* There was an active faith to work miracles, and a passive faith to receive the particular effect the miracle did produce : some had the faith of miracles to heal, and others to be healed. This is an extraordinary thing, and people may go to heaven without it, and go to hell with it ; though they cannot go to heaven without historical faith. Hence it is said, *Many shall come to me in that day, and shall say, We have cast out devils in thy name :* To whom he will say, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* And the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *If I had all faith, and could remove mountains, if I want charity, it availeth me nothing.* This faith of miracles availeth not alone to salvation, because it acts not on Christ holden forth in the promises, as a Saviour to save from sin ; but on Christ, as having power and ability to produce such an effect : which may be where there is no quitting of a man's own righteousness ; and if there be not grace in the person that hath it, it is an occasion of pride. We call you then to historical faith, as necessary, though not sufficient ; but not to this faith of miracles, it being neither necessary nor sufficient. A *third* sort of faith is, *Temporary* faith, spoken of Matth. xiii. and set forth under the parable of the seed sown on stony ground, which soon springs up, but withers : So some hearers of the gospel receive

ceive the word with joy, and are affected with it, but endure not. The difference betwixt this and historical faith is, That historical faith, as such, consists in the judgment, and reaches not the affections, at best it reaches not the affection of joy; for though the devils tremble, yet they are never glad. Temporary faith reaches the affections, and will make a man to tremble at the threatnings, as Felix did; so some way to delight himself in the promises of the gospel, and to snatch them, as it were, from the apprehension of the sweet taste and relish he finds in them. It is even here, as when it is told a whole man, that a physician is come to town, he is neither glad nor sad at it; but tell it to a sick man, and he is pleased, from an apprehended possibility of a cure; yet this apprehended possibility of a cure never sends him to the physician, nor puts him to apply the cure. The *fourth* sort is, *Saving* faith; which goes beyond all the rest, and brings the sick man to the physician, and to make use of the cure. There may be some measure of true saving faith, where there is not much temporary faith, or moving of the affections; and there may be a considerable measure of temporary faith, where there is no saving faith at all: Even as a fallen star may seem to shine more than a fixed one that is over-clouded, yet it hath no solid light. Know then, that faith is called for; but take not every sort of faith for saving faith. It would make tender hearts bleed, to see so many mistaken in the matter of their faith. There are some who say, they had faith all their days; O that ye were convinced of the lamentable deceit and delusion that ye are under! And that ye could distinguish betwixt faith and presumption, betwixt historical and temporary faith, and true saving faith! Though the two former be not delusions, yet in so far as ye rest on the same, and take them for saving faith, ye are deluded; for saving
ing

ing faith puts you out of yourselves, to rest on Jesus Christ.



S E R M O N IV.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm
of the LORD revealed?*

THE gospel is a sweet message, and ought to be glad news when it comes to a people; and therefore, when this report of our Lord Jesus Christ is made to sinners, it is a wonderful sad complaint that follows on the refusal, and not welcoming of it; there is no better news a minister can carry, than that brought to the shepherds by the angels, Luke ii. 10, 11. *Fear not, behold we bring you glad tidings of great joy to all people; unto you is born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* But were it an Isaiah, it would grieve him when he looks on a fruitless ministry and despised gospel, and make him complain, *Who hath believed our report?* O that we may experimentally know the chearfulness and gladness that follows the gospel where it is embraced! And that we may not know the sorrow and sadness that will follow the challenge for despising of it! One of these two the preached gospel will be, Either it will be joyful news to you; or, A sad ground of complaint to God against you.

We began to speak of the great duty of a people
that

that hears the gospel, and the great means whereby this news becomes delightful, and that is, by faith receive the report of the gospel, or to believe on Christ reported of in it. This is clearly implied; for the regret which holds out the sin is, *Who hath believed our report?* And therefore the great duty must be to believe, and by faith to receive the report. We come now to speak of the *use*; and because it is the great design of the whole gospel, yea it is the design of the law also, both of which level at this end and scope, even faith in Christ; it will be expedient, and no ways impertinent, that we insist a little on this, especially when so many thousands are utterly ignorant of faith, being strangers to what believing in Christ is; and so great stranger to the native end of the gospel, and out of the way of getting good by the preaching of it, that to this day they have not learned this one lesson, to wit, concerning faith in Christ; and other lessons will be to little or no purpose, till this be learned.

We shall not insist at large on the doctrine of faith; but only, in a plain way, glance at what this great duty is that is required of the hearers of the gospel. It is believing in Christ savingly, or saving faith: for no other thing will hold off the complaint against you: Ye will be complained of, though ye believe with all other faith, therefore it is this faith that is here meant.

That we may come the sooner to what we would be at, we shall premise two or three words. *First*, When we speak of believing here, we presuppose these things that are necessary for clearing the object of faith, and capacitating us to believe, though they be not saving faith: As, namely, 1. That the offer of the gospel must come to people; that the object of faith be held out to them; that it be told them, that there is a way for a sinner's justification through Christ Jesus; and that sinners may be accepted before God

on

on his account, or through him. There must also, 2. Be an understanding of this; a conceiving in the judgment what it is. People cannot believe, except they hear; and understand what they hear, so far as distinctly to fix their faith on the thing known. They must know and understand the Mediator's fulness, the covenant's freeness, and the efficacy of faith to make Christ theirs. Yea, 3. It is necessary that there be some acquaintance with our own condition; as, that we are naturally under sin; that we are lost, and under the curse; sick, and utterly unable, and even despair to get ourselves recovered by any thing that is in, or by any thing that we can do of ourselves; and that we are for ever undone, if we get not a Saviour, that our mouth may be stopped. 4. Not only must we know this, but it is necessary that there be an historical faith of it; to believe that there is fulness and sufficiency in Christ; that he is able to cure, and take away the guilt of sin in all that rest on him: These must be believed in general, before ever sinners can rest on him for their own salvation; which supposes that there may be an historical, where there is not a saving faith. Now when we have gone all this length, saving faith is that which the gospel calls for; and it is the heart's acting according to what sound light and conviction it hath on Jesus Christ, as holden forth in the promise, for obtaining of life and salvation thro' him: So that when the soul is lying still under its conviction, and knows it cannot have life but by resting on Christ, and hears that there is a sufficiency in him for supplying all its wants, then the work of the spirit prevails with the soul to cast itself over on him for obtaining of life, and of every other thing needful; it brings the soul to embrace and lay hold on him, not only as one able to save sinners, but to save itself in particular. And this is the native work of faith that unites the soul to Christ, and puts it over the boundary, or march of all delusion: It is the

N

bringing

bringing of a lost sinner from the serious apprehension of his own naughtiness and undone estate, to cast himself on Jesus Christ for the obtaining of life through him.

Secondly, When we speak of faith, we would premise this, That even this true and saving faith, which is not only in kind true, that is, such as hath a real being, but is saving, may be considered in its different acts or actings, for its different needs or necessities. Though the covenant be one, yet the acts of faith are many, we having to do with pardon of sin, with sanctification in its parts, vivification and mortification, with peace, &c. faith differently acts on Christ and the promise for obtaining of these. Now the faith that we would insist on is, the faith that rests on Christ for pardon of sin, on which all the rest of the acts of faith depend; it is that faith whereby a sinner receives Christ, and casts himself on him; that faith whereby union with Christ is made up.

Thirdly, We would premise, that there is a great difference betwixt faith, and the effects of it, as peace, joy, assurance of God's love, and these other spiritual privileges that follow believing. It is one thing actually to believe, another thing to have the peace and joy that follows upon and flows from believing; the one being as the putting out of the hand to receive the meat, and the other as the feeding on it: It is the first of these we mean and intend to speak of, even that faith whereby we lay hold of Jesus Christ himself, and get a right to all these privileges in and through him.

Fourthly, We premise, that even this saving faith hath its degrees, as all other faith hath; some have weak faith, some stronger; some have that full assurance spoken of, Heb. x. or a plerophory, not only as to the object, that it is sufficient, but as to the apprehending and obtaining of life through that object; so that they are able to say, *Neither height, nor depth,*
nor

nor any thing else, shall be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We say then, that saving faith hath its degrees, though the degree be not that which we speak of; but it is the kind of this faith, whether weaker or more strong, whereby a lost sinner casts itself on Christ; the faith which puts the sinner off the ground it stood on, to fix on him the faith which brings the soul from the covenant of works, to a new holding of life by Christ and his righteousness. We shall then speak a little, 1. To what we conceive, this act of saving faith is not, for preventing of mistakes. 2. What way the scripture expresses it; when then we say that such a thing is not saving faith, ye should know that this thing is not what ye must trust to; and when we say such a thing is saving faith, ye should labour to act and exercise faith according to it.

First, For what saving faith is not. 1. It is not the knowing that Christ is God and man; that he was born, was crucified, dead and buried, and rose again. Ask some, what true saving faith is? They will say, it is a true knowledge. Ask them again, how long it is since they believed? They will say, ever since they knew good from evil: Ye should know then, that apprehensive or literal and speculative knowledge is needful, but it will not be taken for saving faith. It is not a touch of warmth, or liberty of the affections in a natural way, which may be in unregenerate men, yea possibly in Pagans, as in a Felix, who in the mean time have not so much as temporary faith, because it rises not from the word, but from dispensations of providence, or from temporary things; and if it rise from the promises of the word, and there be no more, it is but temporary faith. 3. It is not convictions, which many take for faith; and take it for granted, if they be convinced of sin, they believe; and will say, Whom should they believe on but Christ, and yet they never follow the conviction,

tion, to put in practice what they are convinced of.

4. It is not simply a resolution to believe, as others take saving faith to be, who being convinced that their own righteousness will not do their turn, resolve to believe on Christ for righteousness, but they will take a convenient time to do it; and many maintain their peace with this, though it be no true peace; but a bare resolution to believe, is not faith: Ye use to say, there are many good wishers in hell. I remember the words of a dying man in this place, who thought he believed before, and being asked what difference he conceived to be betwixt the faith he had before, and the faith he now had attained to? he answered, Before I thought or resolved to believe, but never practised it, now I practise believing. There is such a subtilty and deceit in the heart, that if it resolve to believe, and if it observably thwart not with faith, it will sit down on that, as if all were done; therefore the word is, *To day if ye will hear his voice, that is, to day if ye will believe, harden not your heart.* This resolving to believe, is like a man sinking in the water, and having a rope cast out to him, he resolves to hold it fast, but does not. So many think they have the promise beside them, and resolve to make use of it, but do not presently do it: So that the ship sinks down, and they perish, while the promise abides and swims above.

5. It is not prayer: There are many that think they believe when they some way repent, pray, and put their hand to other duties, and they know no more of believing but something of that kind. It is true, indeed, prayer may help to believe, yet it is not always with faith: It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, that believeth; many will seek to enter that shall not be able: People very often have these two miserable mistakes about prayer, either they put it in the room of Christ, or in the room and place of faith, not considering that they are different things; for faith exerciseth

ciseth itself on Christ as Mediator, and prayer taketh him as God, the true object of divine worship; yet if it be not founded on Christ as Mediator, it is not heard. The acting of saving faith is properly on Christ held forth in the word, and prayer is a putting up of suits according to the word. There are many that know no more what use to make of Christ, than if he had never been incarnate, nor had come under that relation of a Mediator, and think their prayers serve for all; whereas faith not only respects Christ as God, but his merits as Mediator, and his offices. 6. Nor is faith only a believing this word of God to be true, though we could wish many were come that length: It would make a man tremble to hear the blasphemous words that some have, when they are asked concerning their believing the truth of the Bible. But though ye come that length, it is not enough; the devils believe and tremble. The faith that we call you to is more than historical; it is resting on Christ, and a cordial receiving of the message which he sends to you: As suppose a king should send an embassy to a person to woo her to be his wife, it is one thing to know that there is such a king, another thing to believe that he is real in his offer, and that the woman, by consenting to marry him, may be, and will be happy, and (which is yet more) actually to receive the message, and to consent to go and marry him. It is here, as when Abraham's servant is sent to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. she and her friends believe all the report that the servant made of his master and of his son, that it was true; and then it is given to her option if she will go with the man, and she consents to go, and actually goeth. This is it we press you to, To go with us and close the bargain, and to accept of him, and of life through him. By the same similitude ye may know what saving faith is, and what is the difference betwixt it and temporary faith. When the great, rich, and brave offer comes to be made to
Rebekah,

Rebekah, by a man with many camels, gold and bracelets, when she believes that it is true, and that it is made to her, she is glad, and it may be exceeding glad, if not somewhat vain also, that is like temporary faith: But when it comes to the articles of the contract, it is said to sinners, ye must be subject to Christ, and follow his will, and not your own; this, this binds the bargain. Thus many when they hear there is a possibility of life to be had in Christ, and much more when they hear it is to be had on good, easy and free terms, it will make them smile; but when it comes to that, Psalm. xlv. 10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, forsake thy father's house, or the fashions of thy father's house.* It halts there, and they suspend and demur to close the bargain; but saving faith goes further on, and, with Rebekah, finally closes the bargain.

Secondly, The next thing is, What is saving faith? or, What is it to believe in Christ? And would to God ye were ready to believe, and as ready to receive the invitation, as to ask the question, and that in asking the question ye were in earnest; for, by the way, many have asked the question, What shall we do to be saved? where, if they had been in earnest, they might have been soon resolved: The answer is at hand, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. But to them that desire further clearness or confirmation in this business of concern, we shall speak a little; yet ye must know, that it is such a thing as is impossible to be made plain to a proud humoured or unhumbled sinner; it is the poor humbled soul that will understand it; and to such a soul, half a word will be enough.

The plainest way to set it forth, as we conceive, is, to name some scripture expressions and similitudes that hold it forth. The first whereof is that of Mat. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* And John vi. 35. *He that cometh to me shall never hun-*
ger,

ger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.

These expressions hold forth these three things obviously. *First*, An evil which men cleave to. *Secondly*, A good that is offered to them. *Thirdly*, A passing from the evil to the good; and so *come to me* implies.

1. A hazard that people are in by being at a distance from Christ. 2. That there is access to Jesus Christ for remedying that evil, and removing of that hazard. 3. A passing from the one to the other; a passing from our own righteousness to Christ's righteousness; a passing from our natural condition to Jesus Christ; a real passing from death in ourselves, to life in him. Most part think faith to be a conceit, a humour, or a guess; that they think they may have, and never know how: But it is a real thing, a coming from our own righteousness, as I said, to his; from a covenant of works, to rest on Christ and his righteousness, held forth in the covenant of grace. This is somewhat explained, Rom. vii. where two husbands are spoken of, a woman cannot marry another man till her first husband be dead: So till a sinner be dead to the law, he cannot marry Christ; there must be a divorcing from the law and covenant of works, before ye can close with Christ.

The second expression is, John i. 12. where faith is held forth as *a receiving* of Christ, *To as many as received him, he gave them power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name.* And it is well expressed in the Catechism, to be a receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel. This supposes that Christ is offered to us, and that we are naturally without him. The gospel comes and says, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Come and receive a Saviour.* And the act of faith is a laying hold of that offer, a receiving and embracing of it; a being well content to take a free discharge through his blood.

A third expression is, Phil. iii. 12. where faith is set forth as *apprehending* of Christ. And Heb. vi. 18.

is called a *laying hold* on the hope set before us. And Isa. lvi. 4. a *taking hold* of the covenant. All which suppose us to have a choice given us, and Christ to be holden forth as a city of refuge, and a shelter from that which we are in hazard of. Christ is held out in the gospel as the city of refuge; and the exercise of faith is to run from the hazard to him, as a child that is chased by an unknown and uncouth person, flees unto the mother's arms, or as the man-slayer fled from the avenger of blood to the city of refuge: And faith having run to him, casts itself on him, or thrusts itself, as it were, into his arms.

A fourth expression is, *rolling or casting* of ourselves upon the Lord, as Psalm lv. 22. *Cast thy burden on the Lord*: And Psalm xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way to the Lord*; it is on the margin, *roll thyself on the Lord*, or *rest* on him; as in ver. 7. and *repose thyself on the Lord*. The gospel lays Christ, as it were, at our feet, and faith rolls us over upon him. It is the soul's finding itself, through the work of the Spirit, unable to stand under the burden; rolling itself on Christ, as a crazy and weak body casts itself on a down-bed for ease. This is a very emphatic, significant and active expression of faith; setting out a man quitting his own legs or feet, as unable to stand on them, and laying himself on Christ. That is what we call you to, even to quit your own feet, and to roll yourselves on Christ.

A fifth expression is, Rom. x. 3. where it is called a *submitting to the righteousness of God*; which is held forth in the gospel thus: As if a king were proclaiming a pardon to rebels, and saying to them, notwithstanding the many heinous crimes ye have committed, and are guilty of, if ye will confess them, and betake yourselves to my grace and mercy, sincerely resolving to be henceforth faithful and dutiful subjects to me, I will freely pardon you; which gracious offer they most gladly accept of, and submit themselves to it.

Submitting

Submitting is an acquiescing in the terms of the gospel, as it is proposed; as if ye should say, We accept the bargain, and are well content and satisfied with it, In a word, faith carves not out to God our way to salvation, but sweetly submits to the way he hath carved out.

A sixth expression is, *Hiding of ourselves in God, or in Christ*: So the word *trust* in God, signifies to hide ourselves in him, as in a place of refuge; according to that, Prov. xviii. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are preserved*, or hid; or, they flee to it, as doves do to their windows. And this is what the apostle means, Phil. iii. 9. *That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, &c.* So that if ye ask, What is faith? It is a man's betaking himself to Christ; that when he shall be called for, it may be answered, Lord, I am in Christ, not having mine own righteousness, &c. It is not to be trusting to our good hopes, good prayers, or good meaning; but to Christ's satisfaction, and God's promise. By faith, when rightly exercised, the sinner holds and hides himself in Christ; so as nothing of the man can be seen: And this is well expressed by the Lord, when he says, Isa. xxiii. 26. *Come, my people, enter into your chambers, shut the doors about you, hide yourselves for a little while, &c.* Come under the Mediator's wings, lock in yourselves by faith there, and so make all sure.

A seventh expression is, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. where when Hezekiah is writing to the degenerate tribes to come home again, he bids them, *yield themselves to the Lord*; in the original it is, *give the hand to the Lord*: Even as two men who have been at odds and variance, or have broken the ties that were betwixt them, come to renew their friendship, they join hands; now God is brought in stretching out his hands to you, Isa. lxxv. 2. Therefore come and close with him, yield to him, give him the hand, or join
O hands

hands with him, and make the bargain and engagement sure for the time to come. All these similitudes borrowed from men, are partly to make the nature of faith obvious and clear, and partly to strengthen and confirm it.

An eighth expression is that of *opening* to Christ, Cant. v. 2. *Open to me, my dove, &c.* Rev. iii. 30. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man open the door to me, &c.* Acts xvi. it is said, *The Lord opened the heart of Lydia.* When the word comes, sinners hearts are locked against God; Christ comes by his word, and knocks hard to get in; he bids us open and take in our Saviour, and faith discerns his voice, and gives him entrance: It is the letting of the word sink into our hearts, and making him welcome. It is not only the crediting the word as true, but the receiving of him whom the word offers, for the end for which he is offered: And this is, when the work of the Spirit with the word raises good and strong inclinations within, and makes the heart to open and receive Christ. Wherever Christ hath a design of grace on the soul, and comes with power, he continues knocking, and calling hard and loud, till doors and gates be cast open to him.

A ninth expression or similitude under which faith is held forth, is that of a *marriage*, or of *covenanting* or consenting, whether in marriage or otherwise, but more especially in marriage. When Christ takes on him the place of a wooer, ministers are his ambassadors, the word is their instructions, wherein he bids them go tell sinners that *all things are ready*, and to pray them to come to the marriage, or to marry and match with him; and faith is a coming to this husband, a receiving of the word of invitation, a consenting to the marriage: It is a change or mutation of qualities; we change fashions, we subscribe the contract on the terms offered us. In the bargain of grace some thing is offered by God, and that is Christ
and

and his fulness; and there is something done on our side, and that is accepting of him by faith: And this is not so much a saying with the tongue, as it is a believing with the heart; as in Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believes unto righteousness.* It is the heart's presently subscribing the marriage-contract, and going to live and cohabit with him, though confession will be readily made with the mouth also, as he calls for it.

A tenth expression or similitude, is that of *buying*; *Ho, every one* (crieth the prophet, Isa. lv. 1.) *that thirsts come to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy, &c.* So Rev. iii. 18. *Buy of me eye-salve, &c.* The meaning of which is, that God in the gospel sets forth, as in a market, to sinners rich and rare wares, good and cheap, or at very low and easy rates; and that believing is like buying the wares. Life eternal is offered on condition of believing on Christ, and the poor sinner thinks that a good bargain, for it takes no money from him. Rev. xxii. 17. *this is called willing; Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* The soul hath a good will to the thing: It is held forth by several other expressions in scripture; as, *cleaving to the Lord*, Josh. xxiii. 8. and Acts xi. 23. it is called *bearing, hearkening, and inclining of the ear*, Isa. lv. 2, 3. an attentive, concerned, and holy listening to, and taking hold of this offer: It is a cleaving to the Lord, as wood-bind or ivy cleaves to an oak, because its life depends on it. And Deut. xxx. and Josh. xxiv. it is called a *chusing of the Lord*, upon deliberation, as knowing that we have need of him, that he is a Saviour suited completely to all the necessities of our souls, and that we are warranted to believe on him: It is the native act and exercise of faith to chuse Christ among all the wooers that court the soul. So, likewise, it is set out under *trusting and committing*, Psal. xxxvii. *Commit thy way to the Lord, trust in him.* I

know, saith Paul, 2 Tim. i. 22. *He is able to keep that which I have committed to him.* It is to give Christ the credit of your salvation. It is one thing to give a man credit that he is true, and another thing to intrust him with our greatest concerns. We credit many whom we will not thus trust, nor commit ourselves and concerns to. The former (when these are applied to God) is historical faith; but this latter is saving faith, when we dare trust ourselves to him, and to his word; And we think this expression holds forth as much of the nature of saving faith as any of the former, if we could understand it when we dare trust ourselves to him, because he hath given his word. Thus also, to act and exercise faith on him for temporal or for spiritual things, is to expect the event from God; but so, as we expect and look for it on this ground, that Christ hath purchased it, and we have accepted him on his offer, which gives us a right to these things needful for us, and purchased by him. It is said, Matth. xxii. when the invitation came, that some made light of it; but faith, on the contrary, lays weight on it, and we commit ourselves to God on that ground. It is called, Rom. vi. *A delivering up ourselves to the word*, and to him in it. It puts a blank in Christ's hand, to be filled up as he pleases.

You see then what ye are called to; it is to open to Christ, to come to him, to marry him, to cast yourselves on him, to commit yourselves to him, to give him credit, &c. And is there any of these things unreasonable or prejudicial to you? And if they be very reasonable and advantageous, (as, indeed, they are) we would exhort you to come to him, to receive him, to apprehend him, to flee to him, to take hold of him, to marry him, &c. Believe on him, and by believing, be united to him, and get a right to him, and to all his purchase; give him the credit of saving your souls. This we call for from you, and if ye do
it

it not, the complaint in the text will stand against you, *Who hath believed our report?*



S E R M O N V.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

IT is a great matter to get the gospel once brought amongst a people, and such messengers, as may make the savoury report of Jesus Christ unto them: Yet this is not all, there is a greater work behind, and that is, to get Christ believed on, and to get the report concerning him received by the people to whom it is made. This being the greatest, gravest, and the most eminent work of the prophets, and of the ministers of the gospel, not so much to get a word to say, as to get the word believed. And this is Isaiah's complaint, that though he himself brought the report concerning Christ, and foresaw many more would bring it, yet that the exercise of faith in those who should hear it would be very rare.

We spoke of the great thing called for from a people to whom this gospel comes, and the report of Christ is made, and that is, to believe on him; to receive and rest on him of whom the report is made.

Except

Except this be, though there were never so many preachers, and encouragements to preach; though you should flock to the ordinances every day, the ground of complaint will still remain, if there be not saving faith in Jesus Christ, which is the substance of the gospel.

After confirmation of this point, we shewed what faith is from the several names the scripture giveth it, and wherein the exercise of saving faith is holden forth. All which imply these three; 1. A great hazard and danger that the hearers of the gospel are in: Whether they be sensible of it in such a measure at least, or not, we speak not now, yet they are so really; so much *fleeing, coming, laying hold, apprehending*, &c. insinuate. 2. A fulness and sufficiency in Christ Jesus holden forth to them, as the object of their faith; as one that can deliver out of that danger, and make right whatever is wrong. 3. An act, wherein mainly the exercise of faith is holden forth; and it is the act of the soul under that danger and distress, betaking itself to Christ's fulness for help: It is a fleeing from the curse of the law to him, as to the city of refuge. So every name that faith gets, sets out a man acting and moving some way for Christ's remedying the evil, and removing the hazard he is in.

Having spoken a little to this, that faith is the main duty that is called for, we shall now follow the exhortation to press you to it; it being to no purpose to speak of Christ, and of faith in him, except he be received. This is the end of the word written and taught, John xx. at the close, Even to believe in the name of the Son of God, and by believing to receive life in and through him.

And therefore, *Secondly*, Seeing this is the main duty called for by the gospel, That by faith ye should receive it, and Christ offered in it, we earnestly exhort you to it. It is not so much to this or that particular

ticular duty, though these be implied; it is not so much to attendance on ordinances, nor to submission to discipline and censures, though these also be duties that we exhort you; but it is to obedience to the great command of faith, even to believe on him whom the Father hath sent and sealed: It is to receive this gospel; to submit to the righteousness of faith; to open to him that is knocking at the door; to yield to him, and to give him the hand, that past quarrels may be removed, and taken out of the way. Except this be, we declare to you, in his name, that ye do not bring forth the fruit that this gospel calleth for from you; and that no less will be acceptable to God, nor accepted from you by him.

And to add here the *third* branch of the doctrine, we say, That no less will do your business as a necessary means for attaining the promise, and that which is promised. 1. Look to all the promises, whether of pardon of sin, or of peace with God, of joy in the Holy Ghost, and of holiness and conformity to God: There is no access to these, or to any of them, but by faith; this is the very proper condition of the covenant of grace, and the door whereby we step into it. And if ye think pardon of sin, peace with God, and holiness to be necessary, then this great gospel-duty of believing is no less necessary; for the Lord saith, John iii. 36. *He that believeth not is condemned already.* 2. Look to the performance of any duty, or mortification of any lust or idol, and faith is necessary to that, 1 John. iii. 5. *It is by faith we obtain victory over the world:* It was by faith (Heb. xi.) that all the worthies spoken of there wrought righteousness, &c. 3. When any duty is done, of whatsoever nature it be, there is no acceptation of it without faith: It is not our praying, or our coming to the church, that will make duty to be accepted, but it is faith; *The word profited them not, saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 2. because it was not mixed with faith.* And that for
making

making the duty acceptable, faith is necessarily requisite, we may clearly see, Heb. xi. where it is expressly said, *That without faith it is impossible to please God.* And how is it that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain? It was nothing sure in Cain's sacrifice itself that made it be rejected, nor any thing in Abel's that made it be received or acceptable, but faith in the Messiah to come, that was found to be in the one, and was missing in the other. Is there not reason then to press this duty on you? And to exhort you not to think this a common and easy thing, tho' the most part think it to be so? If we look to the benefits of it, to the difficulty of it, and to the rarity of it in the world, there is no duty needs more to be pressed than this, even that Christ: Jesus should have the burden of your immortal souls cast on him by this saving faith. I shall therefore, in the further prosecution of this, *First*, Shew what mainly you should eschew and avoid, as that whereat people more ordinarily stumble. *Secondly*, What it is we would exhort you to, and what grounds.

For the *first*, I know the deceits and mistakes in men about the exercise of faith are so many, that they are more than can well or easily be reckoned up; yet we shall in some generals, spoke of before, hint at a few of them; for as long as ye continue in the same snares, they must be still pointed out to you, and endeavours still used to undeceive and deliver you out of them: And therefore, 1. Beware of resting on a doctrinal faith, which before I called historical. We know it is hard to convince some that they want faith; yet we would have you to consider, that it is not every kind of faith, but saving faith, that will do your business: It is the want of that which the prophet complains of. And therefore, to open this a little, ye should consider, That there may be really such a faith as is an assent to the truth of the word in a natural man, yea, in a reprobate; but that faith will never

ver unite to Christ, nor be united with the pardon of sin. *First*, I do not say, that every one that is in the visible church hath this doctrinal faith, to believe a heaven and a hell, that the scripture is the word of God, and that all that believe in Christ shall get pardon of sin and life; the carriage, alas! of many testifies that they have not thus much, whatever fleeting notions they may have of these things, or whatever esteem they may seem to put on the gospel, and whatever profession they may make that they believe the truth of it, yet in their deeds they deny it; for if there were a fixedness in the doctrinal faith of the gospel in men, they durst not for their souls live as they do. Neither yet, *Secondly*, do we say, That all they that have this doctrinal faith of the gospel, or somewhat of it, do believe every passage in it alike; but often as they please them, they believe them. Hence many believe what the word speaks of mercy, and of pardon of sin, and will not question that; but what it speaks of holiness, and of the severity of God's reckoning with men for sin, they do not so credit that part of the word. It is true, where the faith of the one is, the faith of the other will some way be; but because the one agrees better with their corruption than the other, therefore the one is not so received as the other; and it is very frequent with such, to be found diminishing from one place, and adding to another, of the word of God. Nor, *Thirdly*, do we say, That all men do, in a like and equal degree, believe the truth of the word: There is in some more knowledge, in some less; in some more convictions, in some fewer; and though we preach to you all, yet there are some that believe not this to be God's ordinance: There are many who will not be saved, that take this word to be the word of God, and believe what is the meaning of it, because the word itself says it is so. And the reason of this is, 1. Because there is nothing that is not saving, but a natural man may

have it. Now this doctrinal faith is not saving, and so a natural man may have it, yea, the devils believe and tremble; and James does not dispute with these to whom he writes on this account, that they believed not this, but tells them, that historical faith was not enough; and we think a man in nature may have a great persuasion of the truth of the word of God, and that what it says will come to pass, and yet still continue but a natural man. A second reason is, Because the scripture speaks so often of many sorts of faith that are not saving; as, *Exod. xiv.* at the close, it is said, *The people believed the Lord: And Psal. cvi. 12. Then they believed his word, and sang his praise: And John ii. 23. Many believed on Christ, to whom he did not commit himself.* There was a faith in them, which his signs and miracles extorted from them, that was not saving. And *Matth. xiii.* two or three such acts of faith are spoken of in the parable of the sower that were not saving, however sound they might be in their own kind. And *1 Cor. xiii.* we have such a faith spoken of, as a man dare not deny the truth of the word, though he should bring his body to be burnt by his avouching of the same. A third reason is, Because as much credit may be given to the word, as is given to any other history that is creditably believed; and it is on this ground that we believe there was such men as Cæsar, Pompey, Wallace, &c. And it being certain that there may be impressions on the consciences of hearers that this is God's word, backed with some common work of the Spirit, and that it is generally received to be the word of God in the part of the world we live in, what wonder is it that people believe thus, and drink in this historical or doctrinal faith of the word, so as they may even dare to suffer death for it? And yet in the mean time they may want saving faith; the devils being as firmly persuaded as any natural man is, that God is true, and that his word will be performed, and therefore they

they say to Christ, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* The pangs of a natural conscience in men will assure them of a judgment to come, though they tremble to think on it.

And therefore, before we proceed further, take a word of *use* from this, to let you see the great and very general mistake of the most part of the hearers of the gospel, in resting on this doctrinal faith. If ye tell them that they have no faith, they will not by any means own that. They believe there is a Saviour, and that he is God and man, and that such as believe on him shall be saved, and on this they rest. It is such as these who think they have believed ever since they had any knowledge, because the word was always, or very long since, received in the place where they lived for the word of God, and they believe it to be so, and know no difference betwixt believing the word, and believing on Christ holden forth in it; though, alas! many of you believe not thus much, for if ye were among the Jews, ye might be soon brought to question the truth of the gospel. But though ye had the real faith of the truth of the word, take not that for saving faith; for as there is a real sorrow that is not the saving grace of repentance unto life, so there is a sort of real faith that hath a real object, and a real being in the judgment, which yet is not a real closing with Christ, and so not saving faith: As suppose a man pursued by his enemy should see a strong castle-door standing open, or one in hazard at sea should see dry land, yet if he should stand still while the enemy pursues him, or abide still in the sinking vessel, the sight of the castle-door open, nor of the dry land, would not save him. So it is not the believing that there is a Saviour come into the world to save sinners, that will save, except there be a resting on him as he is holden forth in the word of the gospel. Historical faith is only, as it were, a looking on the Saviour; but saving faith cleaves to him, and

rests on him. Historical faith looks on Christ, but acts not on him, closes not with him; and therefore such as have this only, and no more, sink and perish without getting good of him: We would think it a great step to get many of you to believe as the devil, who believes and trembles: The little trembling there is, shews that there is but little of this historical faith; yet, as I have often said, this is not all; ye may have this, and yet if ye halt there, ye will certainly perish, if ye were never so confident to be saved. The apostle doth well distinguish these, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*: Where these two are presupposed; *First*, Believing that God is, or hath a being; and, *Secondly*, Believing that his promise is sure and firm, that he is faithful who hath promised, and will make his word good. And then, *Thirdly*, On both these follows a coming to him, as a rewarder of diligent seekers of him. The first two take in historical faith: For to believe that God is, is natural; and to believe that God is faithful in his promise, may be in natural man: But to come to him, to get the hazard that the soul is in, removed through Jesus Christ, is a thing that few do attain to. This then is the first thing we would be aware of, not aware to believe the truth of the word, but to be aware of resting on it as a saving faith: It is not enough to look on Christ, and to grant that it is he; but we must never be satisfied till we can rely on Christ, and lay the weight of our salvation and peace on him in his own way.

The second thing ye should beware of is, Some common and quickly transient work on the affections, that may accompany historical faith: Whether the affection of grief, or the affection of joy be stirred thereby, both are unsafe to be rested on, when ye cannot prove your resting on Christ, *i. e.* where there is no sufficient ground to prove it by; Though ye should tremble

tremble as Felix did, and be under alarming convictions of conscience and fears of your hazard, or tho' ye should be affected with joy, as the temporary believer may be, and sometimes is, what will that profit you? It is a great mistake to take some small work on the affections, which at the best is but an effect of historical faith, for a saving work of the Spirit. Or, *Secondly*, If it be not an effect of historical faith, it is an effect of a challenge of conscience, and smiting of the heart, as in Saul, who could say to David, *Thou art more righteous than I, my son David*. Or, *Thirdly*, It is some common work of the Spirit, such as was in Simon Magus, of whom it is said, *he believed*, and desired the apostle to pray for him; for men to conclude on this ground, that they are brought out of nature into a state of grace, is to build upon a sandy foundation. The apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. vii. 10. of worldly sorrow, as well as of a godly sorrow; and as there may be a worldly sorrow, so there may be a carnal joy, a sort of rejoicing in prayer, or at hearing of a sermon, or at a sacrament, which is not saving faith. Some hear the word with joy, Matth. xiii. who yet *endure not*. And John Baptist's hearers rejoiced in his light for a season: Even as a sick man, who hearing (as we hinted before) that a physician who is skilful and able to cure him is come to town, he becomes glad in hopes of a cure of his disease; but here is the obstacle, when the physician tells the man that he must be so and so abstemious, and keep himself under such a strict diet, he will not obey, and so all his joy vanishes. There is something like this in temporary faith, where some remote expectation of salvation will raise a carnal joy and gladness; but when it comes to this, that a man is called to quit his lusts, or his estate, or in the world, to undergo trouble and persecution for the gospel, by and by he is offended, he thinks, to say so, *A bird in hand is worth two in the bush*; and therefore when the storm blows

in

in his teeth, he turns his back and runs away. We find this often in people that when sick, they have fits of seriousness, and sometimes flashes of sorrow under convictions, and sometimes flashes of joy, that vanish when they come to health again. When we speak of some common work on the affections, we mean, among other things, some liberty and warmth of spirit in prayer; which, no question, even unrenewed men may find more at one time than another, as when they are in some great hazard or strait, they will be more than ordinary serious in that duty, and yet this may be but an effect of nature. This proves a great stumbling and neckbreak to many, that they think they are well enough, if now and then they have utterance in prayer, words beyond what they expected, and upon reflecting find that they have been in earnest, though it was but moral seriousness that moved them in prayer, in the place of saving faith; so that when they pray with warmth they think they believe, when in the mean time they never knew what it was in good earnest to lay themselves on Christ Jesus: Therefore when we invite you to believe, this is another thing we would bid you beware of, that ye take not a flash of sense for true faith.

3. There is yet a more subtle, though no less dangerous mistake, that ye should beware of, and that is, when faith is confounded with obedience, and is looked on in justification as a piece of new obedience, with love, repentance, and other duties of holiness: So some think they believe, because they have some natural awe of God in their minds, with some fear of sin, perform some duties of religion, and walk honestly, as they think, according to the rule; which is to confound the covenant of works and of grace, and to make the covenant of works a covenant of grace, or to run the covenant of grace into a covenant of works; only with this difference, that though their works be not perfect, but defective, yet where-
in

in they are defective, they think there is worth in their faith to make up that want, and to supply that defect; and so by faith they think they will obtain the acceptation of their works, and of their persons on account of their works: They look upon their works as pleasing to God, but because they are not perfect, they will believe, or exercise faith, to make up their defects; to which the way of grace is quite contrary, which makes the tree first good, and then the fruit. This way, that many take, is not to draw the evidences of believing from works of holiness, which is warrantable; but the founding of faith, or their hope of heaven on works: And the use they make of their faith, is to ward off challenges of conscience for the imperfection of their works, and to make faith procure acceptance (as I just now said) of their works, and acceptance of their persons for their works sake.

4. Beware of that which ye ordinarily call a certain assurance, or sure knowledge of your salvation, and that all the promises are yours, whereby ye think yourselves in no hazard; a hope and assurance of heaven that ye can give no ground for, nor proof of, only ye think ye are sure of pardon of sin, and of coming to heaven, and that ye are obliged to maintain that groundless hope; but this is not saving faith, for it is a hope of heaven, that can give you no right to Christ: There must first be a fleeing to him, and closing with him, before ye can have any true and well-grounded hope of heaven; but your hope and confidence is, never to question the matter: Ye are like Laodicea, who thought herself rich, and to stand in need of nothing, when she was miserably poor; or like those men, who, when God was threatening them with judgment, yet would needs presume to think that they leaned on the Lord. I think, among all the persons that God hath indignation against, it is in a special manner against those who have this sort of hope, and to whom God discovereth the ground-
lessness

lessness of it, and yet they will still stoutly maintain and stand fast by their hope. It is to these he speaks, Deut. xxvi. 16. who despise and mock God's threatenings, and say, *We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our own hearts, and add drunkenness to thirst.* The Lord there pronounceth a curse, and to the curse addeth an oath, that he will not spare such persons, but will separate them for evil, and cause all the curses of the law to overtake them. Judge ye now what a condition this is for persons to be in, to be believing that all the promises are theirs, and yet, instead of that, to be (in the mean time) liable to all the curses threatned in the word of God. It is this that we call *presumption*, and the *hope of the hypocrite will perish*, Job viii. 13. The confidence of such shall be rejected and swept away, as a spider's web shall be rooted out of their tabernacles, and bring them to the king of terrors. They think they believe always, and that when they are not troubled nor disquieted they never want faith, but have a great deal of it; which yet is but a conjecture, which cannot support and uphold them when they come to a strait. When they are more secure, they think they believe very well; and when they are more awakened and disquieted, they think they believe less, and their fancied faith quite ebbs on them: When they hear of any exercise of mind, or trouble of conscience in others, they wonder that they will not believe; and all their work is to maintain their deep security and strong delusion. This is then the *fourth* thing ye should beware of, for it is not the faith that will remove the complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* And yet how many are there of this sort, who say they shall have peace, and please themselves with their good hopes, say the word what it will. O! be persuaded, that this is nothing else but woeful unbelief and presumption; and therefore we must preach to you the terror and the curse of God, though ye cry

cry peace to yourselves. The Lord complains of such persons, Jer. v. 12. saying, *They have belied the Lord*: He sent his prophets to denounce judgments in the days of Josiah, when there was a fair profession of religion and reformation, yet they would believe and hope that no evil should overtake them.

That which we aim at in this part of the use, is to make way for what follows; even to give you a clear ground for exercising of faith on Jesus Christ, when all these stumbling-blocks and mistakes are moved out of the way. We therefore exhort you, to lay your hand to your heart, and narrowly to try if ye have called, or accounted any of these to be saving faith; for there are hundreds, nay thousands, that perish under these pretents, deceiving themselves, and deluding others, by a faith they were born and brought up with, and they have no more but their groundless hope to prove their faith by; and this they will stand by, say to them what ye will: but be not deceived, for God will discover you. Ye think a strong presumption is faith, and that ye can by such a faith drink in the promises; but God will make you vomit them up, and ye shall be declared to be void of faith in the great day. Therefore be more jealous over your faith, and seek to have your hold of Christ made sure, which is done, when from the belief of your hazard and self-emptiness, and of Christ's fulness, ye go to him and close with him, to make up all your wants. This faith is specially qualified by the account on which we go to him, and rest on him, even as a conscientious duty is that which flows from a command, as obedience to it, so one of the main things that qualifies this faith is a receiving Christ as Christ, or as he is holden forth in the gospel, which is therefore well put in the description given of faith in the Catechism. And it is called *a believing on him whom the Father hath sent*: Which is not to believe on Christ simply, but as he is holden

forth in the word of the gospel. Presumption may look on Christ and his fulness, and few or none will readily dare to give him a direct and downright refusal, or to reject him professedly and avowedly, when they hear of such happiness as is to be had in him: But that which we say qualifies faith, is to desire, receive, and embrace him according as he is holden forth in the gospel, *for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 2 Cor. i. 30. when he is trusted with an eye to the promise, and when that which makes us rest on him is the word of God; for though Christ be the material objects of faith, yet the word is the formal object, whereby we get a right to him, and there is no getting hold of Christ, but in, and according to his word: And therefore the generality of people (who, on the matter, take the Antinomian way) think they have no more to do but to apply Christ, and to count him their own at the very first; but by their not exercising faith on the word of promise, they miss him. This is, as I have said, a main qualification of saving faith, even to rest on Christ as he is held forth in the word, and by the word to take hold of him, and rest upon him. Saving faith doth not simply rest on Christ, because he is merciful, and hath all fulness in him; but it rests on him and his fulness, as received in the word, and offered by God in his word. Faith takes God's faithfulness in his word, and lays hold on him by that. Christ is the thing that makes happy, but God's faithful promise is the right by which we get a title to Christ. We should never like that faith that knows not the use of the word, that betakes itself to Christ, or the thing in the word, but considers not the word that holds him forth; whenas it is only this word that gives us warrant to expect that his fulness shall be made ours, and supply all our wants. Many desire, and expect good of God, but get it not, because their expectation is not founded on his word, and that

God's

God's faithfulness in his word is not closed withal. In a word, I would have you to think, that faith is neither an easy, nor an insuperable difficult thing; but that it is easy to go wrong, and difficult to go right; and that, without God's special and powerful guidance, ye cannot believe nor exercise faith, nor walk in the way of believing in him, and dependence on him; so that ye may be helped to make a right use of Christ, and to build upon him; that ye may not slip nor stumble, and fall on the stumbling-stone laid in Zion, on which so many fall every day, and break themselves to pieces.

S E R M O N VI.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

IF it were not recorded in the infallible scriptures of truth, we would hardly believe, that there could be so much powerful and sweet preaching of the most excellent instruments that ever were employed, and yet that there should be so little fruit following on it: Who would believe that Isaiah, so excellent, so sweet, and so evangelic a prophet, should have so many sad complaints as he hath? chap. vi. 28, and 58. that he should be put to bring in the Lord, saying, *All the day long have I stretched out my hands to a rebellious people*, chap. lvi. And that here himself should have

cause to say, *Who hath believed our report?* It is scarce one man here or there that hath savingly believed on Christ: And this is the third thing in the words that now we would speak to; and it is a very sad, though a very clear truth.

The *doctrine* is this, That there may be much powerful preaching of the gospel, and yet unbelief generally among the hearers of it: Or take it with dependence on the former two; namely, 1. That the great work of the ministry is, To propose and make Christ known to a people. 2. That the great duty of people that have Christ proposed to them is, To believe on him. Then this follows on the back of these, 3. That people may have Christ proposed to them, brought to their heart and mouth; and though it be but believing that is called for from them, yet that cannot be obtained from most of them. This gospel-duty of believing is often slighted by the hearers of the gospel. This is clearly held forth here, *Who hath believed our report?* We have called for faith; but it is a rare thing, among the multitude of hearers, to find one that believeth savingly.

To make out, and prove this a little further, we shall consider this complaint, with these aggravations of it, which will make it the more clear, and so the more to be wondered at. As, 1. Those of whom the complaint is made are not heathens, but God's own people; as the Lord complains, Psalm vii. 10, 11. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would have none of me.* Our Lord Jesus complains of Jerusalem, Matth. xxiii. at the end, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldest not.* That the Lord's own professing people should not believe, nor receive the report that is made of him, heightens the complaint, and aggravates their guilt exceedingly. 2. It is not a complaint as to one sermon, or time; but it is a complaint frequently repeated, as to many fruitless sermons and times,

times, yea, generations. Ifaiah preached long in many kings reigns, and yet all along his prophecy he complains of it, as chap. vi. 11. *How long, Lord, shall their eyes be blind, and their ears heavy? &c.* And chap. xxviii. 9. *Whom shall I teach doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts, precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, here a little and there a little.* And chap. lxxv. 2. *All day long I have stretched out my hands to a rebellious people.* And here again, *Who hath believed our report?* Much and long, or many years preaching, much plain and powerful preaching, and yet little or no fruit; *They are snared and taken, and fall backward,* for all that: And this was not in Ifaiah's days only, but in Christ's days, John xii. 37, 38. and in Paul's days, Rom. x. 16. where the very words in the text are repeated; nay, it runs down from the first spreading of the gospel, even to these latter days wherein we live; many hear, but few receive the report. 3. Consider how many they are that complain, it is not one or two, or a few, but all the preachers of the gospel: It is not, *Lord, Who hath believed my report;* but, *Who hath believed our report?* It is complained of by Ifaiah here, and in several other places named before: It is complained of by Micah, chap. vii. 1. *Woe is me, for I am as they who have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat, the good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men, &c.* It is complained of by Hosea, chap. xi. 7. *Though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him;* that is, none would give him the glory of his grace in believing on him. Ah sad word! As is that also in Psalm lxxxi. the Lord calls, *Hear, O my people, and I will testify to thee; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it: But my people would not hearken to my voice and Israel would none of me.* And what prophet is there almost, if I need say almost, but one way or other

other makes this complaint, That though the Lord stretched out his hands all day long, yet it was to a rebellious and gain-saying people. Look forward, and see what our Lord says of John Baptist, and of himself, *Whereto shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places, saying one to another, We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not lamented:* That is, there is much preaching by men endowed with several gifts, but none of them do the people much good. John preached with much holy austerity, like one mourning; the *Son of man* most sweetly, like one piping; yet neither the one nor the other prevailed. There are some Boanerges, sons of thunder, alarming and thundering preachers; some Barnabas's, sons of consolation, sweet comforting preachers, yet all gain but little on the hearers. Our Lord saith, Matt. xxiii. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you?* This is the ordinary complaint, *Ye would not.* A 4th aggravation is, If we consider who they are that meet with this unbelief and unfruitfulness in them they preach to; if it were poor cold preachers, such as we, alas! in a great measure are, or such as the Scribes and Pharisees were, or if it were such as had learning only, and not piety, it were no such wonder to see them meet with unbelief and unfruitfulness in their hearers; but it is even those whom the Lord has sent and sharpened, as arrows out of his quiver, as this prophet was. It is even his preaching that is fruitless in a great measure: And was there ever a more sweet, plain, powerful, and delightful preacher than Isaiah? that even the very reading of his sermons may affect the readers, yet is there any that complains more, or so much as he does in the chapters before cited? Probably ye may think, that if Isaiah were a preacher now, people would be moved by his sermons; yet his preaching had the same return and entertainment that ours has

has now: And Hosea called his hearers to the Most High, yet none at all would exalt him. It was their work to stretch out their hands all the day long, but the people hardened their necks and refused to return, Jer. xiii. and Zech. vii. But, 5thly, Consider all these were God's servants and preachers under the Old Testament; and you may be disposed to think, that under the gospel, when the veil is laid by, and when Christ himself, their Lord and master, and his apostles come to preach the gospel, it should be otherwise; yet John the Baptist, who was Christ's har-binger, a burning and a shining light, a stayed and fixed man, not a reed shaken with the wind (as many of us are too much) a prophet, yea more than a prophet, yet when he preached, many of his hearers *re-jected the counsel of God against themselves*, Luke vii. John comes preaching austerely, and they say he hath a devil; and if there was any rejoicing in his light, it was but for a season. And Paul, that chosen vessel, how often was he persecuted? and he makes the same complaint, in the same words that Isaiah does, of his hearers, especially the Jews, Acts xiii. 46. and xxviii. 28. and was constrained to tell them, that he and his fellow-preachers behoved to quit them, and betake themselves to the Gentiles: And how does he complain of the Corinthians and Galatians, and of their being bewitched, and suddenly seduced and drawn away from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, by some self-seeking, false ministers, coming with counterfeited glancing among them. We shall close this with the consideration of our Lord Jesus, who was a nonsuch preacher, of whom it is said, Matth. vii. 22. that *he spake with power, and not as the scribes*: And Luke iv. when he was opening that sweet text, Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. it is said, *They all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*; and the officers that came to him, say, *That never man spake as he spoke*; and yet his complaint is the same, Matth. xxiii.

xxiii. 37. *How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not :* And John i. 11. it is said, *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were lifted up to heaven by the Lord's preaching to them in person, and yet woe after woe is denounced against them, because they believed not, for all his preaching and miracles : And it is a wonder, if we look through the history of the gospel, how many a sweet sermon he made, and with what weight and power he spoke, and sometimes with tears, and withal backed his word with miracles, that made his hearers acknowledge the finger of God, and yet how few were brought to believe on him ? So that he makes this very complaint as Isaiah, John xii. 38. Is it not a wonder, when he and his apostles preached so much, and so long, that the church was so little a flock, and believers so few in number, even after his ascension ? Need we any further proof, that the gospel, where it comes, gets but little welcome ? The carriage of many among ourselves is a sad proof of it : We are afraid that many of you do not believe to this day, though there hath been amongst you, much, long or many years, powerful preaching of the gospel, but still live without faith, and are perishing.

If this be not enough to clear the *doctrine*, 1. See how Christ speaks of it, Matth. xiii. in the parable of the sower of the seed, where there are three sorts of ground that never bring forth good fruit ; and there he speaks, not only of the time of his own personal ministry, but of all other times. 2. Look to the ordinary and daily effect, or rather consequence of this preached gospel, and it will prove the thing. Do not many perish ? Do not many croud thick in the broad way that leads to destruction ? And but very few fruits of faith appear ? Is there not little, lamentably little, of a real change in the way and walk of most to be seen ? To clear it yet further, go through the several ranks of persons, that in God's account are unbeliev-

ers,

ers, O! there will be exceeding few believers in Christ found. *First* then, Consider the grossly profane, that are never so much as civilized. *Secondly*, The ignorant, stupid and senseless, that never mind their own souls, are never afraid of wrath, nor in the least concerned to make their peace with God. *Thirdly*, The earthly-minded, that think of nothing but the world. *Fourthly*, Those of a civil outward carriage, that have some good works, and, as they think, good days too, and yet come not near Christ to close with him. *Fifthly*, The hypocrites of all sorts, both the presuming hypocrites, that will thank God they are better than their neighbours, and yet trust not to Christ, and free grace through him, but seek to establish their own righteousness, gross as it is; and the legal hypocrites, that never denied their own righteousness, nor submitted to the righteousness of Christ. Lay aside all these, I say, and we leave it to your own consciences to judge, how few will be found to have saving faith: And therefore I am persuaded, if there be any truth of God delivered to you, that this is a truth, That though the gospel be preached to many, yet there are but few hearers that do actually believe in Jesus Christ, to the saving of their souls.

Use 1. The first use of it is, to beseech you to let this sink deep into your mind, as the truth of God, for these reasons; 1. Because it is a most useful truth; and if it were believed, would make people very watchful over themselves, and to tremble for fear, lest they be found among the multitude that believe not, and put them to secure their interest in God, and not to rest on a fashion and form of religion, without observing what fruit followeth on the gospel. Among the many evils that undo multitudes, we think this is not the least, that this truth is never thoroughly fixed in them: They think there are many heathens and Turks without the church, and many gross swearers, drunkards, and other such within it, that will perish,

but none others, or at least but very few, who among a professing people do perish; neither can they be induced to think it such a hard matter to find one, or a very few that are believers in a country; so that if Isaiah were now alive to cry, *Who believes our report?* each of them would be ready to answer, I believe.

2. Because for as certain and useful a truth as this is, yet generally it is not believed: people cannot think that so few believe, and that believing is so difficult and rare a thing. I would ask you this question, Was it ever a difficulty to any of you to believe? If not, what is it that makes believing so rare? What should move the prophet thus to complain, *Who hath believed our report?* I shall briefly give you some evidences, that many of you do not really believe this truth. The *first* is, That so few of you tremble at the word of God: The historical faith that the devils have makes them tremble; but ye have not even so much: This is given as a property of a suitable hearer of the gospel, to whom the Lord will look, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. that he is one *who trembles at the word*; but the most part of you that hear this gospel, are like these pillars on which this house stands, who are never so much as once moved at the word: Ye either take not faith to be an absolutely necessary thing, and that ye must perish without it, or ye think that the faith ye were born with will do your business; ye do not believe that ye are naturally under the power of the devil, and led captive by him at his will; and that without holiness, and a spiritual gracious frame and stamp on your heart and way, ye shall never see God: What wonder then that ye come not to rest on Christ, when the very letter of the gospel is not credited. A *second* evidence is, That there is so little preparation made to prevent your eternal hazard: It is said of Noah, Heb. xi. that *Noah being warned of God, prepared an ark*; and this is attributed to his faith. It is not possible that ye should live so negligently and carelessly, if
ye

ye believed that the curse of God were pursuing you, and that ye will be brought to reckon for that which ye have done in the body, and that ye will meet with God as an enemy; if this were believed, though your hearts were harder than they are, it would make you tremble, and bring you to other sort of thoughts, and more seriousness. A *third* evidence is, That there is no fruit of faith among many of you: for where it is, it cannot be altogether smothered, but will shew itself one way or other: and if ye will still assert your faith, I would say to you as James doth to those to whom he writes, *Shew me your faith by your works*. If ye say, God knows; I answer, That ye shall find that to be a truth that he knows, and he will make you know that he does so: But, alas! that poor shift will not avail you when it comes to the push. O try your faith then by your works: see what mortification of lusts, what repentance from dead works, what growth in knowledge, what shining of holiness in your conversation, is attained to. Many of you, even as to knowledge, are as if ye lived among Heathens; many of whom have been as free of vice, and more profitable to others, than many of you are, and cared as little for the world as many of you do: How comes it to pass then that ye have lived as if ye pretended faith, and yet have no fruit? Ye must either say, that faith is not necessary, or that ye may have faith without fruit, for we are sure your fruit is not the fruit of faith. To live honestly as you call it, what is that? There are many Heathens who have gone beyond you in that: we will not say that moral honesty is nothing, but sure it is not all. All the fruits of mere moral honesty, are but four fruits, that will set your teeth on edge: Neither is it your hearing of the word only, but your believing and doing of it, that will profit you. It is very sad, that most plain obvious duties are not at all followed; as, the studying of knowledge: the exercising of repentance, one of the very

first duties, which is never separated from faith; the humbling of the soul before God; the loathing of yourselves for all ye have done; the love of God, &c. for there may be challenges for gross evils in Heathens: and fear is not repentance, but godly sorrow that causeth repentance, not to be repented of. A *fourth* evidence is, The want of that work of God's Spirit that accompanies faith. Faith is a special work of the Spirit, and the gracious gift of God; it is wrought by the exceeding mighty power of God, whereby he raised Christ from the dead, and by that same power he worketh in them that believe. Now did ye ever know what this work meant? Did ye ever find it to be a difficult work to believe? Did ye ever know what it was to have the Spirit of God constraining your heart to believe? I speak not of any extraordinary thing; but certainly faith is not natural, nor does it come from pure nature; and wherever it is, it manifests itself by works, and evidenceth the power of the Spirit in the working thereof. There are sad evidences of bitter fruits that spring from this root, to wit, People's being strangers to the experimental knowledge of the work of faith: As, 1. When men know no more difficulty to get Christ, and to rest on Christ, than to believe a story of Wallace, or of Julius Cæsar. 2. When people say that they believed all their days, and believed always since ever they knew good from ill; and though their faith be no true saving faith, but a fancy, yet they will not quit it, and it is impossible for men to get them convinced that they want faith. 3. When men never knew what it is to be without faith: it is one of the great works of the Spirit, John xvi. 8. to convince us of the want of faith. Men, without the special work of the Spirit, will be easily convinced, that breach of the sabbath, that stealing, that bearing false witness, &c. are sins; but how many of you have been convinced of the want of faith? we are constrained to say this sad word
when

when we look on this text, that it is lamentably fulfilled in your eyes, and even in this our congregation. Think not that we wrong such of you who have believed our report: Ah! it is few, even very few of you, that receive and believe this gospel.

Use 2. The second use is for conviction. If it be ordinary for the greatest part of the hearers of the gospel not to believe, let it sink in your hearts that it is no extraordinary thing that hath befallen you: Are ye not such hearers as many of those were who heard Isaiah and Jesus Christ? And if so, will not this follow, that there are many, yea, even the throng of the hearers of the gospel that believe not? And who, if Christ were gathering sinners by this gospel, would not be gathered? If, where the gospel comes, many do not believe; then here in this city, where the gospel is preached to a great multitude of professing members of the visible church, there are many that do not believe. Or let me ask you a reason why ye do except yourselves; either this truth holds not so universally, or many of you must fall under it, or else give a reason why you fall not under it. The truth which Isaiah preached hath been preached to you, and yet ye remain unbelieving, and despisers of the invitation to the marriage of the king's son, as the Jews did. We are not now speaking of Jews, Turks, nor Heathens, nor of the churches in general, nor of other congregations, but of you in Glasgow, that have this gospel preached amongst you; and we say of you, that there are few that believe our report. Think it not our word, the application flows natively from the text; not from the necessity of the thing, but from the ordinary course of men's corruption. Are not the same evidences of the want of faith, which we spoke of, amongst you? How many are there in their life profane? How many rest on civility and formality? Is there not as little repentance now, as was in Isaiah's time? As little denying of our own righteousness, and
making

making use of Christ's, though the word be taught by line upon line, here a little and there a little? Perhaps, though ye think that the doctrine is true in the general, ye will not, ye cannot digest the application, that among so many of you visible professors of faith, there are but few real believers: Therefore we shall follow the conviction a little further, by giving you some considerations to make it out, that we have but too just ground to make application of the doctrine to you, especially considering the abounding corruption that is amongst you, that ye may be put to fear the wrath that attends sin, and to flee to Christ for refuge in time. 1. Consider of whom it is that the prophet is speaking, and of what time; is it not the times and days of the gospel? Had not the Spirit (in dictating this text of scripture) an eye on Scotland, and on Glasgow? And do not our Lord Jesus Christ and Paul apply it in their days? And why then may not we also in ours? and when the Spirit speaks expressly of the last times, that they shall be perilous, and of the falling away of many, should it not give us the greater alarm. 2. Do not all things agree to us as to them? Is not the gospel the same? Is our preaching any better than theirs? Nay, had they not much more powerful preaching? And if that preaching, which was most powerful, had not efficacy as to many to work faith in them, what may we expect to do by our preaching? Are not your hearts as deceitful? Are not your corruptions as strong? Are ye not as bent to backsliding as they were? What sort of people were they that were unfruitful hearers? Were they not members of the visible church as ye are? circumcised under the Old Testament, as ye are baptized under the New? Was it not those who had Christ and his apostles preaching to them? Yea, they were not among the more ignorant sort who did not believe, but scribes and Pharisees; and those not of the profanest sort only, but such as came to church, and attended
on

on ordinances, as ye do; yea, were such as had gifts, and cast out devils, and preached in Christ's name, as you may see, Luke xiii. 6. Now when there are so many, and of such rank, who get no good of the word, and of such, a great many that will seek to enter, and shall not be able, to whom Christ will say, *Depart, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity.* What can be the reason that many of you do so confidently assert your faith, when there are scarcely any characters of unbelief but ye have them? Or, what can be your advantage in keeping yourselves carnally secure, when the strong man in the mean time is in the house? and to shut your eyes; and make your necks stiff, and to resolve, as it were, not only to lie still, but to die in your unbelief. I persuade myself, that many of you, ere long, will be made to wonder, that ever ye thought yourselves believers; and will be galled when ye think upon it, that whatever was said to you, ye would needs maintain your presumptuous faith. When we bid you suffer the conviction to sink, let none put it from themselves to others, but let every one take it home to himself; although we would not have any of you cast loose what is indeed made fast and well-secured, nor overturn a slender and weak building, though it were, to speak so, but of two stones height, if it be founded on a right foundation, on the rock; but we speak to you that cannot be brought to suspect yourselves, when ye have just reason to do so. Sure this challenge and charge belongs to some, yea to many, and we would ask what ground have ye to shift it? How can ye prove your faith more than others that have none at all? that ye hope ye have faith, will not do your business, that is no solid proof: Ye cannot come to Christ, except made suitably sensible of your distance, and of that ye have never been convinced as yet. Do ye think to cast yourselves on Christ sleeping, and ye know not how? certainly when the pins of your tabernacle come to be loosed,

loosed, ye shall find that your fancied faith will not be able to keep out a challenge. Ye could never endure to think yourselves to be Christ's enemies, or that ye wanted faith; but when death comes, conscience will awake, and the challenge will get in upon you whether ye will or not. Many of you think that ye are wronged, when your faith is questioned or reproved, as if it were an odd and rare thing to be graceless, or to be members of the visible church, and yet want faith; and it irritates you to be expostulated with in private for your unbelief: But suffer this word now to take hold of you, I beseech you; and if ye could once be brought to suspect yourselves, and to think thus with yourselves, what if I be one of those many that believe not? I fear I be in hazard to be mistaken about my faith; and from that, put on to see how ye will be able to ward off the challenge, and to prove your faith to be sound, we would think ye were far advanced. O if ye had the faith of this truth, that among the many hearers of the gospel, there are but few that believe, and were brought thereby to examine and try yourselves. There is no truth that Christ insists on more than this, That strait is the gate, and narrow is the way to heaven, and that but few find it, and that there are few that believe, and few that be saved. If ye did once in earnest look on yourselves as in hazard, and were brought to reflect on matters betwixt God and you, it might be, the Lord would follow the conviction; we desire him to do it; and to him be praise.

S E R M O N VII.

ISAIAH LIII. i.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

IT is a sad matter, and much to be lamented, when the carrying of such good news, as is the report of Jesus Christ in the gospel, becomes unprofitable to them that hear it, and thereby burdensome to them that carry it. Men would think, that such glad tidings as make the heavenly host of angels to sing, would be very joyful and welcome news to sinners, and also most encouraging to them that carry it; and where the former is, there the latter will be also: Where the word becomes useless and unprofitable to hearers, it is burdensome, as to the concomitant and effect, to honest ministers that speak it. Though Isaiah brought this news in a very plain, powerful, pleasant, and sweet manner to the people he preached to, and that frequently, yet in the midst of his sweet prophecies he breaks out with this complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* He is carrying glad tidings; yet taking a view of the unbelief of his hearers now and then, he complains of it to God in his own name, and in the name of all the ministers of the gospel that should come after him.

We shewed you, that it was a very ordinary thing; where the gospel comes in greatest plenty and power, for the hearers thereof to meet it with much unbelief; a truth that was verified in Isaiah's time, and that he

forefaw would be verified in the days of the gospel, and therefore it is our report; not only is it the report of Ifaiah, but it is the report of Christ and of Paul, who make the same complaint, and quote the same words of Ifaiah: And need we doubt of the truth of it, when Ifaiah in the Old, and Paul in the New Testament, thus complain? Not to speak of their, and our Lord and Master, who *came to his own, and his own received him not*; and of whom when he came, they said, *This is the heir, come, let us kill him*. Need we, I say, doubt of the truth of the doctrine, or to think it strange to see it so in our time, and that we have the same complaint, when the means (at least the instruments) are incomparably far below what they were then, though it be still the same gospel?

The prophet's scope is, to give advertisement and warning to the hearers of the gospel for the time to come of this common evil, even the abounding of unbelief in them that hear it. 1. That he may prevent the scandal of the unfruitfulness of the word where it comes. 2. That he may add a spur of excitement to the hearers of the gospel to endeavour to make use of it, and not to rest upon means, how powerful and lively soever they be, but to press forward to the end they aim and shoot at. 3. That he may put men to the trial, and that they may be brought to look in upon themselves, whether they be or be not in this black roll of them that receive not the report: And we think, if any thing put men to be suspicious of themselves, and to commune with their own hearts about their soul's state, this should do it; especially when they all consider how this evil agrees to all times, and yet more especially to the times of the gospel, and how it is an evil that abounds, not only among the profane, but among those who are civil and zealous too for the righteousness of the law, it should make them put themselves to the trial, and not to take every thing to be faith that they fancy to be so; for either
this

this doctrine is not true, that wherever the gospel comes it meets with unbelief in most part of its hearers, and cannot be applied to this generation, or that there is much faith in this generation that we live in that will not be counted saving faith. If all of you were believers, there were no ground for this complaint; and if we take peoples own word, we can hardly get a person but will say he believes: So that the generality of mens hearts run quite contrary to this truth; and therefore we say, it is the scope of this doctrine to give people the alarm, and to put them to suspect and try themselves: I do not mean that any should doubt the work of faith where it is indeed, for that is also a part of our unbelief; and, ordinarily, when unbelief fails on the one side, the devil makes it up on the other, and makes tender souls question their faith when they begin to believe, as if they could mend unbelief with unbelief: But it is to such that we speak, who cannot be brought to suspect their faith. Certainly ye will wonder one day, that ye should have heard such a plain truth, and yet would not so much as ask your own hearts whether there was reason to suspect your want of faith; as it is said, that Christ marvelled at their unbelief who heard him, so may we at yours, and ere long ye shall also marvel at yourselves on this account.

Before we prosecute this use, and the rest any further, we shall speak to another doctrine, and it is the last that flows from these words, tending to the same scope to make us aware of unbelief, which the prophet makes such a heavy ground of complaint. The doctrine then is, That if there were never so many under unbelief, and never so many who refuse to receive Jesus Christ, yet unbelief is a sin, and a most dreadful sin; which, though people had no more, will seclude them from heaven. There were no ground for this complaint, if it were not so; even as the prophet would have had no ground to complain of

the peoples unbelief, if there were not many unbelievers. So unbelief is a very great sin in whomsoever it is, and makes them exceeding sinful: or take the doctrine thus, It is a very great sin for a people to whom Christ is offered in this gospel, not to receive him, and rest upon him for salvation, as he is offered to them therein; and it ariseth from this ground, that where Christ is not received, there the ministers of the gospel have ground of complaint, for it supposes a great defect in their duty, seeing it is their duty to believe; yea, the great gospel-duty on which all other duties hang, and which is called for by many ties and obligations: *This is his commandment* (saith John in his first epistle, chap. iii. 23.) *that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*; therefore it must be a great sin not to believe.

There are, in short, three things comprehended in this doctrine (speaking of unbelief, not only as opposite to historical faith, which we commonly call *infidelity*, but as it is opposite to saving faith, which is that which is called for here) 1. That unbelief, or not receiving of Christ, is a sin, or a thing in its own nature sinful: It is a sin, as well as adultery, murder, stealing, lying, sabbath-breaking, &c. Yea, and in the aggravations of it, a sin beyond these. It is as contrary to the word and will of God, and is as contrary to the Divine Majesty, as drunkenness, murder, adultery, or any other sin; the positive command of believing being as peremptory, plain and particular, as these negative ones are, the breach of it must be as sinful. 2. That there is such a kind of sin as unbelief, besides other sins, and such a distinct duty as believing, that if men could do all other duties, if this duty of believing be wanting, they will be still sinful, and there will be still ground of complaint: And if faith be a particular duty required, and distinct from other duties and graces, as it is clear it is, Gal. v. 21. then unbelief must be a particular sin, distinct from other

other sins, though it hath influence on other sins, as faith hath on other duties. So Rev. xxi. 8. it is ranked among the most abominable sins. The reason why we mark this is, because there may be some in whom some gross sins, as adultery, bloodshed, and the like, do reign, and they get that name to be called adulterers, murderers, &c. others may possibly be free of these, who yet have unbelief reigning in them, and therefore they get that name to be called unbelievers, and are ranked with the grossest of evil-doers.

3. That even many in the times wherein the scriptures were written, and in every age since, are found guilty of this sin, and condemned for it, who are, as to several other things, commended. Hence it is said, Rom. x. 3. of the Jews, that *they had a zeal of God*, which in itself is good, *though not according to knowledge*, yet it was their main lett and obstruction in the way to life, *That being ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own*: For as much zeal as they had for the law of Moses, seeing they did not receive Jesus Christ, and his righteousness by faith, it made any other good thing they had unacceptable: And the reason why we mark this is, that people may see that it is not only for gross sins, and with gross sinners, that the gospel complains and expostulates, but it is also for not submitting unto, and not receiving the righteousness of Christ; and therefore ye are far mistaken, that think yourselves free from just grounds of challenge, because, forsooth, ye are free of murder, adultery, drunkenness, and the like. Do ye not consider, that unbelievers are in the same rank and roll with abominable whoremongers, forcerers, idolaters and dogs? And is not unbelief contrary to the command of God, as well as murder, adultery, and these other gross sins? And therefore people think little of unbelief, though it be very common, if they be free of other gross sins.

4. We shall add a fourth thing which the doctrine implies, *That unbelief, tho'*
there

there were no other sin, is exceeding sinful; and is, *First*, The great ground that makes God expostulate with the hearers of the gospel, and that makes them fall under the complaint, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life*; and Mat. xxiii. 37. *How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not*. And for substance, it is the Lord's great complaint of most of his professing people; Psal. lxxxix. 11. *I am the Lord thy God, open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it; but my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me*; and then follows, *O that my people had hearkened unto my voice*. There is no sin the Lord complains more of than this, and it is the great complaint of all his servants. *Secondly*, Behold how the Lord threatens this sin, and punishes for it; see Psalm xcv. 7. and Heb. iii. 7. and Heb. iv. 8. where he swears in his wrath against unbelievers, that they shall not enter into his rest. Adultery and murder do not more certainly keep men from heaven than this of unbelief, yea they are joined together, Rev. xxi. 8. see also, Luke xii. 46. where the severest judgment that is executed is upon unbelievers; and in the man that had the offer of Christ, and did not receive it, and put on the wedding-garment, Matth. xxii. 12, 13. see it also in the words that are pronounced against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, Matth. xi. and our blessed Lord Jesus loves not, to speak so, to pronounce woes, but to bless his people; yet when they have the offer of life through him, and will not receive it, he pronounces woe after woe upon them, and of what sort were they? even beyond these that came upon Tyrus and Sidon, upon Sodom and Gomorrah: We think such threatnings as these should make people not to think unbelief a light or little sin; or, that there is any ground of quietness, so long as they are in a self-righteous condition, and have not their peace made with God through Christ. *Thirdly*, Look further, to the greatness of this sin in
the

the strange names that the Lord puts upon it, 1 John v. 11. *He that believes not, hath made God a liar*: And is there any sin that hath a grosser name or effect than this? for it receives not the report which he hath given of his Son: he tells people that happiness is to be gotten in him only, and they think to be happy though they take another way; they believe not the report, for if they believed it, they would receive Christ as their life: see further what names are given to it, Heb. vi. 6. and Heb. x. 20. which though they be there given, with other aggravations of sinning wilfully, with despite, &c. with respect to the unpardonable sin, yet who are they that live under the gospel and believe not, but in a great measure they will be found capable of most of them at least? *It is called a crucifying of the Son of God afresh, a putting him to open shame, &c.* And who are they that do this, and on what ground? It is unbelievers, through their unbelief: They think not Christ worth the having, and reject all that is spoken of him, and cry away with him, as the Jews did: And as to their particular guilt, they crucify him; for they cannot refuse him, without affronting him; and can there be a greater affront to him, than, when he condescends so very low, to think so little of him? *Fourthly, Consider the expressions under which he sets out his being affected, to say so, with this sin: he was so affected with it, Mark iii. 5. that it is said, He was grieved for their unbelief.* He had many sorrows and griefs, and suffered many things, but this grieved him some way more than all: and it is said, Mark vi. 6. that *He marvelled because of their unbelief*: It is not said, that he marvelled at their adulteries, and their gross sins; but that when he was taking such a convincing way to demonstrate to them his Godhead, yet they would not believe on him, he marvelled at that. So Luke xix. 41. it is said, that when he came near to Jerusalem he weeped over it; and why? the following

ing words tells us, *O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!* That is, O that thou hadst believed, and received the gospel, at least in this thy day, (though thou didst it not before) when thou wast, and art so plainly and powerfully called to this duty! And ye may know that it behoved to be some great thing that made him to weep, when all that the devil and Pontius Pilate, and the Jews could do, made him not to weep. It is said, Matth. xi. that he upbraided those cities that he had preached much in on this ground: Sure when he that gives liberally, and upbraids none, does upbraid for this sin, it shews how much he was pressed with it. And Luke xiv. 21. it is said of this sin, that it *angered* him, and he is not easily angered: sinners need not fear to anger him by coming to him, but when they come not, he is angry. It is said, Matth. xxii. 7. he was *wroth* at this sin: and it is on this ground that, Psal. ii. 12. we are bidden, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*; that is, to exercise faith in him; for if we do it not, he will be angry, and we shall perish. There are other aggravations of this sin, which we leave till we come to the application.

Use 1. Is there not as much here, though people had no more but their unbelief, as may make them know it is an evil and bitter thing, and as may make them scare at it, and flee from it, and to fear, lest they be found under the guilt of it, when called to a reckoning, especially when unbelief is so common, that few suspect themselves or fear it: There is hardly any ill but ye will sooner confess, than with this of unbelief; and there is no duty nor grace that ye more readily think ye perform and have, than this of faith, and it is come to that height, that people think they believe always, and know not what it is to misbelieve. Do ye think that this presumptuous and fancied faith will be counted for faith? Or that Christ, who sifts faith narrowly, will let it pass for saving faith? No, certainly.

Use 2. Is there not here ground of advertisement; awakening, rousing, and alarm to many, that think themselves free of other sins? If the Spirit were coming powerfully to convince of sin, it would be of this; *Because they believe not*, as it is, John xvi. 9. and we are persuaded many of you have need of this conviction, that never once question your having of faith, or care not whether ye have it or not. Put these two doctrines together, That unbelief is an abominable sin, and that it is notwithstanding a very common sin, and let them sink deep into your hearts, and they will give you other thoughts; if this plain truth of God prevail not with you, we know not what will: But the time cometh when ye shall be undeniably convinced of both, that unbelief is a great sin, and that it is a very common sin; and of this also, that it is an abominable and loathsome thing; and very prejudicial and hurtful to you.

Use 3. For a third use, if it be so, let us ask this question; How comes it to pass that so many in trying their state, and in grounding of it, lay so little weight on faith, and think so little of unbelief? I am speaking to the generality of you, and let not others wrong themselves, nor mistake the intent of this scripture. How is it, I say, that the generality of you that hear this gospel, come under this common and epidemick temper, or rather distemper, to maintain your peace and confidence, when ye can, in the mean time, give so little proof of it? Think ye that faith cannot be missing or mistaken, that it is ordinary and common, or that it is indifferent, whether ye have it or not? We are persuaded that many of you think, that if ye had a good mind, as ye call it, and a square, civil, honest walk, and keep still your good hope, that all will be well; ye never doubt, nor question whether ye have received Christ or not: But if unbelief lie in your bosom, (I mean not doubting-desperation, or questioning of the Godhead, but the not receiving

ceiving of Christ and his righteousness) though ye had more than ordinary hypocrites have, ye will for this sin of unbelief find yourselves under the standing curse of God; for our Lord says, John iii. 18. *He that believes not is condemned already*; and ver. 36. *The wrath of God abideth on him.*

In pressing of this *use*, I shall shew, by a few aggravations of this sin, why the Lord layeth so much weight upon it; and that, not so much as it opposeth faith, as it is a condition of the covenant of grace, and a means to unite us to Christ, but mainly as it is a sin thwarting his command: And, 1. It thwarteth with both the law and the gospel; it thwarteth with the commands of the first table, and so is a greater sin than murder or adultery, nay than Sodomy, tho' these be great, vile, and abominable sins; which may be thought strange, yet it is true, it makes the person guilty of it, more vile before God than a Pagan-sodomite; the nature of the sin being more heinous, as being against the first table of the law in both the first and second commands thereof, it being by faith in God that we make God our God, and worship God in Christ acceptably. Next, It is not only a sin against the law, but a sin against the gospel, and the prime flower, to speak so, of the gospel; it comes in contradiction to the very design of the gospel, which is to manifest the glory of the grace of God, in bringing sinners to believe on Christ, and to be saved thro' him; but he can do no great things of this sort amongst unbelieving people, because of their unbelief: It bindeth up his hands, as it were, to speak so with reverence, that he cannot do them a good turn. 2. It strikes more directly against the honour of God, and of the Mediator, and doth more prejudice to the ministry of the gospel, and causeth greater destruction of souls than any other sin: It is possible, notwithstanding other sins, that Christ may have satisfaction for the travel of his soul, and there may be a relation bound

bound up betwixt him and sinners notwithstanding them; but if this sin of unbelief were universal, he should never get a soul to heaven. The salvation of souls is called, *The pleasure of the Lord*; but this obstructs it, and closeth the door betwixt sinners and access to God; It strikes also at the main fruit of the ministry; it makes them complain to God, that the word they preach is not believed; it frustrates the very end of the ministry, and it comes nearest the destruction of immortal souls: We need not say, it brings on, but it holds and keeps the wrath of God on sinners for ever; *He that believeth not* (as we shewed before from, John iii.) *is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.* 3. More particularly, There is nothing in God (even that which is most excellent in him, if we may speak so, not excepted) but it strikes against it; it strikes against his grace, and frustrates that: When Christ is not received, some sort and degree of despite is done to the spirit of grace; unbelievers thwart him in the way of his grace, and will have no spiritual good from him: It comes in opposition to his goodness; for where unbelief reigns, he hath no access, in a manner, to communicate it: It strikes against his faithfulness; there is no weight laid on his promises, it counts him a liar; in a word, it strikes against all his attributes. 4. There is no sin that hath such a train of sad consequences following on it; it is that which keeps all other sins alive, for none hath victory over any sin but the believer; the unbeliever lies as a bound slave to every sin, and it is impossible to come to the acceptable performance of any duty without faith, for none can come suitably to any duty without a promise: And can any but a believer comfort himself in making use of any promise?

We shall close our discourse, with speaking a word to that which we hinted before, even to let you see, not only the commonness of unbelievers, but the great

hazard that flows from it, and the exceeding great evil of it: If we be only convinced of the commonness of it, it will not much trouble us, except we be also convinced, and believe the hazard of it; but if we were convinced of both, through God's blessing it might affect us more, and necessitate us to make more use of Christ. You that stand yet at a distance from Christ, can you endure to lie under this great guilt and ground of controversy that is betwixt him and you? Do ye think it little to venture on his upbraidings and woes, even such woes as are beyond those that came on Sodom, the heavy curse and malediction of God? And yet we say to you who are most civil, discreet, formal, and blameless in your conversation, if there be not a fleeing in earnest to Christ, and an exercising of faith on him, the wrath of God not only waits for you, but it abides on you. O tremble at the thoughts of it; it were better to have your head thrust in the fire, than your souls and bodies to be under the wrath and curse of God for ever. It is not only the ignorant, profane, drunkard, swearer, adultery, whoremonger, &c. that we have to complain of, and expostulate with, but it is the unbeliever; who, though he be lift up to heaven, shall be cast down to the pit of hell. If you ask, what is all this that we would be at? It is only this in a word, we would have you receive Christ: If ye think that unbelief is an exceeding great evil, and that it is an horrible hazardous thing to lie under it, then haste you out of it to Christ; O! haste, haste you out of it to Christ; kiss the Son lest he be angry; embrace him, yield to him; there is no other possible way to be free of the evil, or to prevent the hazard.

S E R M O N VIII.

ISAIAH LIII. I.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm
of the LORD revealed?*

IT is a great encouragement and delight to the ministers of the gospel, and it is comfortable and refreshing to hearers, when the message of the gospel is received, and our Lord Jesus Christ is welcomed; but on the contrary, it is burdensome and heavy, when there are few or none that believe and receive the report, when their labour and strength is spent in vain, and when all the assemblings of them together that hear the word of the gospel is but a treading of the Lord's courts in vain: If there were no more to prove it, this complaint of Isaiah, speaking in his own name, and in the names of all the ministers of the gospel, is sufficient; for as comfortable messages as he carried, (and he carried as comfortable messages as any that we can hear) yet there was a general non-profitting by the word of the gospel in his mouth. When we meet with such words as these, our hearts should tremble, when we consider how general and common an evil unbelief, and the not receiving of Christ, is, how horrible a sin, how abominable to God, and how hazardous and destructive to ourselves it is, and how rare a thing it is to see or find any number believing and receiving this message of the gospel.

We spoke from these words to these doctrines; *First*, That where the gospel comes, it offers Jesus Christ to all that hear it. *Secondly*, That the great
hing

thing called for in the hearers of the gospel, is faith in him. *Thirdly*, That, notwithstanding, this unbelief is an exceeding common evil in the hearers of the gospel. *Fourthly*, That it is a very sinful, heavy, and sad thing not to receive Christ, and believe in him, all which are implied in this short, but sad complaint, *Who hath believed our report?*

We shall now prosecute the use and scope of this. The last use was an use of conviction of, and expostulation with, the hearers of the gospel, for their being so fruitless under it, serving to discover a great deceit among hearers, who think they believe, and yet do it not; whence it is that so many are mistaken about their soul's state, and most certainly the generality are mistaken, who live as if believing were a thing common to all professors of faith, while it is so rare, and there are so very few that believe.

The next use is an use of exhortation, That seeing unbelief is so great an evil, ye would by all means eschew it; and seeing faith is the only way to receive Christ, and to come at life through him, ye would seek after it, to prevent the evil of unbelief. This is the scope of the words, yea, and of all our preaching that when Christ, and remission of sins through him, is preached to you, ye would by faith receive him, and rest upon him for obtaining right to him and to the promises, and for preventing the threatnings and curses that abide unbelievers. We shall not again repeat what faith is, only in short it comes to this, that seeing Christ hath satisfied justice for sinners, and his satisfaction is offered in the gospel to all that will receive it, even to all the hearers of the gospel, that sinners in the sight and sense of their lost condition would flee into him, receive and rest upon him and his satisfaction, for pardon of sin, and making their peace with God. Is there need of arguments to persuade you to this? If ye be convinced of your sinfulness, and of your lost estate without Christ, and that
there

there is a judgment to come, when sinners must appear before him, and be judged according to that which they have done in the body; and if ye have the faith of this, that sinners that are not found in Christ cannot stand, (as, by the way, woe to that man that is not found in him, if it were a Paul; for even he, he is only happy by being found in him, not having his own righteousness, but Christ's) and withal, that there is no other way to be found in him but by faith, (which is that which Paul hath for his main scope, Phil. iii. 9, 10.) then to be found in him by faith should be your main work and study. This is what we should design and endeavour, and to this we have access by the gospel; and it is, in short, to be denuded of, and denied to our own righteousness, as to any weight we lay upon it for our justification before God, and to have no other thing but Christ's righteousness offered in the gospel, and received by faith to rest upon for justification, and making our peace with God. This is it what we command you to flee to, and by all means to seek an interest in; that when the gospel makes offer of Christ, and righteousness through his satisfaction, and commands you to believe in him, when it lays him to your door, to your mouth and heart, that ye would rest upon him for making your peace, and the bearing of you through in the day of your reckoning before the tribunal of God.

That we may speak the more clearly to this use, we shall shortly shew you, 1. What ground a lost sinner hath to receive Christ, and to trust to him. 2. What warrants and encouragements a sinner hath to lean and trust to this ground. 3. We shall remove a doubt or two, that may stand in the way of sinners resting on this ground. 4. We shall give some directions to further you to this. And, 5. We shall give you some characters of one that is tenderly taking this way of believing: and because this is the way of the gospel,

gospel, and we are sure there is not a word ye have more need of, or that, through the blessing of God, may be more useful; and there is not a word more uncontrovertible, which all of you will assent to the truth of, to wit, That there is a great good in believing, and a great evil in unbelief; we would exhort you the more seriously to lay it to heart. O think not that our coming to speak and hear is for the fashion; but to profit! Lay yourselves therefore open to the exhortation, and let the word of faith sink down into your hearts, considering that there is nothing ye have more need of than of faith, and that ye will not find it safe for you to hazard your souls on your own righteousness, or to appear before God without Christ's righteousness, and that the only way to come by it is faith. This may let you see the necessity of believing; and that it is of concernment to try how it is with you as to that: And therefore again and again, we would exhort you in the fear of God, that ye would not neglect so great a salvation, which through faith is to be obtained, but lay it to heart, as ye would not have all the servants of God, who have preached the gospel to you, complaining of you. It is our bane that we suspect not ourselves; and indeed it is a wonder, that those who have immortal souls, and profess faith in Christ, should yet live so secure, and under so little care, and holy solicitude to know, whether they have believed or not, and should with so little serious concernedness put the matter to a trial: but we proceed to the particulars we proposed to speak to.

And first to this, That ye have a good solid ground to believe on; for clearing of which we would put these three together. 1. The fulness and sufficiency of the Mediator Jesus Christ; in whom all the riches of the gospel are treasured up; in whom, and by whom our happiness comes, and who wants nothing that may fit him to be a Saviour; *Who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.* 2. The good

good order, freeness, and fulness of the covenant of grace wherein it is transacted; that the fulness that is in the Mediator Christ shall be made good to believers in him, and by which lost sinners, that by faith flee unto him, have a solid right to his satisfaction, which will bear them out before God; by which transaction, Christ's satisfaction is made as really theirs, when by faith it is closed with, as if they had satisfied and paid the price themselves; 2 Cor. v. 21. *He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:* And this consideration of the legality and order of the covenant serves exceedingly to clear our faith as to the ground of it, because by this covenant it is transacted and agreed upon, that Christ shall undergo the penalty, and that the believer in him shall be reckoned the righteous person: if there be a reality in Christ's death and satisfaction to justice; if he hath undergone the penalty and paid their debt, there is a reality in this transaction, as to the making over of what he hath done and suffered to believers in him; and the covenant being sure and firm as to his part, he having confirmed it by his death, it is as sure and firm as to the benefit of it to the believer in him. 3. The nature of the offer of this grace in the gospel, and the nature of the gospel that makes the offer of the fulness that is in Christ by virtue of the covenant: It is the word of God, and hath his authority, when we preach it according to his command, as really as when he preached it himself in Capernaum, or any where else, even as the authority of a king is with his ambassador, according to that, 2 Cor. v. penult ver. *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us,* there is the Father's warrant and name interposed; and for the Son's it follows, *We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God;* add to this the nature of the offer, and the terms of it, there is no condition required on our part, as the precise condition of the covenant, but be-

lieving. Now when these are conjoined, we put it to your conscience, if ye have not a good ground to trust to, and a sufficient foundation to build on; and if so, it ought to be a powerful attractive motive to draw you to believe in him, and to bring you to rest on him by believing.

Secondly, We have also many warrants and encouragements to step forward, and when Christ in his fulness lays himself before you, to cast yourselves on him, and to yield to him: If we could speak of them suitably, they are such as may remove all doubts that any might have in coming to him, and may serve to leave others inexcusable, and unanswerably to convince them that the main obstruction was in themselves, and that they would not come unto him for life; he called to them, but none would exalt him, 1. Do ye not think that the offer of this gospel is a sufficient warrant and ground of encouragement to believe on him? And if it be so to others, ought it not to be a sufficient warrant and encouragement to you, when he says, Psal. lxxxi. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it?* What excuse can ye have to shift or refuse the offer? If ye think Christ real in his commands, is he not as real in his offers? 3. He hath so ordered the administration of this gospel, as he hath purposely prevented any ground that we may have of doubting to close with Christ: He hath so qualified the object of this grace in the gospel, that these of all the world that men would think should be secluded, are taken in to be sharers of it; for it is *sinners, lost sinners, self-destroyers, ungodly, the sheep that have wandered, the poor, the needy, the naked, the captives, the prisoners, the blind, &c.* according to that of Isa. lxi. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; he hath sent me to preach glad tidings to the meek or poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, &c.* and Isa. lv. 1. those who are invited to come to the fair of grace

grace are such as are *thirsty*, and such as *want money*; who among men use to be secluded, but in grace's market they only are welcome; it is to them that grace says, *Ho, come*: and Rev. xxii. 17. *Whosoever will let him come, and take of the water of life freely*. It is not only (to say so with reverence) those whom he willeth, but it is *whosoever will*; and so if thou wilt come, grace puts the offer into thy hand, as it were, to carve on; to let us know, that he allows strong consolation to believers, and that either the hearers of this gospel shall believe, or be left without all excuse; He hath it to say, as it is, Isa. v. *What could I have done to my vineyard that I have not done*. If ye had the offer at your own will, what could ye put more in it? It cannot be more free than *without money*, it cannot be more seriously pressed than with a *Ho*, and *O yes*, to come. Sometimes he complains, as John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*; and sometimes weeps and moans, because sinners will not be gathered, as Luke xix. 41, 42. and Mat. xxiii. 37. Can there be any greater evidences of reality in any offer? A *third* warrant is from the manner and form of Christ's administration: He hath condescended to make a covenant, and many promises to draw people to believe, to which he hath added his oath, swearing by himself, when he had no greater to swear by, for our confirmation and consolation, as in Heb. vi. 16, 17. And among men, ye know, that an oath puts an end to all controversy; and what would ye, or could ye seek more of God, than his saying writing and swearing; He hath done all this, *that the heirs of promise may have strong consolation, who are fled for refuge to the hope set before them*. O! will ye not believe and credit God when he swears? among other aggravations of unbelief this will be one, that by it ye make God not only a liar, but perjured; a heavy, heinous, and horrid guilt in all unbelievers of this gospel. 4. To take away all controversy, he hath interposed his com-

mand, yea it is the great command, and in a manner the one command of the gospel, 1 John iii. 23. *This is his commandment, That ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*; and therefore the offer of the gospel, and promulgation of it, cometh by way of command, *Ho, come, believe, &c.* whereby the Lord tells the hearers of the gospel, that it is not left to their own choice, or as a thing indifferent to them, to believe or not to believe, but it is laid on them by the necessity of a command to believe; and if ye think ye may and should pray, sanctify the sabbath, or obey any other command, because he bids you, there is the same authority enjoining and commanding you to believe, and as great a necessity lies on you to give obedience to this command as to any other; do not, therefore, think it humility not to do it, for obedience is better than sacrifice.

For your farther encouragement to believe, I would say three words, which ye should also look upon as warrants to believe, and by them know that it is a great sin not to believe. 1. Ye have no less ground or warrant than ever any that went before you had; David, Moses, Paul, &c. had no better warrant; my meaning is, ye have the same covenant, the same word and promises, Christ and his fulness, God and his faithfulness, offered to you, the same warrant that God hath given to all his people since ever he had a church; and do ye not think but it will be a sad and grievous ground of charge against you, when you shall see others that believe on the same grounds that you have, sit down in the kingdom of heaven, and yourselves as proud rebels shut out? Whatever difference there be as to the main work of grace, and of God's Spirit on the heart in the working of faith, yet the ground of faith is the word that all hear who are in the visible church; and you having the same ground and object of faith in your offer, there will be no excuse for you if ye do not believe. A second encouragement

agement is, That the ground of faith is so solid and good, that it never disappoints any one that leans to it; and count the gospel a mean and insignificant thing who will, it shall have this testimony, which damned unbelievers will carry to hell with them, that *it was the power of God to salvation to them that believed*; and that there was nothing in the gospel itself that did prejudge them of the good of it, but that they prejudged themselves who did not trust to it: therefore the word is called, *Gold tried in the fire*; all the promises having a being from Jehovah himself, one jot or one tittle of them cannot fail nor fall to the ground. 3. If ye were to carve out a warrant to yourselves, as I hinted before, what more could ye desire? What miss ye in Christ? What clause can ye desire to be inserted in the covenant that is not in it? It contains pardon of sin. Healing of your backslidings, and what not? And he hath said, sealed, and sworn it, and what more can ye require? Therefore we would again exhort you in the name of Jesus Christ, and in his stead, not to neglect so great a salvation. O! receive the grace of God, and let it not be in vain.

In the *third* place; let us speak a word or two to some objections or scruples, which may be moved in reference to what hath been said. And, *First*, It may be some will say, That the covenant is not broad enough, because all are not elected, all are not redeemed nor appointed to be heirs of salvation; upon which ground, temptations will sometimes so far prevail, as to raise up a secret enmity at the gospel: But, 1. How absurd is this reasoning? Is there any that can rationally desire a covenant so broad, as to take in all as necessarily to be saved by it? There is much greater reason to wonder that any should be saved by it, than there is if all should perish: besides we are not now speaking to the effects, but to the nature of the gospel; so that whoever perish, it is not because they were not elected, but because they believed not; and

and the bargain is not of the less worth, nor the less sure, because some will not believe; and to say, that the covenant is not good enough, because so many perish, is just as if ye should say, it is not a good bridge because some will not use it, but adventure to go thro' the water, and so drown themselves. 2. I would ask, Would you overturn the whole course of God's administration, and of the covenant of his grace? Did he ever *a priori*, or at first hand, tell people that they were elected? Who ever got their election at the very first revealed to them? Or who are now before the throne that ever made the keeping up of this secret from them, a bar or impediment to their believing? God's eternal purpose or decree is not the rule of our duty, nor the warrant of our faith, but his revealed will in his word: let us seek to come to the knowledge of God's decree of election *a posteriori*, or by the effects, which is a sure way of knowledge. Our thwarting his word to know his decree, will not excuse, but make us more guilty; *He hath shewed thee, O man,* (saith Micah, chap. vi. 8.) *what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee,* &c. and if any will scruple and demur on this ground to close the bargain, let them beware that they provoke him not to bring upon them their own fears, by continuing them in that scrupling and demurring condition: Ye cannot possibly avoid hazard by only looking on, and not making use of Christ; therefore do not bring on your own ruin by your fear, which may be by grace prevented, and by this way of believing shall be certainly prevented.

But, *Secondly*, Some may object and say, I am indeed convinced that believing is my duty, but that being a thing that I cannot do, why therefore should I set about it? *Ans.* 1. This is a most unreasonable and absurd way of reasoning, for if it be given way to, what duty should we do? We are not of ourselves able to pray, praise, keep the Lord's-day, nor to do
any

any other commanded duty, shall we therefore abstain from all duties? Our ability or fitness for duty is not the rule of our duty, but God's command; and we are called to put our hand to duty in the sense of our own insufficiency, which if we did, we should find it go better with us; and may not the same be expected in the matter of believing, as well as in other duties?

2. None that ever heard this gospel shall in the day of judgment have this to object, none shall have it to say, that they would fain have believed, but their meer infirmity, weakness and inability, did hinder them; for though it be our own sin and guilt that we are unable, yet where the gospel comes that is not the controversy, but that people would not come to Christ, would not be gathered, that when he would, they would not, for where there is a will, to will and to do go together; but it is enmity at the way of believing, security, stupidity, senselessness and carelessness of what becomes of the immortal soul, that ruins folks; for the soul that would fain have Christ, shall be helped to believe: The reason is, Because the nature of the covenant of grace, and of the Mediator thereof, is such, that all to whom he gives to will, he gives them also to perform, and his faithfulness is engaged so to do. It must therefore return to one of these two, That either ye will not receive him, or else ye are willing though weak; and if ye be willing, *Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it*; but if it halt at your perverseness and wilful refusal of the offer, there is good reason that in God's justice ye should never get good of the gospel; nay, there is never a one to whom the gospel comes and who doth not believe, but formally, as it were, he passeth sentence on himself, as the word is, Acts xiii. 46. you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, which the apostle gathers from this, that they did not, neither would accept of Jesus Christ offered to them in the gospel; as the event is that follows the offer, so will the Lord account of your receiving of it.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, As for directions to help and further you to believe, it is not easy, but very difficult to give them, it being impossible to satisfy the curiosity of nature; neither can any directions be prescribed, that, without the special work of God's Spirit, can effectuate the thing; the renewing of the will and the working of faith being effects and fruits of omnipotent grace: Yet because something lies upon all the hearers of the gospel as duty, and it being more suitable and congruous, that in the use of means, that when means are neglected, believing should be attained; and because oftentimes those that desire this question to be answered, to wit, How they may come to believe? are such as have some beginnings of the work of grace and of faith. We shall speak a few words to such as would believe and exercise faith on Jesus Christ: And,

1. People had need to be clear in the common fundamental truths of the gospel; they should know what their natural estate is, what their sin and misery is, and they should know the way how to get out of that state. Ignorance often obstructs us in the way of believing; *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?* Rom. x. 14. When people believe not, it is as if they had never heard.
2. When ye have attained to the knowledge of the common truths of the gospel, as of your sin and misery, the nature of the covenant, the Mediator and his fulness, &c. labour to fix well the historical faith of them: we are sure that many never come this length, to believe the history of the gospel; and till that be done, they can advance no farther; for, as the word is, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:* I say, these common simple truths of the gospel must be well fixed by an historical faith; and yet this would not be rested on, because though they be excellent truths, yet they may be known and historically believed where saving faith and salvation follow not.
3. Be much in thinking,

thinking, meditating and pondering on these things ; let them sink down into your hearts, that the meditation of them may fix the faith of them, and that they may deeply affect us, we should seek to have a morally serious feeling of them, as we have of the common works of the Spirit ; but there are many like the *wayside hearers*, who, as soon as they hear the word, some devil, like a crow, comes and picks it up ; therefore to prevent this, ye should seek to have the word of God dwelling richly in you, ye should meditate on it till ye be convinced of your hazard, and get your affections some way stirred, according to the nature of the word ye meditate upon, whether threatnings or promises : The most part are affected with nothing ; they know not what it is to tremble at a threatening, or smile, as it were, on a promise, through their not meditating on the word, that it may produce such an effect. 4. When this is done, men should fully give up their own righteousness as to their justification, that if they cannot so positively and stayedly come to rest on Jesus Christ and his righteousness, yet they may lay the weight of their peace with God on no other thing ; they should lay it down for a certain conclusion, that by the works of the law they can never be justified, and should come with their mouths stopt as to that matter before God. Thus weak Christians will find it sometimes easier, to give up with the law, than to close with the gospel, as to their distinct apprehension of the thing. 5. When this is done, go, as it were, to the top of mount Nebo, and take a look of the pleasant land of promises, and of Christ held out in them, and let your soul say, O ! to have the bargain well closed, to have my heart stirred up to love him, and to rest upon him ; O ! to have faith, and to discern it in its actings ; for when the life of faith is so weak that it cannot speak, yet it may breathe ; and though ye cannot exercise faith as ye would, so as to cleave to and catch fast hold of the

VOL. I. No. 2. X object,

object, yet essay seriously to esteem, love, and vehemently desire it: In this respect the will is said to go before the deed; though as to God's begetting of faith there be a contemporariness of the will and the deed, yet as to our sense the will outruns the deed, even as in another sense the apostle says, *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I know not*; for we ought to have our will running after Christ, and believing on him, when we cannot attain to the distinct actings of it.

But it may be here objected and said, Is not this presumption? *Ans.* If this were presumption, then all we have said of the warrant of the gospel to believe, is to no purpose: Christ never counted it presumption to desire and endeavour in his own way to believe on him for attaining of life through him: To desire heaven and peace with God, and to neglect Christ and pass him by, were indeed presumption; but it is not so to desire them through him. 6. When ye have attained to this desire in your hearts, if ye cannot distinctly to your satisfaction believe on Christ, ye should firmly resolve to believe and essay it, and say, *This is the way I will and must take it, and no other*, as David saith, Psalm xvi. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord*: Hence the exercise of faith is called a *chusing* of God, Deut. xxx. 19. and Josh. xxiv. and seriously, sincerely and firmly to resolve this, is our duty when we can do no more; and it is no little advancement in believing, when such a resolution to believe is deliberately and soberly come to. 7. When this is done people should not hold still, for to resolve and not to set forward will be found to be but an empty resolution; therefore having resolved (though still looking on the resolution as his gift) we should set about to perform and believe as we may; and when we cannot go, we should creep; when we cannot speak words of faith, we should let faith breathe; when it can neither speak nor breathe distinctly,

distinctly, we should let it pant: In a word, to be essaying the exercise of faith, and often renewing our essays; which if we did, we should come better speed in believing than we do. Thus, though ye were under a conviction, that ye could do no more in this than a man whose arm is withered can do to stretch it forth, yet as the man with the withered hand at Christ's word of command to stretch it forth, obeyed and succeeded, or as the disciples, when they had toiled long, even all the night, and caught nothing, yet at Christ's word they let down the net and inclosed a multitude of fishes; so, though ye have essayed to act faith often, and yet come not speed, yet essaying it again on Christ's calling to it, it may, and will through grace go with you. 8. When yet ye come not speed as ye would, your short-coming would be bemoaned and complained of to God, laying open to, and before him the heart, who can change it, and ye would have it for a piece of your weight and burden, that your heart comes not so up to, and abides not so by believing; I would think it a good frame of spirit, when the not having of the heart standing so fixed at believing, is an exercise and a burden. 9. When all this is done, in some measure ye would wait on in doing thus, and would continue in this way, looking to him, who is the author and finisher of faith, for his influence to make it go with you, to look to him to be helped, is the way to be helped to believe, or to pray to him to better and amend faith, is the way to have it bettered and amended; it is said, Psal. xxxiv. 5. *They looked to him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed:* And if it be said, How can one look that sees not? It is true, blind folk cannot look, yet they may essay to look, and though there be but a glimmering, as the looking makes the faculty of seeing the better and more strong, so the exercise of faith makes faith to increase, this is it that the Psalmist hath, Psal. xxx.

verse last. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord*; that is, if ye be weak, wait on, and he shall strengthen you, believe, and give not over, though to your sense ye come not speed; beginners that are looking conscientiously to their way, though they have but a glimmering weak sight of Christ, and be as the man that at first saw men walking as trees, yet if they wait on, they may attain to a more close and firm gripping of Christ.

We close with this word of advertisement, That as we speak not of these things as being in man's power to be performed, so neither can they be gone about to purpose, but where there is some faith and love; yet when they are at first looked on, they are some way more within our reach than the distinct exercise of faith, which is a great mystery. The Lord bless his word and make it useful to you.



S E R M O N IX.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

IF folks soberly and gravely considered of what concernment it is to make use of the gospel, and what depends upon the profitable or unprofitable hearing of it, how serious would both speakers and hearers be? This same poor, mean and contemptible-like way of speaking or preaching, is the ordinary way that God hath chosen to save souls, even by the *foolishness* of

of preaching, as the apostle hath it, 1 Cor. i. 22. and where ministers have been tender, how near hath it lain to their hearts, whether people profited or not: They that will read Isaiah, how he resented and complained of it, and how he was weightied with it, will easily be induced to think that he was in earnest and that it was no little matter that made him thus cry out, *Who hath believed our report?*

We shewed that four things were comprehended in the words; *First*, That the great errand of ministers is, to bring the glad tidings of Jesus Christ the Saviour, to sinners. *Secondly*, That it is the great duty of people to believe and receive the offer of Jesus Christ in the gospel. *Thirdly*, That it is the great sin of a people that hear the gospel, not to believe and receive Jesus Christ when he is offered unto them. The *fourth* and last thing which now we are to speak of is, that it is the great and heavy complaint of faithful ministers of the gospel, when this good news is not received and welcomed, when they have it to say, *Who hath believed our report?* and it is but here one and there one that closes with Christ.

Considering these words, as they hold out the prophet's resentment and complaint, we shall from them draw four *observations* which we shall speak briefly to, and reserve the use and application to the close of all.

Observ. 1. The first is, That it is meet for, and the duty of a minister of the gospel, to observe what fruit and success his ministry hath among people, and whether they believe or not: Isaiah speaks not here at random, but from consideration of the case of the people, and observing what fruit his ministry had among them, we would not have ministers too curious in this, as to the state of particular persons, neither would we have them selfish or anxious in seeking any ground of boasting to themselves, yet they should seek to be so far distinct and clear about their spiritual case and condition, as they may know how to speak suitably

bly to it, and how to speak of it to God; that they may say, as they have ground for it, that in such a place, among such a people, *a great door and effectual was opened unto us*, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xvi. 8. And in such another place, and among such a people, *Who hath believed our report?* as here the prophet doth. It is said, Luke x. 17. and Mark vi. 30. the disciples returned, and with joy told Christ all that they had done, and how the devils were subject to them; they kept an account of what success they had in their ministry; so it is necessary that a minister observe what success he hath among a people, that he may know, 1. How to carry before God in reference to them, what to praise for, what to lament for, and what to pray for. 2. It is necessary as to the people, that he may carry right to them for gaining of strangers to God, and helping forward those who are entered into the way, and that he may know what report to make of them. 3. It is necessary for a minister himself, though not simply as to his peace, for that depends on the faithful discharge of his office; yet as to his joy and rejoicing, to know when he labours in vain, and when not, among a people.

We would not then have you to think it curiosity, though something be said now and then, and asked you, that some of you may possibly think impertinent; for it becomes a physician to see to know the state and condition of those whom he has under his hand and cure; and ye should not take it ill, though after observation, we now and then speak and tell you, what we conceive to be your condition.

Observ. 2. The second observation is, That it is most sad to a loving minister, and will much affect him to see and observe unbelief and unfruitfulness among the people that he preaches the gospel to. This must be a certain and clear truth, if we consider what it is that put Isaiah to this, even to cry, *Who hath believed our report?* Though a minister should have never

ver so great exercise of gifts, never so much countenance and respect among people, if he be affectionate, he will be more grieved and weighed with their unbelief and unfruitfulness than with stripes and imprisonment, there will be no suffering to this in his esteem, nothing so sad a ground of complaint. This makes the prophet, Mic. vii. 1. to cry, *alas and woe is me, I am as these who have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings after the vintage, there is no cluster to eat, the good man is perished and there is none upright among men*; and he insists in this complaint. How often was our Lord Jesus, the most excellent and tender preacher that ever preached, put to this complaint? All the affronts and reproaches he met with, grieved him not so much as the unbelief and hardness of heart that was in the people; it is said, Mark ii. 5. *that he looked round about on them with anger, and was grieved for the hardness of their hearts*; and Mark vi. 6. *that he marvelled, because of their unbelief*; yea, it so affected him, that (Luke xvii. 42.) it is said, *that when he came near the city he wept over it, saying, O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace*. There is a fourfold reason of this, that hath a fourfold influence on the sadness of a serious and tender minister of the gospel. 1. Respect to Christ Jesus his Master, in whose stead he comes to bespeak and woo souls to Christ. What would an ambassador think of personal respect and honour, if his master were reproached, and his message rejected and despised? And can an honest and faithful ambassador of Christ look on, and his heart not be wounded, to see the gospel fruitless; the Lord's pleasure as it were marred, and the work of gathering in of souls obstructed in his hand, and his Lord and Master affronted and slighted. 2. The respect that a faithful minister hath to peoples souls, hath influence on this; a tender shepherd will watchfully care for, and wish the sheep well, and be much affected when they are in

an

an evil condition, and where the relation is of a more spiritual nature, and the flock of far, very far greater worth and concernment, what wonder the shepherd be more affected? as Paul bespeaks the Galatians iii.

16. *My little children, of whom I travail again in birth, 'till Christ be formed in you; to be travailing and bringing forth but wind, cannot but prick and wound*

an honest minister of the gospel to the very heart; so 2 Cor. xi. 29. Paul saith, *Who is offended, and I burn not?* The very hazard of a soul, will be like a fire burning the heart that is tender and zealous of the spiritual good of souls.

3. The respect that a faithful minister hath to the duty in his hand, hath influence on this; for such an one loves to neat his duty, and to go neatly and lively about it, and the unbelief and unfruitfulness of the people clogs him in his duty, and makes him drive heavily; hence it is said, Mat. xiii.

58. and Mark vi. 5. that our Lord *could not do many mighty works there, or among that people, because of their unbelief;* unbelief straitens and shuts the door, and makes preaching become a very burden to a faithful minister; therefore the apostle exhorts, Heb. xiii.

17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and watch for your souls, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you;* a necessity lies upon ministers to go about their work, but when the word does no more but buff on them, so to speak, it makes them to cry, as this same prophet doth, chap.

vi. 11. *How long, Lord? And, 4thly, This also hath influence on their being so much weighted, even the concern of honest ministers own joy and comfort; it is true, as we hinted before, that neither a faithful minister's peace, nor his reward of grace doth depend on it simply, I have spent my strength in vain, says Isaiah, chap. xlix. 4. yet my labour is with the Lord, and my reward from my God;* as to that there is no necessary connection, and it is of grace it is so; yet as to a minister's satisfaction and joy there is a connection

tion

tion, as we may see, Philip. ii. 16. where Paul saith, *That I may joy in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, and laboured in vain*; and from his expostulation with the Galatians, chap. iv. 9, 10, 11. *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

I shall not prosecute the *use* of this neither; only see here, that it is no marvel though sometimes we be necessitated to complain of you, and to expostulate with you; and considering the case of people generally, if our hearts were suitably tender, it would even make us burst for grief, to see so many sleeping securely and senselessly in their sins, and in that pitiful posture posting to the pit, if God prevent not.

Observ. 3. The third observation is, That a minister may, and sometimes will be put to it to make report to God of what fruit his ministry hath, and sometimes to complain to him of the unbelief and unfruitfulness of the people among whom he hath long preached the gospel; Isaiah, sure, is not carried to this complaint out of hatred to the people, neither from any pleasure he hath in it, nor any delight to tell ill tales of them: The Lord needs no information, yet he complains, and that to the Lord, as we shewed from Rom. x. 16. where it is said, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* So then, prophets and apostles complain of this; it is Ezekiel's complaint no doubt to God, as it was the Lords to him, *This people are a rebellious house, and they will not hear*; and Isaiah speaks here in his own name, and in the name of other ministers of the gospel, that they may join with him in this complaint; and there is reason for it if we consider, 1. The relation that a minister stands in to God, he ought to give an account to him, who gives obedience and who not, and what is done by his embassy, there being no talent given, but a reckoning how it was employed will be called for. 2. The subordination that a minister stands in to Christ, wherein it is requisite he be kept, as know-

ing the work is the Lords and not his, pleads for this, 3. That a minister may be kept from carnalness and vanity on the one hand, and from discouragement on the other, he ought to be acquaint with, and to hold up both the fruitfulness and unfruitfulness of the people to God. 4. It is meet for the good of the people it be so, not to irritate, but kindly to affect the people, that when he complains to God, they may be convinced that it is to get the evil complained of amended, if so it may be.

This complaining will we fear be the result of much preaching among you; for either there must be more faith and fruits, else ye will have the more complainers, and the more complaints against you.

Observ. 4. The fourth observation is, That it is and ought to be a very sad and weighty thing to a minister, and also to a people, when he is put to complain to God of their unbelief amongst whom he is labouring: It is the last thing he hath to do, and he can do no more, and it is the greatest and highest witness and ditty against them, when a minister hath been preaching long, and observing the fruit of his ministry, and is wearied out with their unfruitfulness, and forced to cry, Lord, there are none, or but very few that have believed the report that I have brought to them; it is the heaviest and hardest word that Christ hath to say to Jerusalem, Mat. xxiii. 37. and Luke xix. 31. when he complains of their unfruitfulness, harder and heavier than all the woes he pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees, on other accounts, and at least equivalent to them pronounced on the same account; for the same woe and wrath follows both; O! saith he, *that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes*; this comes as the last and saddest word, holding out the desperateness of their condition, when the powerful preaching of the gospel hath no gracious force, nor saving effect following it, when
 direc.

directions prevail not, when no sort of ministerial gifts do a people good, when it comes to that, Mat. xi. 16. *Whereunto shall I liken this generation, it is like children sitting in the market-place crying to their fellows, we have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not lamented:* When both the sweet offers of grace, and the terrible threatnings of the law, come forth to a people, and both are followed for a long time without fruit, then comes out that word: *Whereunto shall I liken this generation? John came neither eating nor drinking, and ye say, he hath a devil; his austere way of living and preaching did you no good, ye could not bear with it: The Son of man came eating and drinking, in a familiar way, and ye say, behold a man gluttonous, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners:* They stumble at both unjustly; and so it is even to this day, many stumble at the messenger, cast at the message, and then followeth the sad complaint.

It is meet that now we speak to a word of *use*, but we profess we know not well how to follow it, there is so much ground to complain, and we are not (alas!) suitably sensible of our own unfitness to follow the complaint, which makes us think that it would become another better; but what shall we say? It is the word of the Lord, and it were needful that both you and I should forget and take our eyes off men, and remember that it is the Lord God, and some commissioned from him, that we have to do with, that so we may accept the message. 1. Then we may say that it is no pleasure to us to be hewing you, and speaking sharply to you, (the Lord knows,) would to God there were more that needed healing medicines, and that fewer had need of hewing and wounding; but the truth is, carnal security, spiritual pride, hypocrisy and formality, are so common, and become so much the plague of this generation; that people believe not their hazard. Neither 2. is it our desire nor design

to speak to all of you indifferently, and without discrimination; for as the Lord saith, Matth. xi. 19. *Wisdom is justified of her children*; though the generality despise this word, yet we are confident the Lord hath some that he allows not to be grieved: And we shall desire, that such may not wrong themselves, nor mar our freedom in speaking the word of the Lord to others. 3. We shall not desire to speak peremptorily as to the case of particular persons, though we will not deny nor conceal our fears and sad apprehensions, as to many of you; only what we have to say, we should know and be assured that it is not spoken at random by us, but as having some acquaintance with many of your conditions, and we may gather from those what is very probably the condition of others.

And now as to what we would say to you: Some have been preaching this gospel to you, who are removed to another part of the vineyard; others are gone to another world; and some are yet continued preaching to you: But what fruit is brought forth by the ministry of all? If we were put to make a report of you, as we will be put to it, what could we say? We are afraid to speak our apprehensions; O! how little is this gospel, as to its fruit and success, upon the growing hand among you? We shall therefore forbear to speak of that which we think hath deep impressions on ourselves concerning you, but we would have you to look through matters, how they stand betwixt God and you; and, if we may humbly lay claim to any measure of the judgment of discerning, may we not ask, where is there a man or woman amongst most of us, that hath a conversation suitable to this gospel? If we begin at the great ones that have the things of the world in abundance, it is their work for most part not to be religious, but to gather and heap up riches, and to have somewhat of a name, or a piece of credit in the world: this is the farthest that many of such design. And if we come and take a
look

look of the way of the poorer sort ; they live as if they were not called to be exercised to godliness : And this is the condition of the generality, to live as if God were not to call them to a reckoning ; you will say, we are poor ignorant folks, and are not book-learned ; but have ye not souls to be saved ? And is there any other way to be saved than the royal way wherein believers have walked ? But if we should yet look a little further ; how many are there that have not the very form of godliness, who never studied to be Christians, either in your fellowship with others, nor when alone, or in your families ? There are some, O ! that I might not say, many, who are hearing me, that will not once in a year bow their knee to God in their families ; many of you spend your time in tipling, jesting, loose-speaking, which are not convenient ; yea, I dare say, there are many that spend more time in tipling, jesting and idle-speaking, than in the duties of religion, either in public or in private ; what report shall we make of you ? shall we say that such a man spent three or four hours every day in going up and down the streets, or in tipling and sporting, and would not spend half an hour of the day on God and his worship ; and further, how many are yet ignorant of the first principles of religion, a fault that is often complained of, and yet we would be ashamed to have it heard of, that such ignorance should be under half a years preaching of the gospel, that is in this place under many years preaching it ; and even amongst those who hold their heads very high, and are above others, who can guide and govern their own affairs, and give others good counsel in things concerning the world, yet if we come to speak with them of repentance, or of faith in its exercise, of convictions and challenges for sin, of communion with God, of the working of God's Spirit in the regenerate, or of the fruits of the Spirit, they have not a mouth to speak a word of these things ; and if they speak any thing,

O !

O! how little favour and relish is there in it: put them to discourse of religion, they do it without gust or taste, they have no understanding of it; at least experimentally, doth this look like folks that have heard and received the gospel? let me say it the wisdom of this world, and the knowledge of Christ, are far different things; and if some of you go that length as to get the questions of the Catechism, which is well done in itself; if we put you but to express them in other words, you cannot do it, which plainly shews that ye are not masters of your knowledge. And what shall we say of others, of whom we cannot say but we get respect enough; yet how do selfishness and worldly mindedness abound in them? And how graceless and Chrattleless are they found to be, when put to the tryal? We will also say to you, that there is great difference betwixt civility and Christianity: civil behaviour will never pass in Christ's account for suitable fruits of the gospel, and will never hinder us from having a just ground of complaint against you: How many have a form of religion, and want the power of it? Who think themselves something, when they are indeed nothing, and their profession is so thin and full of holes, so to speak, that their rottenness and hypocrisy may be seen through it. Though these things be but general, yet they will comprehend a great many of you that are here in this assembly; and if so, is there not just ground of complaint, and exhortation with you, as a people among whom this word hath not suitable fruit. And as for you that live profanely and hypocritically, what shall we say to you? Or how shall we deal with you? We bring the word to you, but ye make no more use of it, than if ye had never heard it: no more religion shews itself in you, than if ye lived among Heathens: Shall we say to God, the fruit of the gospel is there? Dare we be answerable to God, or can we be faithful to you, to flatter you, as if all were well with you? And must not
our

our complaint then rather be this, *Lord, they have not believed our report?* Though we be mean, and though there be ground of complaint of us, yet the word is his word, and will take hold of you. I know that people do not readily digest such doctrines well; and it may be some think that few ministers are better dealt with than we are: But we say, that this is not our complaint I confess, if we look from the beginning of the world to this time, there will be few ministers of the gospel, found to have been better dealt with, as to outward and civil things: But alas! should that stop our mouth? Yea, rather ought it not to be the more sad to us to be so dealt with, and to live in civil love with men and women, who yet do not receive the gospel, nor deal kindly with our Master: Do not think that we will take external respect to us for the fruit of the gospel, as we have no cause to complain of other things, so let us not be put to complain of this, but receive Christ in your heart; let him and his precious wares have a currency and go off amongst you; make use of him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and go not only for the fashion about the means that should bring you near him; but be in good earnest, and this would satisfy us much, and prevent complaints. Lastly, I would ask you, what will come of it, if we shall go on in preaching, and you in hearing, and yet continue still in unbelief? Will there not be an account demanded of us, and must we not make a report? And if ye think we must report, can we report any other than really how it is with you? Shall we, or dare we, say that such a man was a fine civil man; and therefore he will not be reckoned with, though he believe in Christ? No, no, but this must be the report that such a man, and such kind of men, though Christ was long wooing them, would not embrace him; though he invited them to the wedding, yet they would not come: Nay, they

they mocked and spurned at it ; they trode the blood of the covenant under foot, and counted God a liar in all his offers ; and said by their practice, that they should be happy, though they took not this way : Many of you, who would not take this well, if we should speak this to you in particular, will find it to be a truth one day : And if ye shall say, What would we be at ? The answer is at hand, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved* ; this is the end of the gospel, and the mean of your happiness ; it is the great and the main thing that we call for, which if it be not obtained, the ground of the complaint will continue : And do you think this any strange, hard or uncouth thing, that when we bring to you the offer of Christ in the gospel, we bid you receive it, and flee in to him to hide you from the wrath to come : and yet this is all we seek of you ; it is neither your shame nor your skaithe that we seek, but that ye may take with your sin, that ye may judge and condemn yourselves, that your mouth may be stopped before God, and that ye may flee to Jesus Christ in earnest, and close with him on his own terms ; as therefore ye would prevent the greatly aggravated sin, to wit, sinning against the gospel and the complaint of the ministers thereof against you, and the terrible vengeance of the Mediator, *kiss the Son*, cast open the everlasting doors of your hearts, and let the gospel, and Christ the King of glory have access : We pray you stand not in the way of your own happiness, refuse not to do him that much pleasure and satisfaction for all the travel of his soul, as to give him your souls to be saved. Now God himself keep you from this folly and soul-destroying madness.

S E R M O N X.

ISAIAH LIII. I.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm
of the LORD revealed?*

WE have spoken somewhat these days past, to sundry doctrines from this part of the verse, and particularly of the sad complaint which Isaiah hath in his own name, and in the name of all the ministers of the gospel, that the savoury report concerning Jesus Christ is not received, and that though life and salvation through him be offered to many, yet there are but few, scarce here one and there one, that do embrace it, this is the sad result, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* words, that being spoken by such a prophet, and so often mentioned in the New Testament, may and should as often as we speak, hear, or read them, put both ministers and people to a holy demur, and to look what becomes of all our preaching and hearing, when this was all the fruit, even of Isaiah's preaching, as to the greatest part of his hearers.

Before we leave this part of the verse, it will not be unmeet that we speak a little to these three things. *First*, To what may be the causes why, when the gospel is powerfully preached, there are so few believers. *Secondly*, How it comes to pass, seeing so few believe, that generally so many think they believe, and so few suspect their own faith. And, *Thirdly*, To the necessity that lies on the hearers of the gospel, to enquire at, and try themselves concerning their faith, and to have some solid satisfaction in it.

Although we mention no particular doctrines now, yet considering the doctrines we spoke to before, these

things will not be unsuitable to them, nor impertinent to you.

For the *first*, The causes why so few believe the gospel, we cleared to you already. That generally the powerful preaching of the gospel hath been with little fruit, so that Isaiah hath this sad complaint, *Lord, Who hath believed our report?* and our Lord Jesus hath it also on the matter, Matth. xi. 17. *We have piped to you and ye have not danced, we have mourned to you and ye have not lamented;* and in the same express words, John. xii. 38. And when it is so with sweet Isaiah in the Old Testament, and with our blessed Lord in the New, that spoke with such power and authority, ye may see there is reason for us to enquire into the causes why it is that so few believe? in speaking to which. 1. We intend not to touch on all the reasons that may be gathered together, of peoples not profiting under the gospel, but of these that ye have most reason to look to, and that are most obstructive of faith in you. 2. Though we might speak of reasons on the side of them that speak to you for *who is sufficient for these things?* and we shall not deny but we have culpable accession to your unfruitfulness, yet it were not much to your edifying to insist on these. 3. Neither will we speak to these sovereign causes on God's part, who in his holy justice gives up people to unfruitfulness, when they receive not the truth in love. Neither *4thly*, Shall we insist on these causes that may arise from the devil, who waits on wherever the word is preached, to mar the fruit of it, as we may see, Mat. xiii. 19. the evil spirits, like as many crows, when the seed of the word is sown, waiting on to pick it up, and ye would know, that ye never come to hear the word, but there are, as it were, flocks of devils attending you; hence it is that some are rocked and lulled asleep, some have their minds filled with worldly thoughts, some forget all that they hear ere they go out of doors,

doors, thus it is with many hearers of this gospel, their hearts are trode upon as the way-side by devils and foul-spirits, that never a word takes impression on them, and though ye may think such expressions uncouth-like and strange, yet they are sadly true; Satan waited on when Christ preached, and sure he will fear no more to do so at our preaching than he did at his, if he stood at Joshua's right hand to resist him, he will no doubt be at ours; but, we say, we will not insist on these. But *5thly*, We shall speak a little to these causes that are common in you, which ye yourselves might know, if ye would observe them, and we would exhort you to take notice of them, when we tell you of them.

First, Then we offer, or rather assert this for a cause, the want of serious minding the great concernment of the work of your salvation, and that this preached gospel is the word of the Lord by which ye must be saved; alas! though ye have immortal souls, and though this word be the mean of your salvation, yet there are hundreds of you that never lay it to heart, that your souls are in hazard, and that this word must be it that ye must live by, and live upon; I appeal to your consciences, if ye think upon this seriously; want of this *consideration* fosters security, breeds laziness, and makes and keeps you careless and carnal; I shall instance the want of it in three respects.

1. Look how ye are affected towards this word, and your own edification by it before ye come to hear it, how few are hungering and thirsting, or preparing for benefit by it or preparing to meet with God in it? in effect ye come not with a design to profit; so that if it were known, it would be wondered at, wherefore ye come to hear the word, as Christ says of some, *They came, not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled*; so may we say of you, that ye come not to profit by the word, but on some crooked carnal design.

carry when ye are come, how many sleep a great part of the sermon? so that it is a shame to look on the face of our meetings, when in every corner some are sleeping, whose consciences God will waken ere long, and the timber and stones of the house will bear witness against them; were you in any other meeting about ordinary business, there would not be such sleeping; but when ye are awaking, what is your carriage? for ye may be awake, and your heart far away, or fast asleep, how seldom can ye give account of what is said? though your bodies be present, your hearts are wandering; ye are like these spoken of, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. *Who sat before the prophet as God's people, but their hearts went after their covetousness*; how often, while ye are sitting here, is your heart away? some in their thoughts running after their trade, some after their merchandise, some after one thing, some after another. This is one sad instance of it, that there are many of you who have had preaching forty or fifty years, that can scarce tell one word of it all; and no wonder; for ye were not attentive in the hearing of it. 3. Look how ye carry after the word is heard; what unedifying discourse will ye be engaged in ere ye be well at the door? How carnally and carelessly do many rush unto, and go away from, hearing of the word! And when ye get a word that meets with your soul's case, do ye go to your knees with it before God, desiring him to breathe upon it, and to keep it warm? Or do ye meditate upon it? Now put these three together, your carriage before; in the time, and after your hearing the word, ye will find that there is just cause to say, that the most part that hear this gospel are not serious; and what wonder then that it does them no good? In the end of that parable of the sower, Mat. xiii. Mark iv. and Luke viii. it is said by the Lord; *Take heed how ye hear; for whosoever hath to him shall be given, &c.* if ye improve well your hearing, ye will still get more; but so long as you take no heed how ye hear, ye cannot profit.

A second

A *second* ground or cause is this, That the most part of hearers never come to look on this word as the word of God, they come never almost so far as to have an historical faith of it. It is said, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him diligently*; but when men do not really believe that God is, what wonder they seek him not, that they fear neither judgment nor hell, and that they study not holiness? they say in their hearts they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their own hearts, and that the way to heaven is not so narrow as ministers say it is, that God will not condemn poor christened people; this is the language of many hearts, and of some mouths; needs there any evidence of it? If ye believed that the way to heaven is so strait, and that holiness is so extensive, could ye possibly with any seriousness reflect on your heart and way and not be affrighted? But the truth is, this word gets not leave to sink in you as the word of God; therefore saith our Lord to his disciples, Luke ix. 44. *Let these sayings sink into your ears*. There are these things, I fear, ye do not believe; and let me not be thought to take on me to judge your consciences, when there are so many *that profess they know God, but in works they deny him*; as in Tit. i. 16. when we see such things in your carriage, we know that there is a principle of unbelief from whence they spring. 1. There are many of you that really believe not there is a God, or that he is such as his word reveals him to be, to wit, holy, just, powerful, &c. else ye durst not live at enmity with him; *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God; they are corrupt, &c.* your practical atheism and profanity say ye believe not there is a God. 2. Ye never believed the corruption of your nature, *Do ye think* (as James bespeaks these he writes to, chap. v. 5) *that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that is in you lusts to envy*? Ye do not think, that your heart is deceitful
and

and desperately wicked? Though we should preach never so much on this subject, yet ye lay it not to heart, ye take it not to you in particular. 3. We are afraid that many of you believe not a judgment, and your particular and personal coming to it; nay, there are among you, who are like to these *mockers* spoken of by Peter in his second epistle ch. iii. v. 34. who say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* And as there were in Paul's days some that denied the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. so there are still some who do it on the matter at least; ye have the same corrupt nature. We would think that we had prevailed to some purpose, if ye were brought really to believe, that there is a God, a life to come, and a day of judgment: And if ye did so, ye would be more serious in duty, and would come more hungry and thirsty to the word. 4. The means of salvation is not believed, to wit, That the way to peace with God is faith in Jesus Christ, and that there is no way to heaven, but the way of holiness. If all your thoughts were spoke out, it would be found that ye have another way than faith, and that of holiness; and to make out this, we need go no further than to your practice; we are sure many of you live in profanity, and yet have all a hope of heaven, and what says this? But that ye think not faith and holiness necessary, and that ye may come to heaven another way: This is an old fault and deceit, it was in Moses's days, for some are brought in (Deut. xxix. 19.) saying, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, and add drunkenness to thirst; though I tipple daily at my stated times, tho' I follow my lusts and pleasures, and take my fill of the world, we cannot be all saints, &c.* *The Lord will not spare that man, but his anger and jealousy shall smook against him, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven; though this be not now believed, it shall be found verified.* There are many,
when

when they come to judgment, that will know to their cost, the truth of many things they never believed before; as we find in that rich man, who says to Abraham, *Send some to tell my brethren, that they come not to this place of torment*; it says as much, as that he in his life-time did not believe how terrible and tormenting a place hell was, and it is even so still; though men and women have immortal souls, yet they go on following their sinful ways, and believe not that any evil shall befall them, till God's curse and vengeance overtake them.

A *third* ground or cause is, That men never think themselves in hazard, nor suffer their hazard to affect them, and therefore they seek not after the remedy, hence the Jews, Scribes, and Pharisees rejected Christ; why? they were righteous persons, whole and needed not the physician; and thus it is with many of you, ye will take with it that ye are sinners, but not with the gracefulness of your nature, and this makes it, that when life and reconciliation with God, are offered, ye have almost none to accept of it, why so? ye are generally in your opinion, good friends with God already; none of you almost think that ye have hatred at God, and so ye carelessly and unconcernedly let the opportunity of making your peace with him slip over, even like these Jews spoken of, John viii. 44, 45. who when Christ said to them, *ye have the devil to your father*, answered, *he had a devil, and that they were come of Abraham, and were not born of fornication*; so it is with many of you, ye could never endure to think yourselves in danger of hell, nor to confess that ye were heirs of wrath, as if ye had been born with other natures than the ordinary race of mankind; and this keeps so many of you from getting good of this gospel; for it seeks sinners to pardon them, and enemies to reconcile them; and till the enmity be once confessed, the friendship will never be sought after, nor will it find merchants; tho' when
once

once the enmity is owned, the gospel hath many sweet, peaceful, and comfortable words to speak to the man afterwards.

A *fourth* ground is, The love of money and of the world, which is *the root of all evil*. This is given as a main cause, Matth. xiii. why the word profits not, *The seed is sown among thorns, and the thorns spring up and choke it, the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word*. 'Tis not oppression, nor stealing, but entanglement with, and addictedness to the things of this present world; folks allowing themselves too much satisfaction in their riches and pelf, counting themselves as if all were well if they have it, and grieved if they want it; as if there were nothing but that to make happy, being wholly taken up about it, and leaving no room for the concerns of their souls, for prayer, and seeking of God, nor for challenges to work on them, they are so wholly taken up with their callings and business; for they lay it as a ground that they must be rich, and then they give themselves wholly to all things that may contribute to that end, and that chokes and suffocates the word that it never comes up, that nothing comes to perfection; therefore Christ says, Luke xxi. 24. *Take heed ye be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life*. I am afraid that many more among you who are civil, and esteemed virtuous and frugal, shall perish in this pit of worldly-mindedness, than shall perish by drunkenness, gluttony, fornication, or the like; and yet there is nothing more frequent in scripture, than words spoken to turn men from earthly-mindedness, *How hard is it,* says Christ, *for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?* And such a man is he that is taken up with riches, and places his happiness and contentment in them, whether he have more or less of them. We speak not this to countenance idleness in any, but to press moderation in the use of lawful things. Ye think it enough if we can
not

not charge you with oppression, stealing, whoring, and the like; but this gospel will charge you with the love of money, and if it find the love of the world in you, the love of the Father will not be found in you. Doth not your experience tell you, that it is not an easy matter to be much taken up with the world, and to get a suitable disposition for duties of religion, and to be painful in them?

A *fifth* ground is, mens little prizing of the gospel, and the benefits that come by it; they look not upon it as their happiness to have communion with God; they who are invited to the marriage of the king's son, Matt. xxii. will not come, and the reason is given, *they made light of it*; the offer of the gospel hath no weight, it relishes not: if a market of fine things at a cheap rate were proclaimed, ye would all run to it; but ye delight not in the word of God, ye prize not the gospel and the precious wares that it exposes to sale among you. And to evince and make out this, I would ask you these few questions. And, 1. I would ask you how often, or rather how seldom have you sat down purposely, and thanked God for sending the gospel to you? Ye have given thanks for your dinner: but how often have ye given thanks that ye have the gospel, sabbath-days, and week-days? 2. How little do many of you wait on the preaching of it? Were there a message sent to you but from an ordinary man, and more from a great man, ye would straiten yourselves and your business too somewhat, that ye might hear it; and yet it is a wonder to think how some in this place, except on the Sabbath, will hardly be seen in the church from one end of the year to the other. 3. Had ye any evidence to draw of house or land, ye would seek to have it drawn well and sure; but many of you never sought to have the evidence of heaven made sure; ye know, how interruptions of, and threatnings, to remove the preached gospel from you, never troubled you. That business of the *tender* gave

a proof, that ye might have your ease, and the things of the world, ye cared not what became of the gospel, and of the liberties of Christ's kingdom among you : nay, we may say, the gospel was never less set by, never more reproached, despised, and trode upon, than in the time wherein we live, and who lays it to heart ? If it were well tried, there is more pains taken on little things in a week, than ye take upon your souls in a year ; and which may be spoken to the shame of some, more time taken up in tipling, drinking and debauching, than in prayer, or any other religious duty : and is not that an undeniable evidence that ye make light of the gospel ? *They made light of it, and went their ways*, &c. saying as it were, care for yonder invitation who will, as for us, we have something else to do.

A *sixth* ground or cause, though possibly it be not so frequent ; is a shifting off convictions and challenges, a quenching of any begun exercise in the conscience : Some of you have been made sometimes to tremble as Felix did ; but ye shifted it, and put it off to another time, and went away to some company or recreation, that so ye might stifle it, and drive it out of your thoughts : Is there any of you who in sickness, or under some other sad cross, or at a communion, that has not had your own convictions, challenges, and frights, about your souls estate ; and yet ye have smothered, extinguished, and put them out again.

A *seventh* ground or cause (which is as large and comprehensive as any) is mens resting and sitting down, before they have any solid ground to rest upon, taking a counterfeit work for a real one, like these spoken of Hosea vii. 16. of whom it is said, *They return, but not to the most High* : Some attain to a sort of out-side reformation, and they think on that account they are well enough, and in good terms with God ; and when such are called to return, they say as these do, Mal. iii. 7. *Whereto shall we turn ?* They think
they

they are returned, and that their peace is made already: they cannot endure to be bid believe, or to lay a new foundation, for they think its laid already. In a word, as Laodicea did, *They think themselves rich and encreased in goods*, when yet *they are poor, blind, miserable, wretched and naked, but they knew not*, &c. and so are well satisfied with themselves as gracious persons, resting on these and the like grounds. As,

1. It may be they pray and think something of that.
2. They think they have faith enough, if they have a historical faith.
3. It may be they have had some resolutions, and fits of a sort of tenderness; and these they rest upon.

We shall not insist to shew the rottenness of these props, but shall only say, it were in some respect good for many of you, that ye had never had the little pieces of profession ye have: there is a sort of civil, legal, formal, fair fashioned men and women among us, whose conversation and communication relishes to none but themselves; and speak the word who will, they think that they are without the reach of it: I must say this sad word, that I think many of you have as much believing as keeps you from faith in Christ; that is, ye have as much presumption and security, as makes you that ye are never serious with the Lord to amend it, and to bring you indeed to believe; so that it is a greater difficulty to beat you off from your rotten grounds, than it is to get you right, though both require the omnipotent power of God: ye think ye believe always, and ye have no doubts about it; and therefore ye think ye have faith enough to do your turn. Ah! when will ye know that security is not faith, and that there is great difference betwixt presumption and solid resting by faith on Christ?

Eightly, This wrongs many of you, that because ye are not among the worst sort, and others esteem well of you, ye think that ye are well enough; and this makes us, that as to many of you, we know not whe-

ther to be more familiar with, or to stand at a distance from you, because ye are ready to rest on so very slender grounds: It is not the commendation of men, but the commendation of God that you should seek mainly after; and yet if ye think good men esteem well of you, ye apprehend ye are good enough. This was it made the foolish virgins so secure, because the wise took them and retained them in their company: and this is the neck-break of many, especially when they look about them and observe some sin in others which they have to abstain from; as if it had been enough in Herod, and a sufficient proof of the reality of his religion, *That he heard John gladly, and did many things on the hearing of him.*

A ninth ground (and a very poor one) is folks sitting down on the means when they have them, as if when they have got the gospel they were in no hazard, and could believe when they list: I make no question, but where the gospel is in any measure powerfully preached, there are many more secure and fearless than if they had it not; and its very probable somewhat of this is hinted at, Luke xiii. 26. where some are brought in saying to Christ, *We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets*; who when he thrusts them away from him at the great day, they will in a manner hardly believe that he is in earnest; and they give this for the reason of it, that they have heard him preach, and they have run out to the fields after him. It were good to fear while ye have the word, lest ye miss the fruit of it; compare to this purpose, Heb. iii. at the close, with Heb. iv. 1. and we will find this commended to us; *So we see, saith the apostle, that they could not enter in because of unbelief, let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it*: It is much, yea the first step to faith, to get people suitably afraid, they miss the fruit and blessing of the ordinances while they have them;

them ; it is good to be afraid, to come to church and not to get good of the sermon ; or to go and read a chapter of the Bible and not profit by it, always to put a difference betwixt the ordinance and the blessing of it, and to be afraid in the use of the ordinances to miss the blessing of them.

There may be many other causes, and we should not stint and limit you to these ; but sure these are causes why this gospel profits not. We will add these few, 1. There are some that stumble at the messenger, some at the message ; some thought Christ a friend of publicans and sinners, and said he had a Devil ; and so they said of John Baptist. There are some that can abide neither free nor fair speaking, and they think it is not the word, but the speaker that they offend at : yet prejudices against the carriers of the word have never done good, but much evil, and you would do well to guard against them. 2. Sometimes there is a stumbling at the spiritual truths of the gospel and a sort of new fangleness in the hearers of it that lasts not ; John's hearers *rejoiced in his light for a season* ; something of it was also in Christ's hearers, but they soon turned their back on him when he told them of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and of the necessity of it, else they could have no life in them. *This (say they) is a hard saying and who can bear it !* If we would consider these things, we might see convincing causes of our little thriving, and they might also (through God's blessing) be made use of for directions to thrive ; and if we could once bring you to be single and serious in hearing, and spiritually thrifty, in making use of every sermon and sabbath for edification, we had gained a great point of you.

S E R M O N XI.

ISAIAH LIII. I.

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

IF we would soberly consider the frame of the most part of men and women that live under the gospel, it would be hard to know, whether it were more strange that so few should receive the report, and be brought to believe for all that can be said of Jesus Christ; or whether that among the generality of hearers that do not receive the report, there are so few that will be convinced of their unbelief. Its wonderful and strange to see unbelief so common, and its as strange and wonderful, that among these many unbelievers there are so few that think they want faith.

Ye remember the last day, we proposed to answer this doubt or question, What can be the reason, that when so few believe, all almost think they believe? And then to speak a word to the last *Use* that rises from the matter that formerly we spoke of on these words. We shewed you, and we think the scripture is very clear for it, that among the generality that hear the gospel, they are very rare and few that do believe it; and yet go through them all, there will not one among many be found, but will assert they believe, and they will (to speak so) be crabbed and picqued, to tell them that they want faith; and so the most part of hearers live and die in this delusion; a thing that experience clears as well as the word of God, and a thing that doleful experience will clear at the great day; therefore some are brought in, saying, Luke xiii. 26. *We have eaten and drunken in thy presence*

sence, and thou hast taught in our streets ; to whom Christ will say, I know you not, depart from me ; which doth import this much, that some will come (as it were) to the very gate of heaven, having no doubt of their faith and interest in God, or of their entry into it, and will therefore in a manner plead with Christ to be let in, and who would never once doubt of it, nor call it in question, but they were believers, and in friendship with him. Although there will be no such debate or dispute after death, or at the day of judgment, yet it says this, that many hearers of the gospel have drunken in this opinion which goes to death with them, and no preaching will beat them from it, that they are believers, and in good terms with God, till the intimation of the sentence of condemnation does it, and the wrath and curse of God meet them in the face. And O, how terrible a disappointment will such meet with in that day ! may it not then very reasonably and justly be enquired, what can be reason and cause, when this is granted so generally to be a truth, that there are few believers, that yet it should be as true, that few question or make any doubt of their faith, and how this comes to pass ? I shall give you some reasons of it, which if ye would think upon, and suffer to sink down in your hearts, ye would not marvel that so many are under this mistake and delusion, and it would put many of you to have quite other thoughts of your own condition than you have. We shall only speak to such reasons as are sinful, and culpable upon your part.

The reasons then are these. *First*, The most part never seriously think on the matter, whether they believe or not, or they never put their faith to a trial. If the foolish virgin lights her lamp, and never looks whether there be oil in it, and takes on a fair outward profession of religion, and never looks what is within it, or how it is lined ; to speak so, no wonder she goes up and down with the lamp in her hand, and
never

never knows whether there be oil in her vessel or not, since she never considers, nor puts the matter to proof and trial. The people are expostulated with (Isaiah xliv. from verse 9. for making of images ; that a man should cut down a tree, and with one piece of it should warm himself, with another piece of it should bake his bread, and of a third piece should make a god, and fall down and worship it ; and this is given for the ground of it, v. 18, 19. *They have not known and understood, and none considereth in his heart ; or, as the word is, seeth to his heart ;* they consider not that that cannot be a god ; one would think that natural reason might easily discover this folly. We are persuaded that some of you will think your faith as great a folly, when there shall be as clear evidences to prove the rottenness of your faith and hope, as there were even to common sense, to prove the image made of a piece of tree, not to be God ; when it shall be found and declared, that though ye were never convinced of sin, nor of your misery and lost condition, were never humbled nor touched under the kindly sense of it, never fled to Jesus Christ in earnest, nor never had the exercise of grace, yet notwithstanding the want of all these, ye would needs keep up a good opinion of your faith and hope. We say, the reason why ye entertain this conceit and opinion is, because ye never sit down seriously and soberly before God to consider the matter ; nor do ye put yourselves to proof and trial. Let me therefore ask your consciences, if ye who have this opinion of your faith, durst assert to him, that this faith of yours is the result of your serious examination and trial ; is it not rather a guessing or fanciful opinion that ye believe ? And do you think that such a faith as that will abide the trial before God, that never did abide your own trial ? It will doubtless be a dreadful mistake, to go off the world with such an opinion of faith, and to have the door shut in your very teeth : alas ! there will be no mending or better-
ing

ing of your condition after death: The day comes when many of you, if God graciously prevent not, shall curse yourselves that ever ye should have been such fools as to have trusted your own hearts, or to have taken up this opinion of your faith without ground. We would therefore seriously recommend to you the putting of your faith more frequently to the trial, and that ye would often read and think on that place, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, &c.* O! do not think that a matter of such concernment should be left at a conjecture and utter uncertainty, who loses, when ye are so palpably accessory to your own ruin, by not endeavouring to put yourselves to so much as a trial? Do not say here for excuse, *We have no more grace than God gives us*; when ye never endeavoured so much as the form of the duty, or to go the length ye might have gone in putting yourselves to the trial: The deceit then being desperate and irredeemable, if continued in; do not, for the Lord's sake, after all that is said to you, continue deceiving yourselves.

A second reason is, mens settling themselves on unsound evidences and principles of peace that will not bear them through before God: I do not say that they have nothing to say in words for themselves; but that all they have to say, will be no ground to prove their faith, or to bear them through before God that they do believe indeed: It will be found at the best to be but a lie, as it is said of that man, Isa. xlv. 20. *A deceived heart hath turned him aside, he feeds on ashes, he cannot deliver his soul, no say, is there not a lie in my right hand?* He may have a seeming reason for his faith, but it is no reason indeed. If many of you were going to die, what reason have ye to prove your believing by? Some will say, God hath always been good, kind, and gracious to me; I was in many straits and difficulties, and I prayed and had many deliverances. Thus all the ground of thy faith is but

temporal favours or deliveries, which is even as if Israel should have made their receiving of temporal deliverances, and their acknowledging of them, and having some sort of faith of them, to be ground enough to prove their receiving of Jesus Christ savingly. There is a doleful proof of the unsoundness of this ground, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35, 36, 37. *When he slew them, then they sought him and returned and enquired early after God; they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer: They looked to God's past favours for them when they were in the wilderness, and at the red-sea; and they believed that they could do so still: But they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue; for their hearts were not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant; whereupon he destroyed them, and through their unbelief they did not enter into God's rest. It is also said a little before in that, Psal. ver. xxxii. For all this they sinned still.* There may be many temporal favours and deliverances, and these acknowledged too; and yet no receiving of Christ for making our peace with God, for removing the quarrel betwixt him and us, and for making us cease from sin: Consider if it will be a good ground to plead with God upon, to say to him, Lord, thou must bring me to heaven, because I was in sickness, and thou raisedst me up; I was in this and that strait, and under this and that cross, and thou carriedst me through and broughtst me out of it. The Lord will say to such that have no more to say, ye had so many evidences of my power, but ye sinned still; and yet this will be all the pleading and reasoning that will be found with many of you, and the sad reply you will meet with from God.

A third reason is, Mens giving an external countenance to ordinances and their formal going about them: They think they have faith, because they keep the church, and are not open contemners and misregarders

gardeners of ordinances, as some others are, because they pray, read, hear, &c. It seems it was something like this, that the persuasion of those spoken of, Luke xiii. 26. is built upon, *Lord, say they, we have heard thee preach, and have eaten and drunken in thy presence* : It is not simply, that they heard Christ preach, for many heard him preach who stoned him ; but that when others stoned him, they followed him, and were not only profane, nor professed contemners of him and of his preaching, as these others were ; such words fall sometimes from your mouths. Ye will possibly say, what would we have of you ? Ye are not profane, ye wait on ordinances, and live like your neighbours ; and you content yourselves with that : Alas ! this is a poor, yea, a doleful fruit of ordinances, and of your attendance on them : If there be more security, presumption, and desperate hazarding on the wrath of God, and less sense of the quarrel betwixt him and you on that ground.

A *fourth* reason is, Men hope, even such a hope, that contrary to the nature of hope, will make the most part of you ashamed : Ye think ye believe, because ye hope ye believe ; and that ye will get mercy, because ye think ye hope in God's mercy ; and ye will not believe any thing to the contrary, nor so much as think that ye may be deceived. The opinion that men have of obtaining mercy, that is maintained without any ground but their vain hope, is the most common, most unreasonable, and prejudicial evil among the professors of this gospel : Hence if any ground and evidence of their peace be asked for, they will answer, that they believe ; if it be again asked, how know ye that ye believe ? They answer, we hope and believe it is so, and can give no ground for it. Many are like these spoken of, Isa. lvii. 10. *Thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved* : They have a faith and a hope of their own making ; and this keeps them off, that the word of God takes no

hold on them: We preach that ye are naturally at enmity with God, and offer peace and reconciliation through Jesus Christ; but ye are deaf, for ye think your peace is made already; and but very few are sensible of a quarrel with God, to listen to his word as to the ministry of reconciliation: This is wondered at (in a manner) by the Lord himself, Micah iii. 11. where we have a people whose way is very unlike the gospel; *The heads judge for a reward, and the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us.* It is not for real believing that they are charged, but for their confident asserting their believing when there was no ground for it: So it is with many, they will say, they hope to escape hell, and to have their sins pardoned, and to get to heaven; and they believe it will be so, when in the mean time there is no ground for it, but clear ground to the contrary.

A *first* ground is, mens spiritual and practical ignorance of the righteousness of God; whereof the apostle speaking, Rom. x. 3. saith, *Being ignorant of the righteousness of God, they go about to establish their own,* &c. that which I mean is, mens being ignorant of their natural condition, of the spiritualness of God's law, what it requires, and of the way of faith, and of the command of believing, and the nature of it: It is from the ignorance of these three, to wit, of the mischief that is in them by nature of the spiritualness of the law, and of the spiritualness of faith, and of the exercise of it, that they sleep on in security, and think they have faith when they have it not; and though sometimes they will say their faith is weak, yet they cannot be beaten from it but that they believe; and their faith rises and falls, as their security does. This the apostle makes clear from his own experience, Rom. vii. 9. where before his conversion he says, he was a living man, but after his conversion he begins
to

to think himself nothing but a dead and lost man, the reason is, because before conversion he knew not himself, he knew not the law, nor the nature of the covenant of grace, *Before the law came*, saith he, *I was alive*; he knew not the spiritual meaning of it, and therefore he thought he observed it, and so thought himself sure of heaven, and had no doubts nor disputings concerning his interest in God; *But*, saith he, *when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*; I saw myself then to be lost and gone, and in every thing guilty, that which I thought had been humility, I saw it to be pride, that which I took for faith, I found it to be presumption and unbelief, and my holiness, I found to be hypocrisy; not that his sin grew more upon him, but the sin that before was veiled, was now discovered, and stared him in the face; this is a sad, yet a most real truth; the good believing, as many of you call it, and the faith that ye have, is a surer ground of your strangeness to God, and of your unbelief, than any other thing ye have can be a ground whereupon to conclude, ye have faith and are good friends with God; ye are yet alive, strangers to God, strangers to yourselves, strangers to the spiritual meaning of the law, and to the exercise of faith; if ye would set yourselves to ponder seriously this one consideration, I think ye might be somewhat convinced of it; Do ye not see many that understand more of God than ye do, and that are more tender in their walk than ye are, who yet are more loath, straitened, and afraid to assert their faith and confidence in God than ye are? and they are oftener brangled and put to question their faith, will ye then consider what can be the reason that ye have so strong a faith, that ye never doubted, and they are troubled with doubting sometimes, yea often, though they pray more, and are more diligent in the use of all the means, and holier in their conversation than ye are, and ye will, it may be, say, it is well for them that are not like
such

such a person; this is the reason of it, they see their sin, and the spiritualness of the law, and the nature of faith; and are dead to the law: but ye are yet alive in your own conceit; do ye, or can ye think, that much praying, reading, meditation, and tenderness in mens walk, will weaken faith and occasion doubting? or is it not rather like, that faith will be more confirmed by these, than by the neglect of them? How is it then that ye are so strong in your faith, when they find themselves so weak and doubting? or have ye an infused faith without the means? or doeth God deal with you in a more indulgent way than he uses to deal with his people? How is it then that these of whom ye cannot say but they are more tender than ye are, cannot almost name faith, or assert their confidence in God, without trembling and fear that they presume; and yet ye dare very confidently assert your faith without any hesitation, though ye live carnally and without fear? Do not many of you wonder what ails some people, what need they to be so much troubled, and why do they stand in need of some to pray for them, and with them, and to answer their doubts, and ye, meanwhile, need no such thing; and all the reason is, that ye assure yourselves ye believe, and think the questioning of your security is the very undoing of your faith: God help you, you are in a woful case.

A *sixth* reason is, that people drink in some carnal principles that have no warrant in the word of God, and accordingly square every thing that comes in their way. 1. They lay it down for a ground, that men should never doubt of God's mercy: We do not say that people should doubt of God's being most real in his offer of mercy to sinners in the gospel; but from that it will not follow that none should doubt of God's love to them, or of their coming to heaven, whether they close with the offer or not. Are there not many whom God curseth? and should not these doubt? A
second

second carnal principle is, That there is no such reality in the threatenings of God as there is in his promises, as if he were utterly averse from executing his threats; and as if it were a rare thing for him to condemn any: And is there any thing more opposite to scripture than this principle? Hath he not said in the same place, to wit, Exod. xxxiv. where he proclaims himself *to be gracious, merciful, long-suffering, &c.* That *he is a God that will not clear the guilty*: And hath not the scripture said, that *it is but a remnant that are saved*; as it were, here one and there one, and that there are many damned for one that is saved: But know it for certain, that he will make you one day vomit up these principles, with exquisite torment, when out of your own mouth he will convince you of your mistake and delusion. 3. When people want many things, they think they supply all with an honest mind: This supplies your want of knowledge, your want of faith and repentance, and every thing whereof ye are said to be short: Though ye live and may die carnal and unrenewed, yet ye think still ye have an honest mind or heart for all that; and what, I pray, is your honest mind, but a rotten and profane heart that vails your hypocrisy with a pretext of honesty? Would ye think that man honest, spoke of Isa. xlv. 19. who with one part of the tree warmed himself, and with another part made a God, and fell down and prayed to it? And yet in your sense, he hath an honest mind, for he followeth his light which is but darkness, and the deceit of his heart carrying him away from God, tho' he cannot see it; he discerns not, *because he considers not that there is a lie in his hand, and that a deceived heart hath led him aside.* So it is with you; and if many of you saw, what is latent under that honest mind and heart, there could be nothing that would make you loath yourselves more. A little time will convince you, that that which ye looked for most good from, was your greatest and most traiterous enemy;

my; *He that trusts in his own heart is a fool*, saith Solomon, Prov. xxviii. 26. it supposes that people are ready to trust to their heart, and to hearken to the language of it concerning their spiritual estate, but it says also, that they are fools that do so, for it betrays them, and there is no folly comparable to that whereby a man betrays his own immortal soul; and so he doth who trusts in his own heart.

A *seventh* reason is from the deceitfulness of our heart, and the natural corruption that sticks to us. There is naturally in us pride and self-conceit; we are disposed and given to, any thing that is our own, though it be but a shew, is as good as others reality; to think our own light and knowledge, our own parts and gifts to be as good as those of any others whosoever they be. And with pride there is joined self-love; we cannot abide to think evil of ourselves, or to suspect ourselves: Though this self-love be indeed self-hatred, and is but love to our corruptions, and makes us, when we live in hatred to God, to think that we love him; so that we cannot be induced to think that we love him not; for we know that the love to God is good, and we love ourselves so well, that we cannot endure to think that we want it. Hence it is said of some in the last times, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3. *That they shall be covetous, proud, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, &c. having a form of godliness, and denying the power of it; and the fountain of all is self-love; for, saith he, men shall be lovers of their own selves:* And as self-love is the fountain of much evil, so it is the fountain of self-deceit, and keeps out any thing that may make men question their own condition; so that if a word come in and say, thou hast no ground for thy faith, the heart will be ready to answer and say, it cannot be that I am a self-deceiver; and self-love, as a partial judge, will offer to vindicate the man, and so makes him shift the challenge. Now when all these

these are put together, you may see how many grounds people have to go wrong upon; and men having hearts disposing and inclining them to go wrong, and little pains being taken to discover the deceit of them, is it any wonder that they think they believe, when indeed they believe not, and be empty-handed, having little or nothing to rest upon, while they think they are rich and want nothing? These are not fancied and far-fetched things, but obvious, and at hand, and may easily be gathered from your daily practice: In all which, it is our design and scope to bring you to try your long unquestioned peace; do not therefore think that it is impossible to be thus persuaded, as many of you are, and yet to be mistaken, which is another ground of mens deceit;) for Laodicea was very confident in *thinking herself to be rich and increased in goods, and to stand in need of nothing, when she was in the mean time poor, blind, miserable, wretched, and naked*: And the Galatians, as we may see, chap. v. 8. had *a persuasion which was not of God*. As there may be a persuasion of a point of doctrine, as being right, which yet is an error, so there may be a persuasion of a man's spiritual state as being right, and which he will stoutly maintain to be so, while in the mean time that persuasion is not of God that calleth him, but a strong delusion. If all that be faith that ye call faith, then certainly the way to heaven is much broader than the scripture hath chalked it out; and ministers needed not say, *Who believes our report?* for all should thus believe it. It will then, and must then turn to this; that your persuasion is not of him that calleth you; and if a deceit may lie and lurk under this persuasion of yours, ye have certainly so much the more need to put the business to trial.

And this is the last *use*, (which we cannot now insist on;) That seeing so many think they believe who believe not, and that there are but few that believe the report, and indeed rest on Christ for their salvation,

as he is offered to them in the gospel, it is your concernment to endeavour to put yourselves without the reach of this complaint, and to make it sure that ye have believed and received the report; is there any thing of concernment if this be not, even to make your calling and election sure? And that cannot be made sure as to you, till your faith be made sure. If we could prevail thus far with you, we would count it a blessed fruit of this and of many other sermons, even that some of you who have never questioned your faith, might be engaged first seriously to close with Christ, and then to put yourselves to the trial, that on distinct grounds ye might be able to say, *I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* There are many of you that talk of faith, and yet cannot only not assert your interest in Christ distinctly, nor cannot so much as give any solid grounds of your believing; and should not this, think ye, put you to try it; is there not a day coming wherein ye will all be tried whether your alledged faith was true faith, or but presumptuous? And wherein the conscience which is now quiet, and which it may be never kepted you from an hour's sleep, shall awake and put forth its sting, and shall bite and gnaw, and ye who shall continue under the power of this delusion, will be put to gnaw your tongues for pain and horror under the gnawings of your conscience. Ye that never knew in all your life what these things meant, had need to stand the more in awe, and to be afraid when ye come near death. Though it be a sad matter, that when we should be preaching, and would fain preach the doctrine of faith, it should, by reason of your delusion, be the great part of our work to be thus digging you out of your presumption, and overturning your carnal and ill-grounded hope; yet we have the greater confidence and the more to speak to, and insist on these truths, because they lie so near to the
great

great design of the gospel, and to your immortal souls. salvation; and though we are able to preach more plausible and sweet things to you, yet if these doctrines profit you not, these would not. Seeing therefore they are so profitable, we should not grow weary to speak, and ye should not be weary to hear them spoken of. Would to God ye were seriously and sincerely aiming to be clear in the matter of believing, and that ye stood in need, and were more capable of more pleasant truths; if so, we might have more comfortable, though we will not say more profitable doctrines to insist upon to you.



S E R M O N XII.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm
of the LORD revealed?*

WE have spoken at several occasions to this first part of the verse, and before we leave it, there is one *Use* several times hinted at already, to which there is good ground to speak, it being the design and purpose of these words to hold forth of what great concernment believing is, and of what great difficulty it is, and so many being to the ruin of their souls mistaken about it, there is ground to draw this *Use* of exhortation from it, to wit, That then all the hearers of this gospel would be exhorted to advert well to this, that they make faith sure in itself, and that they make it sure to themselves, seeing, as I said, so many are mistaken about it and beguile themselves. The more pressingly that the gospel calls for faith in

Christ, and the more weightily the Lord expostulates with the hearers of the gospel, because of their unbelief, they are doubtless so much the more concerned to receive it in its offer, and also to look well that they content not themselves with guessing at faith, and that they never think that things are well with them, except they can give good proof and warrant that they are so, and that it is saving faith that they have, seeing there are so many that satisfy themselves as being believers, when yet so few are believers indeed. The sad mistake and disappointment of many, should have so much influence upon us as to put us to more watchfulness, and to a more narrow trial of our own state and condition, that we may know how it is with us. All that we have spoken to the doctrines of this first part of the verse, may be as so many motives to stir you up to both these, and would to God we could be persuaded to this as the *use* of so many sermons, once to admit and take it for granted that it is the truth of God, that there is a necessity, an absolute necessity for us to be really rolled and cast on Jesus Christ by faith, for obtaining of life through him? Though this be a very common *doctrine*, and ye would think a very common *use* of it; yet it is the great thing that God requires in the gospel, and the neglect of it, or not receiving his Son, the very contest and quarrel that God hath with the hearers of it, and the cause of the ruin of so many souls that perish under the gospel. We shall therefore propose to you some considerations that may stir you up to this, and briefly answer a question in each of these two branches of the *use*.

And *first*, For stirring you up to this receiving of Christ by faith. 1. Consider if there be not a standing quarrel and controversy betwixt God and you for sin; and if there be, as no doubt there is, consider how that controversy is to be removed; is there any other possible way but by faith in Christ? If we were preaching to such as had never sinned, and were never

ver under the hazard of the wrath of God, there might possibly be a difficulty to persuade to a receiving of Christ; but when ye have all this in your conscience, that there is sin, and a curse following sin, and that there is no other way for removing that curse but by Jesus Christ, is there not reason to expect that ye should receive this truth? Will any of you think to stand and hold it out against God? And if not, then sure there is a necessity of believing in Jesus Christ, or of lying under the wrath of God for ever.

2. Consider that this gospel and word of salvation is preached to you in particular: When we speak of salvation, we do not say, that Christ was once preached to the Jews, or that in such a distant nation there is a door opened for salvation in the gospel: But we would turn over the words of the apostle (Acts xiii. 38.) to you, and say to you in his words; *Be it known to you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this Man, (to wit Jesus Christ) is preached to you remission of sins, &c.* and this brings the gospel near you, even to your door; it lays before you the way of access to God by Christ, and puts it so close and home to you, that Christ must either have a refusal, or a welcome from you. The first consideration of your own sinfulness and misery might put you to seek after a Saviour, though he were at a great distance; but this other brings him to your heart and mouth; and is it fit (think ye) to neglect such a fair occasion? And will it be wisdom, when salvation follows you, and cries after you, and wisdom lifts up its voice in the streets, saying, *O ye simple ones, how long will ye love foolishness?* &c. to stop your ear, or to run away from Christ, and to run upon your destruction? Do ye think that this gospel will be silent always, or that your conscience will be deaf and dumb always? There are many nations that have not the gospel so near them; and it is hard to know, but the day may come when ye would be content to buy an offer of the gospel

pel at a dear rate, and when there shall not be a Mediator, nor a days-man to be had between God and you; and these days will then be remembered with horror, which now ye securely slip over.

3. Consider what will come of this if ye do not believe the gospel; know ye not that many perish that hear the gospel; and that upon this same very ground, that they did not receive Christ and salvation through him offered to them therein, and whereof they are now deprived? Are there not many this day cursing in hell, under the wrath of God, that they let slip and passed over so many golden opportunities of the gospel without improvement? and know ye not that it will come to the same sad pass with you, if ye do not receive it? Do men live always? Is there not an appointed time for all men upon earth? If before we have savingly exercised faith on him for making peace with God, we be drawn to a reckoning before his tribunal, what will come of it? and are not our precious times going apace and always slipping by; and is not the work of faith by delays still the more difficult? are not our bonds still the more strengthened? and doth not our indisposition still grow the greater? and is it not very ordinary to see these who have slighted the work of faith in their youth, to live stupid in their old age, and die senseless?

4. Consider what sort of people they are, of whom the scripture speaks as unbelievers, and whom the word of God holds forth to be eternally secluded from the presence of God for the want of faith; many think that it is but the grossly profane, or such as never had so much as the form of religion, and such as others would scunner and loath to hear them but mentioned, that it is (I say) only such that are accounted unbelievers; but the scripture speaks of some *that seek to enter in and shall not be able*; that desire to be in heaven, and take some pains to win in, and yet are never admitted to enter into it, and what is the reason,

son, because they took not the way of believing for the obtaining of life and coming to heaven; they took the way of works, they took the way of prayer, of purposes, promises and resolutions to amend and grow better, quite overlooking Christ and the way of believing in him, and so took the way of presumption, and promised themselves peace when there was no true peace, nor any solid ground for it.

5. Consider (which is of affinity with the former consideration) them that are secluded from the presence of God for the want of faith, they are even men and women as we are, that lived in the same kingdom and city with us, that prayed in the same company with us, that thought themselves as sure of heaven as many of us do, that were guilty of the same or like sins that we are guilty of, that have heard many of the same preachings that we have heard, and yet they perish for want of faith, for not believing in the Son of God. Why then should we think that impossible as to us, that is so common and frequent in others? Is not the same nature in us that is in others, and are not our hearts naturally as deceitful and corrupt as those of others? and so may not we be beguiled as others? And is it not the same rule that he will walk by in judging of us, that he walked by in judging of others? What can be the reason that people will read and hear the word, and will promise to themselves heaven, when the same word clears it plainly, that destruction is that which they have to look for from the Lord: it is nothing else but this confident and proud presumption that many take for faith. Let not your precious opportunities slip away, and beguile not yourselves in such a concerning matter as faith is; ye will never get this loss made up afterwards if ye miss faith here.

Lastly, Consider the great necessity that the Lord hath laid upon all men and women, by a peremptory command and charge, to believe in the Son of God.

He

He hath not with greater peremptoriness required prayer, nor dependance upon him, nor any other duty, than he hath required this, 1 John iii. 23. *And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*; yea, its singled out as his main commandment: if that great inquiry be made, *What shall I do to be saved?* This is the answer, *Believe on Jesus Christ*. Do you think that our Lord (who hath so marked and signalized this command in so special a manner) will never take an account for the slighting of it? Or do you think to satisfy him by your other duties without minding this? It cannot be. Suppose ye should mourn all your life-time, and your life were a pattern to others, if ye want this one thing, faith in Christ, ye would be found transgressors, as having neglected the main work.

Now for the *Question*; ye will say, What is this we are bidding you do, when we bid you believe? *Ans^r*. When we call you to believe, we call you, 1. To be suitably affected with the sense of your own naughtiness, sinfulness, and hazard; till there be something of this, faith in our Lord Jesus hath no access, nor will ever get a welcome. Deep apprehensions of the wrath that is coming, and a standing in awe at the thoughts of our appearing before him, contribute much to it. I am not preaching desperation to you, as some mutter, but we would press upon you the faith of the word of God, that tells you what we are, and liveliness under that impression, that ye may not be stopped or let, till ye come to a thorough closure with Christ: The most part of hearers never come this length; and this is the reason why many stumble in the very threshold, and never make progress. 2. We call for and commend this to you, that ye would study to be thoroughly clear as to the usefulness and excellency of Jesus Christ, as to the efficacy of his death, as to the terms of the covenant of grace, whereby a sinner comes to obtain right

to him. To be sensible of sin and hazard without this, is the only way to make a man desperate and mad ; but when this is clear, it makes an open door to the sinner, that he may see whether to run from the wrath to come. I do not only mean that ye would get the catechism, and be able to answer all the questions concerning the fundamentals of religion contained therein, but that ye would also and mainly seek to have the faith of these things in your hearts, and to have faith in God, that ye may be persuaded, that he that was and is God, died for sinners, and that by the application of his satisfaction, sinners may obtain life, and that there is a sufficient warrant given to a sinner to hazard himself upon him. The first of these speaks the necessity of some sense ; the second holds out the necessity of a general faith, according to that word, Heb. xi. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* We must know that there is a warrant to come, and ground to expect acceptance from God upon our coming, or else we will never come to, nor believe in Christ. The third thing that we call you to, when we call you to believe, is, That the sinner would actually stretch out that faith, as the soul's hand for the receiving of Christ, and for the application of him to himself, and would actually cast himself upon the satisfaction of Jesus Christ for covering that sinfulness that is in him, and would catch hold of, and cleave to him that is an able Saviour, for keeping the sinner from sinking under the weight of sin that he lieth under : This is the exercise and practice of faith when it flows from the general doctrine of the necessity of believing such things to be truths in themselves, and then it is extended and put forth in practice, that we who are so certainly and sensibly lost, must needs share of that salvation which we believe to be in Jesus Christ, and so for that, roll ourselves on him. The first piece of sense may be in a reprobate,

the second piece of faith, that there is a sufficient salvation in Christ to be gotten by them that believe in him, may be in a devil; but this third of actual making use of the satisfaction of Christ, for paying our debt, and rolling ourselves upon him, that is the faith and exercise of it that is particular to a sound believer, and the very thing that constitutes a believer, and it is that which we commend to you, that ye may not stand and please yourselves with looking only upon Christ, but that ye may cast and roll yourselves over upon him, that Christ may get your weight, and that all your burdens and wants may be upon him, which to do ye must be enabled by the mighty power of grace, whereof the next part of the verse.

The second branch of the *Use* which follows upon this, is, That we would desire you not only to follow this way of making your peace with God, but to follow the trying and proving of it to your own satisfaction, that ye may be warrantably confident that it is so. There is a great difference betwixt these, to believe in Christ, and to be clear and certain that we do believe in him; as there is a necessity of the first, without which there cannot be peace with God, so there is a necessity of the second, though not simply, as without which there can be no peace with God, yet upon this account, as without which we cannot be so comforted in God. And seeing there are so many who do not believe, who yet think themselves to be believers, and seeing there is nothing more common among the hearers of the gospel, than to reject Christ offered in it; and to misbelieve, and yet nothing more common than to be confident that they do believe; there is good ground here to exhort you to put your faith to the touch-stone, that ye may know whether ye may confidently assert your own faith upon good ground, and abide by it. We would think if it were remembered, and seriously considered, how great a scarcity there is of believers, and how rare a
thing

thing it is to get any to receive Christ, that people needed not be much pressed to put their faith to the trial; and when there will not be one among many found who will pass under the account of a real believer with Jesus Christ, should not the most part suspect themselves, seeing the most part that hear the gospel are the object of this complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* or very few have believed it; ye would study to have some well grounded confidence in this, that ye are not presuming and going upon grounds that will fail you at last, but that ye be in case to say on solid grounds with the apostle, *I know whom I have believed*, &c. There is a faith and hope that will make many ashamed; and certainly, in the day of judgment, when Christ shall have to do with these persons, that never once thought to be thrust away from him, they of all men shall be thrust away from him with greatest shame. O! the confusion that will fill and overwhelm them who had a profession of Christ, and yet had never the root of the matter in them, above and beyond many others: Dare many of you upon the confidence ye have, look death in the face, it is no great matter to be confident in the time of health; but will ye then be able to comfort yourselves in the promises of God? do not promise to yourselves the things in the covenant, except ye be endeavouring in God's way to be sure ye are believers indeed. Our life depends upon our faith, but our consolation depends much upon our clearness that we have faith, and that we are in Christ, and therefore there is much need to press this upon you: There is no way to rid you of the terrors of God, and to make you comfortably sure of your particular interest in the promises of God, but by making it sure and clear that ye are believers in Christ indeed.

There are three or four sorts of people to whom we would speak a little here. 1. There are some who think that if they could do other duties, though they should never do this, to wit, to make their calling

and election sure, they would be and do well enough : Are there not many of you that never so much as set yourselves to try whether your faith would abide God's trial or not ? Ah ! Ah ! An atheistical indifferency, a slighting of the consolations of God, aboundeth amongst many ; so that they think the promises and the consolations that are to be gotten in the promises, are not so much worth, as to be thereby put to take pains to try and see, whether they belong to them or not ; but the day will come that many of you will curse yourselves for your neglecting and slighting of this. A second sort are those, who, because they were never sure of peace with God themselves ; and because they were never sure of their own faith, neither ever concernedly endeavoured to be so, they think its all but fancy that's spoken of assurance of faith, and of peace with God ; they think its but guessing at the best. There is such a sort of persons, who think they may be doing as they can, and not trouble themselves with such fancies, or nice things ; but if ye ask them what will come of them at last ? They will tell you, they will trust that to God. Think ye it nothing, that God hath laid so many commands on you to make your calling and election sure ? And think ye it nothing that he hath given so many marks to try it by ? And that some of the people of God do holily and humbly glory and boast so much of their communion with God, of their assurance of his love to them, and of their special interest in him ? Do not all these say, that there is such a thing as this to be had ? There is a third sort that please themselves with mere conjectures about this matter ; and the greater their security is, they persuade themselves the more that they have faith : this is as sad as any of the former, when they grant all, that men should make their calling and election sure, and should endeavour to be sure of their faith ; but in the mean time take peace with the devil, and peace with their lusts, for
peace

peace with God, and a covenant with hell and death, for a real bargain with God. This is as true as this word of God is, that there are many that put by all challenges by this, and never suspect their faith; they hope that all shall be well, and they must always believe; as if that were the whole duty of faith to keep down all challenges. A fourth sort is, even of the generation of them that have something of God in them, who fear in a manner to make all sure, and think it a piece of humility, and of holy and tender walking to maintain doubting, even as others think it faith to maintain presumption: They are always complaining, as if all things were wrong, and nothing right in their case, and so nourish and cherish misbelief: There is such a thing as this, that marreth even serious souls in their endeavours to make their calling and election sure; and as long as this is, they cannot win to the suitable discovery of this excellent grace that God calls them to exercise, even *faith* in the Lord Jesus: need we make use of motives to press you to this trial of your faith, and to this giving of all diligence to make it sure, who have specially hitherto neglected it? If ye knew any thing of the vexation that unbelief hath with it, and what horror in conscience from the sense of distance from God were, ye would think it a great matter to be clear in this thing; and if it were known and believed how this delusion and uncertainty of faith destroys the most part of men in the world, even of the visible church; durst men lie in their security as most do, without all endeavours to make it sure on good ground, that they do indeed believe? Durst they lie still under God's curse, if they thought themselves to be really under it, and did not foolishly fancy that it is otherwise with them? Durst men treasure up wrath to themselves, if they thought not that the hope they had were good enough? O! but presumption beguiles and destroys many souls; and particularly this same presumption
of

of peoples thinking themselves right when they are wrong, hath destroyed, and doth destroy, and will destroy more members of the visible church, than prophanity, drunkenness, whoredom, theft, desperation, or any other of these gross, and much abhorred evils do. This is the thing that locks men up in their sin, even their presumption, when they say on the matter, *We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our own heart?* It is this that makes men without fear, steal, and lie, and commit adultery, &c. that they say, *Is not the Lord among us?* Is not this the thing that keeps many of you that ye never tremble at the word of God? We have faith in God (say ye) and we will trust in him; therefore seeing presumption is so common, have ye not need to try your faith? If there were so much counterfeit money in the country, that it were a rare thing to get one good piece of money, ye would think yourselves greatly concerned and obliged to try it well, lest ye were cheated with base and counterfeit coin; is there not need then, yea, infinitely much more need for them that would be so wise as not to be beguiled about the salvation of their souls, to search and try whether their faith will abide God's trial or not?

Ye will readily move this Question. What then are the characters, or evidences of a solid and real faith that will abide the trial, by which the pretended faith that is among the men of this generation, may be examined and put to just trial?

I shall first name some direct scriptures, holding out some things essentially accompanying faith; and then shall add others, having more condescending characters for the more particular differencing of this, and helping to the decision of this great question.

The first mark whereby ye may try your faith is, the ground and rise of it; or that whereby it is begotten and cherished; *Faith comes* (saith the apostle, Rom.

Rom. x. 10.) *by hearing* : Doctrinal faith comes by the preaching of the gospel, and saving faith is wrought instrumentally by the same word of God it being the power of God to salvation ; it being the word that is the very ground of our faith : I would ask you from whence comes your faith, and what hand the word of God hath in it ? there are many that have a sort of faith not only without, but contrary to the word of God, whereby they believe that they will get heaven, while in the mean time this word of God does directly exclude them : got ye your faith maintained without ever knowing the necessity of a promise for that effect ? Can ye maintain your peace, and not have so much as any foundation in the truth and faithfulness of God to build it upon ? Never love that faith that hungers not after the word, that is supposed to be lively without being ever fed by the word, that cannot claim either its rise and original, or its growth from the word : I will not say from this or that word in particular, or at this or that time read or heard, but from the word of God ; the word is the very foundation that faith builds upon : if we look to what either accompanieth or followeth faith, there are some plain scriptures that will make that clear, as Acts xv. 9. *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.* (There was indeed once a great difference between Jews and Gentiles ; but now when he hath brought both to believe in Christ, the difference is removed) There is an efficacy in it to circumcise the heart, to purify it, and to banish lusts out of it ; for it closes and unites with Christ, and so brings him home to dwell in the heart ; and where Christ dwells he commands, and so whatever opposes him is banished : faith gives Christ welcome, and will give nothing welcome to dwell with him that is opposite and displeasing to him. Faith improves Christ for the subduing of its lusts, and mortifying its corruptions ; whereas before

fore there might be a fair outside of a profession, and something clean outwardly, and much filthiness and rottenness within; but when faith is exercised on Christ, it purifies from all filthiness of the spirit, as well as of the flesh, it applies the promises for that end, even to get the inside made clean as well as the outside: Yea, its main work is, to have the inside, the heart purified; that being the fountain of all the pollution that defiles the man, and brings the other necessarily along with it. Never love that faith that leaves the heart as a swines-sty to lusts, that leaves it swarming with unclean and vain thoughts, or that leaves the heart just as it was before; or that faith that only cleanseth the outside, and does no more: such a faith, however esteemed by the man, will never be accounted for true saving faith before God. I do not, I dare not say that believers will always discern this heart-purity or cleanness: But this I say, that true faith will set the man a work to purify the heart, and will be making use of Christ for that end; not only to have the arm of the dominion of sin broken, but to have the soul more and more delivered from the indwelling power of it: and this will be the design that he will sincerely drive, to get the heart purified within, as well as the outward man; inward heart-abominations will be grievous and burdensome to him as well as scandalous out-breakings.

A second place is, Gal. ii. 20, 21. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life, &c.* If ye would know a companion of true faith, here is one, it hath a life of faith with it: There is one life killed, and another life is quickened; the life that is killed is that whereby the man sometime lived to the law; *I am dead to the law*, says the apostle, a man's good conceit of himself that once he had, is killed and taken away; he wonders how it came that he thought himself holy, or a believer, or how he could promise to himself heaven
in

in the condition he was in: there is another life comes in the place of that, and it is a life that is quickened and maintained by; and from nothing in the man himself, but it is wholly from and by Christ: The believer hath his holiness and strength for doing all duties called for, and his comfort also from Christ; and he holds withal his very natural life, his present being in the world from Christ, his all is in Christ; his stock of life, strength and furniture is not in himself, but he lives by a continual traffic, as it were on bills of exchange betwixt Christ and him; when he wants, he sends a bill to Christ, and it is answered in every thing that he stands in need of, and that is good for him. He is a dead man, and he is a living man; and wherever true faith is, there the man is dead, and there the man is living: Do not I pray mistake it, by thinking that true faith is but vented, puts forth itself only in reference to this or that particular, or at this or that particular time only; for faith must be exercised not only by starts, as when we are under challenges for sin, or at prayer; but we must design and endeavour to exercise faith through all our life; that is, we must by faith look for every thing that is useful and needful for us from Christ; and be always endeavouring to drive on a common trade of living this way: we must be habituating ourselves to seek after peace, strength, and consolation, and what else we need, out of the fulness that is in him. This life of faith is to see the want of all things in ourselves, and yet to have all things in ourselves; contenting and comforting ourselves that there is strength in him, though we be weak in ourselves; and that he hath gotten the victory over all his and our enemies; and that we shall at last through him, be victorious in our own persons, contenting and satisfying ourselves that he hath complete righteousness, though we be bankrupt, and have none of our own; and betaking ourselves only to that righteousness for our justification

tion before God: thus making a life to ourselves in him, he living in us by his Spirit, and we living in him by faith? O sweet and desirable but mysterious life!

The third place is, Gal. v. 6. *In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love*: He doth not simply say faith, but *faith that works by love*: For faith is an operative grace: and this is the main vent of it, the thing by which it works, it works by love: faith is the hand of the new creature, whereby every thing is wrought, it having life from Christ; and we may say that love is in a manner the hand of faith, or rather like the fingers upon the hand of faith, whereby it handleth every thing tenderly, even out of love to God in Christ, and to others for his sake: faith works, and it works by love: That is a sound and good faith that warms the heart with love to Christ; and the nearer that faith brings the believer to him, it warms the heart with more love to others. And therefore love to the people of God is given as an evidence of one that is born of God; 1 John v. 1. because, wherever true faith is, there cannot but be love to the children of God flowing from love to him that begets them; that faith that is not affected with God's dishonour out of love to him, and that can endure to look upon the difficulties, sufferings and afflictions of the children of God, without sympathizing and being kindly affected therewith, is not to be taken for a sound faith, but to be suspected for a counterfeit.

The fourth place is, James ii. 14. *Shew me thy faith by thy works, &c.* True faith hath always sound holiness with it, in all manner of conversation in the design and endeavour of the believer, which is withal through grace in some measure attained: What avails it for a man to say that he loves another, when being naked or destitute, he bids him depart in peace, be warmed, be filled; and yet in the mean time gives him

him nothing that he stands in need of; would not such a poor man think himself but mocked? even so, will not God reckon you to be but mock believers, or mockers of faith, when ye profess yourselves to be believers in Christ, while in the mean time ye have neither indeed heart-purity, nor holiness in your outside conversation? that is but such a faith as devils may have that will never do you good: Ye would believe this for a truth, that there will never a faith pass for faith in God's account; and so there should never a faith pass for faith in your account; but that faith that sets a man at work to the study of holiness; that faith that works by love, that faith that purifies the heart, and that faith that puts the person in whom it is, to study to have Christ living in him, and himself living in Christ.

I promised to name a few scriptures that speak forth some more condescending characters of faith. And 1. I would think it a good token of faith, to have men afraid of missing and falling short of the promises, which may be gathered from Heb. iv. 1. That stout confidence that thinks it is impossible to miss the promises, is a suspected and dangerous faith, not to be loved; it is a much better faith that fears, than that faith that is more stout, except there be a sweet mixture of holy stoutness and fear together. It is said, Heb. 11. 7. that *by faith Noah being moved by fear, prepared an Ark, &c.* Noah had the faith of God's promise, that he should be kept from being drowned in the deluge with the rest of the world; and yet he was mourning and trembling in preparing the Ark. If there were much faith among you, it would make many of you more holily afraid than ye are. Love not that faith the worse that ye never hear a threatening but ye tremble at it, and are touched by it to the quick. 2. It is a good token of saving faith, when it hath a discovery and holy suspicion of unbelief waiting on it, so that the person dare not so confide in and trust his

own faith, as not to dread unbelief, and to tell Christ of it. There is a poor man that comes to Christ, Mark ix. 23, 24. to whom the Lord saith, *If thou canst believe, or canst thou believe?* Yes, Lord, (says he) *I believe, help thou mine unbelief*; there was some faith in him, but there was also unbelief mixed with it; his unbelief was so great that it was almost like to drown his faith; but he puts it in Christ's hand, and will neither deny his faith nor his unbelief, but puts the matter sincerely upon Christ, to strengthen his faith, and to amend and help his unbelief. It is a suspected faith that's at the top of perfection at the very first, and ere ever ye wot. - There are some serious souls, that think because they have some unbelief, that therefore they have no faith at all; but true faith is such a faith that is joined with suspected, and feared, or seen unbelief. That faith is surest where people fear and suspect unbelief, and see it, and when they are frightened with their unbelief, and cry out under it, and make their unbelief an errand to Christ, it is a token that faith is there. 3. The third character is, That it will have with it a cleaving to Christ, and a fear to presume in cleaving to him. There will be two things striving together, an eagerness to be at him, and a fear they be found presumptuous in meddling with him, and an holy trembling to think on it; yet notwithstanding it must and will be ventured upon. The woman spoken of Mark v. 28. reckoning thus with herself, *If I can but touch his cloaths I shall be whole*; and she not only believes this to be truth, but cut crouds and thrusts in to be at him; yet v. 33. when she comes before Christ, she trembles as if she had been taken in a fault, not having dared to come openly to him, *but behind him*; she behaved to have a touch of him, but she durst not in a manner own and avouch her doing of it, till she be unavoidably put to it. It is a suspected and unsound faith that never trembled at offering to believe; there is reason to be

be jealous that faith not to be of the right stamp, that never walked under the impressi^on of the great distance between Christ and the person, the sense whereof is the thing that makes the trembling, I say not desperation, nor any utter distrust of Christ's kindness, but trembling arising from the consideration of the great distance and disproportion that's between him and the person. Faith holds the sinner a going to Christ, and the sense of its own sinfulness and worthlessness keeps him under holy fear, and in the exercise of humility. Paul once thought himself a brave man (as we may see Rom. vii. 9.) but when he was brought to believe in Christ, he sees he was a dead and undone man before. I give you these three marks of a true faith from that chapter. 1. It discovers a man his former sinfulness, and particularly his former self-conceit, pride, and presumption. *I was*, saith Paul, *alive without the law once, &c.* a man living upon the thoughts of his own holiness; *but when the law came, I died*; he fell quite from these high thoughts. A second mark is, a greater restlessness of the body of death, it becoming in some respect worse company, more fretful and struggling than ever it did before; *sin revived*, saith Paul, though he had no more corruption in him than he had before, but it awaked and bestirred itself more. I dare say, that though there be not so much corruption in a believer as there is in a natural man, yet it struggleth much more, and is more painful and disquieting to the believer, and breeds him a great deal more trouble; for, says the apostle, on the matter when God graciously poured light and life in me, sin took that occasion to grow angry, and to be enraged that such a neighbour was brought in beside it, it could not endure that; as an unruly and currish dog barks most bitterly when an honest guest comes to the house; so doth corruption bark and make more noise than it did before when grace takes place in the soul. There are some that think they
have

Have the more faith, because they feel no corruption stir in them ; and there are others that think they have no faith at all ; because they feel corruption struggling more, and growing more troublesome to them ; but the stirring and struggling of corruption, if men be indeed burdened, and affected, and afflicted with it, will rather prove their having of faith than their wanting of it. Love that faith well that puts and keeps men contending in the fight with the body of death ; for tho' this be not good in itself that corruption stirreth, yet sin is of that sinful nature, that it flees always more in their face that look God and heavenwards, than of others that are sleeping securely under its dominion. A third mark is, when the soul hath never peace in any of its conflicts or combats with corruption, but when it resolves in faith exercised on Jesus Christ, as it was with Paul, in that chapter after his conversion. That is a sound faith that not only makes peace at first by Christ, but that cannot (to say so) fight one fair stroke in the spiritual warfare, nor look corruption in the face, nor promise to itself an issue from any assault of the enemy, but by faith in Jesus Christ, as it was with the apostle, who toward the end of that chapter, lamentably cries, *O ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?* Yet immediately subjoins faith's triumphing in Christ, *I thank God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord ;* he, perhaps, before his conversion, thought he could do well enough all alone ; but it is not so now, when he can do nothing without Christ, especially in this sore war with his corruption. That is a sound faith that makes use of Christ in every thing it is called to, that joins him, I mean Christ, in the work on every occasion, and particularly when it comes as it were to grappling and hand-blows with this formidable enemy the body of death, this monster, whereof when one head is cut off, another as it were starts up in its place.

For a close of this purpose, I beseech and intreat
such

such of you as are strangers to saving faith (who are I fear the greatest part) to consider seriously all I have spoken of the nature and native evidences of it, that you may be undeceived of your soul-ruining mistakes about it, and let sincere and sound believers, from all, be more cleared, confirmed, and comforted in their faith.



S E R M O N XIII.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

— *And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

THERE are many mistakes in the way of religion, wherewith the most part are possessed, and amongst the rest there is one, that generally the hearers of the gospel think it so easy to believe, that there is no difficulty in that by any thing; they think it hard to pray, to keep the sabbath, to be holy, but the most part think there is no difficulty in believing; and yet unbelief is so rife, and faith so rare and difficult, that the prophet Isaiah here in his own name, and in name of all the ministers of the gospel cries out, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* he complains that he could get but very few to take the word off his hand; and because it weighted him to find it so, and because he would fain have it to take impression on his hearers, he doubles expressions to the same purpose. *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* which in sum is, there is much preaching and many hearers of the gospel, but little believing of it, few in whose heart the work of faith is wrought; it is but here

here one and there one that this gospel hath efficacy upon, for uniting of them to Jesus Christ, and for working a work of saving grace in them; the effectual working of God's grace reaches the hearts but of a few.

For opening the words, we shall speak a little to these three. 1. To what is meant by the *arm of the Lord*. 2. To what is meant by the *revealing* of the arm of the Lord. 3. To the scope and dependance of these words on the former.

For the *first*, In general know, the *arm* of the Lord is not to be understood *properly*; the Lord being a Spirit, hath no arms, hands, nor feet, as men have; but it is to be understood *figuratively*, as holding out some property or attribute of God. By the *arm* of the Lord then we understand in general the power of God, the arm of man being that whereby he exerteth his power, performeth exploits, or doth any work: So the *arm* of the Lord is his power whereby he produceth his mighty acts; as it is said, Psalm cxviii. 15. *The right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly*: xcviii. 1. *His hand and his arm hath gotten him the victory*; and because the power of God is taken either more generally for that which is exerted in the works of common providence, or more particularly for that which is put forth in the work of saving grace: We take it here in short to be the grace of God exerting its power, in and by the gospel, for the converting of souls, and causing them savingly to believe; so Rom. i. 16. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes*; not simply as it consists in speaking of good, sweet, and seasonable words, but as it cometh backed by the irresistible power of the grace of God, as the word is, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *We preach Christ, to the Jews a stumbling-block*; and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God; and that it is so to be taken

taken here, the connexion of these words with the former will make it clear ; for sure he is not speaking of the power of God in the works of common providence, but of his power in the conversion of souls to Christ ; even of that power which works saving faith in the elect.

For the *second*, the *revealing* of the arm of the Lord : By this we do not understand the revealing of it *objectively* as its brought to light by preaching of the gospel ; for thus it is revealed to all the hearers of the gospel ; its in this respect not kept hid, but brought forth clearly to them in the word. And therefore *secondly*, The revealing of this arm or power of the Lord, is to be understood of the *subjective* inward manifesting of it, with efficacy and life to the heart, by the effectual operation of the Spirit of the Lord ; as its said of the great things prepared for them that love God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit* : It is that which is called, 1 Cor. ii. *The demonstration of the spirit and of power*, which make plain and powerful to the spirit of the hearer inwardly that which the word preacheth outwardly to the ear, which without this would strike only on the ear, and yet remain still an hidden mystery : This is the *revealing* of the Lord's arm that is here spoken of ; because it is that on which believing dependeth, and of the want whereof the prophet sadly complaineth, even where there was much preaching.

For the *third*, to wit, the scope, dependance, and connexion of these words with the former, we conceive they come in, both for confirmation and for explication of the former words. 1. For confirmation, there are, as hath been said, but few that believe ; for there are but few that have this saving and effectual work of God's grace reaching their heart ; tho' they have the word preached to them, yet they have not the arm of the power of God's grace manifested to them ; and so he confirms his former doctrine con-

cerning the paucity of believers under the preaching of the gospel. *First*, By asserting the fewness of them that are brought to believe, to be converted, and effectually called by the gospel; which comes to pass through their unbelief. And, *secondly*, By asserting their fewness in respect of God's sovereign applying of his grace in the gospel, which is but to few; its but few that believe, for its but few that he makes effectual application of his grace to. 2. We say it comes in to clear and explicate the former words, whether we take it by way of a reason, or of answer to an objection; for if it be said, how can it be that Isaiah, Paul, yea, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself, should preach so powerfully, and yet that so few should believe? He answers, Its not to be marvelled at, in respect of God, as if he were frustrated of his design; no such matter: Its because the power of Jesus Christ is revealed but to few; and we take this the rather to be the meaning of these words; because when Christ is preaching, and many take offence and stumble, John vi. 43, 44. he says, *Murmur not among yourselves, no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him*; there must be an effectual work of the grace of God put forth on the heart, else none will believe on me: so its said, John xii. 37, 38. *that they believed not on him, that the saying of Isaiahs might be fulfilled which he spoke, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? therefore they could not believe; because that Isaiahs said again, He hath blinded their eyes, &c.* he speaketh not so to apologize for, or to excuse their unbelief, but to shew the connexion that is betwixt the efficacy of the work of grace, and believing or turning to God, that where the powerful and effectual work of grace goeth not forth with the preached gospel, there will be then no believing nor conversion, no saving change of the person from nature to grace.

That which we would say from these words, may
be

be drawn to three doctrines, which I shall first propose, and then clear and apply them for use. The first is, That in the work of conversion and begetting of saving faith, there is requisite and necessary, besides the preaching of the word, a distinct, inward, peculiar, real, immediate, efficacious, and powerful work of the Spirit of the Lord on the hearts of as many hearers as are converted by this gospel. 2. That it is but few of many hearers in whom the Lord thus efficaciously and effectually works by his Spirit and power of his grace; its but here one and there one, a very few who are thus wrought upon and converted. 3. That there is a necessary and inseparable connexion betwixt this inward and efficacious work of the Spirit, and faith or conversion. Where this work of grace is not, there cannot be faith; and where it is, faith necessarily must be, otherwise these two could not be commensurable, of equal extent, and reciprocal; *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* He is not, neither can be a believer to whom it is not revealed; and he is, and cannot but be a believer to whom he is revealed.

For the *first*, We say there is in the work of conversion, and begetting of faith, beside the preaching of the gospel, a distinct, inward, peculiar, real, immediate, efficacious, and powerful work of the Spirit of the Lord requisite and necessary for conversion and begetting of faith, to convince of sin, and to humble for it, to enlighten the mind in the knowledge of Christ, to renew the will and affections, and to persuade and enable the soul of the sinner to embrace and receive Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the gospel. We shall *first* take notice of, and clear some words in the doctrine, and then confirm it.

First, For clearing of some words in the doctrine, we say, 1. It is a *distinct* work of the Spirit, distinguished and separable from the word; though it goes along as he pleaseth with the word, yet it is not as if

there were some power infused into the word, and went always and necessarily along with the word, which is the foolish and groundless conceit of some; for altho' it accompany the word, yet its from a distinct agent, working, and a distinct work, and is inseparable (as I said) from the word, tho' it be wrought on the heart of the same sinner to whose ear the word is preached. 2. It is an *inward* work of the Spirit; for besides the outward and external preaching and calling by the word, there is an inward, powerful, effectual work and calling of the Spirit in the conversion of a sinner, which speaks to the heart, as well as the word speaks to the ear; so that this work of the Spirit that goes along in conversion, is much more than any external persuasion of the preached word can produce. 3. We say its a peculiar work, to difference it from what is common to the hearers of the gospel; for it is a work that is peculiar to them whom the Lord converts, and is applied to none other, but to those in whom he works faith, and whom he effectually calleth by his grace. It is a peculiar work then and not common; for if it were common to all the hearers of the gospel, and not peculiar to some; these two could not go together and be commensurable; *Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* 4. We say its a *real* work as well as a powerful: a real work of the Spirit, that is not only able and powerful to produce the effect, and to convert the sinner, but real and powerful in producing and bringing of it about, and to pass by a real influence of the Spirit actually renewing the will, infusing and creating the habits of grace, and particularly the very habit of faith amongst others in the soul; which is quite another thing than the supposing and saying that a man hath power to believe and be converted; that there is no more requisite to his conversion, but to persuade him to put forth that power and strength which he hath into exercise or practice.

Its a real work of the Spirit, and a powerful bringing about of the conversion of the sinner in a physical way, as they say in the school. 5. We say it is an *immediate* work of the Spirit on the heart, to difference it from a mediate persuasion, or moral swasion (as it is called) as if there were no more requisite in conversion but God's enlightening of the mind, and by that persuading the will to close with Jesus Christ, without any immediate work of the Spirit on the will itself. In this doctrine, we take in all these according to the scripture; in opposition to the several errors invented by men of corrupt minds, about the work of conversion and of saving faith; God's arm and hand must be revealed, the work and power of his efficacious grace must be put forth, for moving and inclining the heart and affections, and for determining the will itself.

We might further clear and confirm all these from that famous instance of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. Where Paul preaching to some women, its said of her, *Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul*; where we find these things differenced. 1. The Lord's powerful work on her heart from Paul's preaching to her ear, the Lord *opened* her heart. 2. Its an inward work, for its on the *heart*. 3. Its a peculiar work, its not all who hear Paul preach whose hearts are opened, but its the heart of one Lydia. 4. Its in the nature of it a real work, that makes a real inward change on her. 5. Its an immediate work; for the Lord not only enlightens her judgment, but goes down to the heart and opens it, and works a change in it immediately. Paul indeed by his preaching opens the way of salvation to all that heard him, from which, tho' many go away with their hearts unopened; yet the Lord hath a secret, mysterious, real, inward work on her heart, which is evidenced by the effect; for he not only enlightens her mind, but makes her willingly yield to the call of the gospel, by opening of her heart.

In the *second* place, To speak a little for confirmation of the doctrine, we would consider these four or five grounds or reasons, to shew that there is such a work of the Spirit wherever faith is begotten, and that most intelligibly in them that are of age. 1. It's clear from these places of scripture, where there is an express distinction and difference put betwixt the outward ministry of the word, and this inward, powerful, efficacious work of grace on the heart, and wherein the great weight of conversion is laid on this inward work, and not on the outward ministry of the word; as Deut. xxix. 4. where the Lord by Moses tells the people, how many things they had seen and heard; and yet says he, *The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.* They had the outward means in plenty, when they wanted in the mean time the inward power; the gift of a spiritual life, and the making them spiritually active to exert it, was with-holden, and therefore they did not savingly perceive, see, or hear; John vi. 44. *Murmur not among yourselves, no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; its written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God, every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me;* where there is very clearly a distinction put betwixt the outward teaching and the Father's drawing, betwixt the minister's teaching and God's teaching. It was one thing to be taught outwardly by Christ as the prophet of his church, and another thing to be drawn and taught inwardly of the Father: this inward teaching is called *drawing*, to shew that it is not external oratory or eloquence consisting in words, to persuade, that can effect the business, but a powerful draught of the arm of the Lord reaching the heart. There are several other scriptures full and clear to this purpose; as Psal. ciii. 3. and Acts xi. 21. A *second* ground, of kin to the former, is from the many and various expressions
that

that are used in the scriptures for holding forth this work of the Spirit of God in conversion, that point out, not only on hand working, and a work wrought; but an inward powerful way of working and bringing about the work, as Jer. xxxi. 34. *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*: Ezek. xi. 19. *I will give them one heart, I will put a new spirit within them, and will take away the stony heart of their flesh*. Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27. *A new heart will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you, &c.* Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me*; it is called the Father's *drawing*, John vi. 44. In the saints prayers (as Psal. li.) it is called even as to further degrees of this work, or restoring of lost degrees, *creating of a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within*: And many more like expressions there are, which shew not only man's impotency and inability to convert or savingly to change himself; but also that to his conversion there is necessary, an inward, real, peculiar, efficacious, powerful work of the Spirit of grace. 3. It is clear, and may be confirmed from the power of God, which he puts forth and applies in the begetting of faith, and in working conversion: It is not a mediate work whereby he only persuades congruously, as some love to speak; but an immediate and efficacious work, whereby with mighty power he works conversion. *It is God*, saith the apostle, Phil. ii. 13. *that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*: And as he not only persuadeth, but effectually worketh; so he not only works on the judgment to the enlightening of it, but on the will, to incline and determine it, by curing it of its crookedness and perverseness, backwardness, obstinacy, and rebellion; and the power whereby he worketh his great work is said, Eph. i. 19. *To be that same mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, that ye may know*, saith the apostle, *what is*
the

the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, &c. It is such a power that works faith, and so exercised in the working of faith, as it was in the raising of Christ from the dead. Now, could there be use for such a power, if there were no more requisite to conversion, but an objective swasion, or a bare proposal of the object with external persuasion to embrace it, wherein the soul is left to itself to chuse or refuse as it pleaseth? Certainly if there were no more, considering our natural enmity to God and his grace, the devil and corruption would have much more influence, and a far greater stroke upon the heart to closing up of the same in unbelief, than any outward persuasion would have as to the opening of the heart, and the begetting of faith; therefore his power is necessarily called for, and the Lord addeth it in converting sinners, else the work would for ever lie behind: and if men be spiritually dead in trespasses, (as all men by nature are) as real a power must be exerted in raising and quickening them, as there is exerted in raising and quickening the dead. 4. It may also be cleared from some in whom this power is exerted, as some children, some deaf persons, and others, whom we cannot deny to be reached by the grace of God; and yet there can be no other way how they are reached, but by this effectual, efficacious, and immediate powerful work of the Spirit, they not being capable of reasoning or persuasion by force of argument.

We shall only add two reasons further, to confirm, and some way to clear, why it is that the Lord works, and must work distinctly, inwardly, really, powerfully, and immediately in working faith, and converting of sinners. The first is drawn from the exceeding great deadness, indisposition, averfeness, perverseness, impotency, inability, and impossibility that is in us
naturally

naturally for exercising faith in Christ. If men naturally be dead in sins and trespasses; if the mind be blind, if the affections be quite disordered, and if the will be utterly corrupted and perverted; then that which converts, and changes and renews them, must be a real, inward peculiar, immediate, powerful work of the Spirit of God, there being no inward seed of the grace of God in them to be quickened: that seed must be communicated to them, and sown in them e'er they can believe, which can be done by no less nor lower power than that of God's grace: Its not oratory, as I have said, nor excellency of speech that will do it; its such a work as begets the man again, and actually renews him. The second is drawn from God's end in the way of giving grace, communicating it to some and not to others: If God's end in being gracious to some and not to others, be to commend his grace solely and to make them alone indebted to grace, then the work of grace in conversion must be peculiar and immediate, and wrought by the power of the Spirit of God, leaving nothing to man's free-will to difference himself from another, or on which such an effect should depend: But if we look to scripture, we shall find, that its God's end in the whole way and conduct of his grace, in election, redemption, effectual calling, justification, &c. to commend his grace solely, and to stop all mouths, and cut off all ground of boasting in the creature, as it is, 1 Cor. iv. 7. *Who makes thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive?* This being certain, that if the work of grace in conversion, were not a distinct, inward, peculiar, real, immediate work, and did not produce the effect of itself by its own strength, and not by virtue of any thing in man; the man would still be supposed to have had some power for the work in himself, and some way to have differenced himself from another; but the Lord hath

designed the contrary, and therefore the work of grace in conversion must be suitable to his design.

Use 1. The first use is for the refutation of several errors, and for the confirmation of a great truth of the gospel, which we profess.

It serves I say, First, for the refutation of errors, which in such an auditory we love not to insist on; yet we cannot here, the ground being so clear, and the call so cogent, forbear to say somewhat briefly this way, and the rather that the devil hath taken many ways, and driven on many designs, to weaken the estimation of God's grace among men, and to exalt proud nature; and that there is here a collection and concatenation of those designs and ways against the truth, which this doctrine holds forth, vented by corrupt men. As, 1. They will have nothing to be necessarily applied for the working of conversion, but the preaching of the word; taking it for granted, that all men have universal or common grace, which God by his sovereignty, say they, was obliged to give, else he could not reasonably require faith of them; and upon this comes in the pleaded for power of free-will, and man's ability to turn himself to God: others by pleading for this notion of a light within men, come to be patrons of proud, petulant and corrupt nature, as if there were need of nothing to beget saving faith but that common grace within, and oratory or swasion of mouth from without. And hence they came to maintain the foulest errors, which have not only been condemned by the church of God in all ages, but have even by some papists been abominated; and many of these same errors are creeping in even in these times wherein we live; the design whereof is to tempt men to turn loose, vain, and proud, and to turn the grace of God into wantonness; as if they needed not at all to depend on God and his grace, having a sufficient stock within themselves, on which they can live well enough. And it is not only the errors of Papists, Pelagians,

lagians, Socinians, Arminians, or errors in the judgment that we have to do with; but of such, as overturn the very foundation of the work of man's salvation; and who, though pretending to higher notions, do yet go beyond all these. But if it be true, that in the work of conversion, beside the preaching of the word, there is a distinct, real, inward, peculiar, immediate, efficacious work of the Spirit, necessary for bringing about such an effect; then there is no common or universal grace that all the hearers of the gospel have; nor is there any power or ability in man to believe of himself; otherwise there were no necessity of such a work as this for the converting of a sinner: The prophet needed not to cry, *Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* And Christ needed not say, *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him*: For men might come without drawing, and believe without the revelation of God's arm. But in opposition to that, we say, and have made it clear, that the work of conversion is brought about by a distinct, peculiar, powerful, real and immediate work of the Spirit on the heart, whereby he not only enlightens the mind, but renews the will, and rectifies the affections. 2. There is another error that this refutes, which seems to be more subtle; for some will grant a necessary connection betwixt the effect, and the grace of God, who yet say that it is suasion or persuasion (for here we take these for the same,) and so and so circumstanced to prevail with some, that brings about the effect or work of conversion in them, and not in others where that persuasion is not so circumstanced; but this opinion lays not the weight of conversion on the arm of the Lord, but on some circumstances accompanying the work, and leaves still some ground of boasting in the creature. 3. A third error which this doctrine refutes, is that of some others, who will have grace necessarily to go along with the word in the working of faith, but so as

it reacheth not the will, but that the will necessarily determines itself, as if the will were not corrupt, or as if that corruption that is in the will were indeed no corruption, as if that corruption that is in the will could be any more removed from the will without the immediate work of the Spirit upon it, than darkness can be removed from the judgment without the Spirit's immediate work on it : But seeing the will is the prime seat of man's perverseness while in nature, and the principal part to be renewed ; it is a strange thing to say, that in the work of conversion, other faculties and powers of the soul must be renewed, and yet that this which comes nearest to the life of the soul should be neglected, or not stand in need of renovation : but from this text it is clear, that in conversion the arm of the Lord must be revealed, and that there is a powerful work of grace that not only presents reasons from the word to move the will, but really regenerates and renews the will : Now what is for the refutation of these errors serves also to confirm us in the truth of the doctrine opposite to these.

2. It serves to refute something in mens practice, and that is, their little sense of the need of grace ; most part come and hear sermons as if they had the habit of faith, and as if it were natural to them, and pretend to the exercise of faith, never once suspecting their want of faith, nor thinking that they stand in need of such a work of grace to work it in them, as if it were impossible for them not to believe ; hence many think that they have grace enough, and if they pray, it is that they may do well, never minding the corruption of nature that is in them ; and indeed it is no wonder that such persons fall readily into error, when their practice says plainly they think they have grace enough already.

The second *doctrine* is, That this distinct, real, inward, efficacious, powerful work of the grace of God in conversion, is not common to all the hearers of the gospel,

gospel, but is a rare thing applied but to few, and even as rare as faith. And what we touched on to evidence the rarity of faith, will serve also to evidence the rarity of this work of grace in conversion; it is in as many as are believers, and are saved, that the work of grace is revealed, and no more, Jer. iii. 41. *I will take one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion, saith the Lord*; it is two or three in the corner of a parish, or in the end of a town, to speak so, who are converted, and the rest are suffered to lie in black nature. If the reason hereof be inquired; this might be sufficient to stop all mouths, which the Lord gives, Mat. xi. 28. *Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight*; it is of the Lord, who is debtor to none, and *who*, as it is, Rom. ix. 15. *shews mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardens*; and here we must be silent, and lay our hand on our mouth, and answer no more, all being found guilty; he is just in what he doth, in calling or not calling effectually, as he pleaseth. And yet, *secondly*, The Lord hath thought fit to call few of many, for holy and wise ends. As 1. To hold forth his own sovereignty, and that he is free, and will walk freely in the dispensing of his own grace. Hence, he not only takes few, but ordinarily those that are the most mean, contemptible, silly, and in a manner foolish, of the multitude of hearers; *It is not many noble, not many wise, according to the flesh, not many rich, not many learned*, that he chooseth and converteth, very ordinarily he hides his grace from these; it is but seldom that he calls and takes the stout and valiant man, and the learned scholar, but it is this and that poor man, the weaver, the shoe-maker, the simple plough-man, &c. whom most ordinarily he calls, when he suffers others to continue in their sin. 2. That he may make all the hearers of the gospel walk in holy fear and awe of him, he reveals his grace in few; it is not the multitude that believes, but here one and there one, that

all

all that have the offer of grace may fear least they miss it and receive it in vain, and may be careful to entertain and make right use of the means of grace, and may withal cherish the spirit in his motions, and not grieve him. O! if ye knew and believed what a rare thing the work of the spirit of grace is, ye would be fear'd to quench, extinguish, or put out any of his motions. 3. As to the godly, he does thus, to make them admire, adore, and praise his grace, and the power of it so much the more.

The *uses* are three. 1. It serves to move all to reverence, adore, and admire the grace of God, and his sovereign way in it; presume not to debate or dispute with him, because they are few that believe, and few that he hath determined his grace for; it is an evidence of his dread, a proof of his sovereignty, in which he should be silently stooped unto, and reverently adored, and not disputed with; we ought to bound all our reasoning within his good pleasure, who might have taken many, and left few, or taken none as pleased him; and we should not think strange, nor fret that the gospel is powerful but on few, here is the reason of it that may quiet us, the Lord hath determined effectually to call but few, and yet he will not want one of his own; *All that the Father hath given to Christ shall come to him*, though none come but as they are *drawn*. A thing that we should be sensible of, but yet calm and quiet our spirits, rather wondering that he hath chosen and called none, than fret because he hath past by many.

Use 2. The second use is to exhort you that are hearers of the gospel, and have not had this distinct and powerful work of grace begetting faith in you, to be persuaded of this truth, that faith and the work of grace is no common thing. The most part, alas! think that they have grace, and that it is not one of many that want it, they will readily say, it is true I cannot believe of myself, but God hath given me the grace.

grace. But I would ask you this question, Do you think that grace is so common a thing that it comes to you, and ye never knew how, or so common that never a body wants it? If not, how cometh it then to pass that ye think and speak of grace as ye do? We would think it a great length, if many of you could be persuaded of your gracelesness. It is not our part to point particularly at the man and woman, though the deeds of many of you say within our heart, that there is no fear of God before your eyes, and that many of you think ye have grace who never had it; and therefore we would say these three or four things to you. 1. Begin and suspect yourselves that matters are not right betwixt God and you, we bid none of you despair, but we bid the most part of you be suspicious of your condition; suspect, nay, be assured, that hypocrisy is not grace, and that your presumption is not faith; for if but few get grace, then many should suspect themselves, and seeing grace is so rare a thing, do not ye think it common. 2. Neglect no means that may bring you through grace to believe, but be diligent in the use of them all, of the word, prayer, sacraments, meditations, &c. It is by these that the Lord begets grace, and by neglecting them, ye may make yourselves guilty of destroying your own souls. 3. Beware of quenching the Spirit in any of his operations or motions, of smothering or putting out any challenges or convictions. If the conscience be at any time touched, or the affections tickled, go not away as the temporary believer doth, sitting down there without going any further. Fear to strangle the beginnings of the life of grace, for grace may begin at little; and if you quench any motion, conviction, or challenge, ye know not if ever ye shall meet with the like again; because when he knocked hard at your heart, ye held him out and kepted him at the door; and ye may be in hazard of that terrible charge, Acts vii. 31. *Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye have always.*

ways resisted the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye. 4. Seeing this work is not common to all hearers of the gospel, but peculiar to some, labour to have it made sure to yourselves, by putting it to proof and trial in good earnest.

Use 3. The third use is for you that are believers, (and would God there were many such,) to whom I would also speak three or four words. 1. Learn from this to be humble. *What hast thou, man, but what thou hast received? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast, as if thou hadst not received it?* O! but it is unsuitable to believers who are free-graces-debtors and beggars (whereof yet none need to think shame,) to be proud and forget themselves: Thou hast nothing, believer, to boast of, but that he hath favoured thee with his grace; and shouldest thou be proud of that, as if thou had made thyself thus? Therefore guard watchfully against all puffing up, self-conceit, and high-mindedness, and study to be humble, and to carry a low sail, else thou mayest break out into some scandalous offence, and may become a shame and reproach to the gospel. We commend humility to you above many things; for we think that in these days, pride is like to break their necks; for when once conceit creeps in, they begin to think they are so far advanced in holiness, that they must not keep company with others, nor join in worship with them; and from that they go to another thing, and from that to a third, that it is hard to tell where they will halt or end; they grow so giddy, that they are scarce like to leave so much ground as themselves may stand upon. O! be ashamed of pride, it is a most intolerable thing to be proud of that which God hath given, wherein ye have no more hand, and whereof ye can no more boast, than they who never had it. 2. Be thankful and give God the praise of what ye have gotten; *It becomes the upright to be thankful.* It is not a little matter to have God's power manifested in the working of faith and
con-

conferring grace; the temporal throne and kingdom; and great things in the world, are nothing to this, it is peculiar to the Lord's own, and not common: many get their fill of the world, who never get, nor will get this; the world is of so little value with the Lord, that to speak so, he doth not much regard who get it, though it be exactly distributed by his providence, but converting and confirming grace is peculiar to his favourites; being therefore clear that he hath bestowed grace on you, O how should ye exult in blessing God, as David did, for giving you counsel to make choice of such a portion, and for his powerful determining your heart by his grace to embrace it, for which ye have not yourselves to thank, but God. 3. Be compassionate and tender towards others, considering that it is only grace that hath made the difference betwixt you and them, and not any good nature in you, which was not in them as some foolishly fancy. Be not puffed up at the faults and falls of any, but rather mourn for them as well as for your own, and be the more humble when ye think of the difference that grace hath made, lest ye fall; and since your standing is by grace, be not high-minded, but fear. Of all persons it worst becomes you to be unconcerned, and much less to mock at the falls of others, considering who, and what hath made the difference. 4. If it be so peculiar a privilege to be partakers of this powerful and special grace of God that is put forth in the great work of conversion, then sure there is something peculiar called for in your conversation, even that it may in all things be as it becometh the gospel, and answerable to this grace bestowed on you. O! what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

S E R M O N XIV.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

— *And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

THE way of the grace of God is a very difficult subject to be thought on, or spoken of suitably, and as it becomes us, grace having a sovereign and unsearchable channel of its own wherein it runs; yet no doubt it is very useful now and then to consider it, if we knew how to make use of it aright; yea, even these steps of grace that are most cross and contrary to carnal reason, may not a little profit when duly pondered. Thus when the prophet hath been looking on the scarcity of faith, and on the paucity of true believers, he looks a little further than on the external preaching of the gospel, even upon the way of God's grace, not out of any curiosity, nor from a fretting humour, because of the unsuccessfulness of his ministry, but that he may thereby get himself stayed and composed; and that he may bring both himself and others, to reverence and adore the holy and sovereign way of God therein: *To whom, saith he, is the arm of the Lord revealed?* It is a word like that which Christ had on the like occasion, John vi. 44. *Murmur not among yourselves, no man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him.*

We opened up the meaning of the words the last day: In short they come to this, as if he had said, how few are they that believe the gospel, and who take the word from his sent ministers? And how few are they on whom the grace of God, that only can make men believe, does effectually work? The prophet points at
a higher

a higher hand than that of the ministers in the success and fruitfulness of the gospel, and couples these two together, the preaching of the word, and the power of God's grace, in the working of faith and conversion in sinners.

We proposed these three doctrines to be spoken to from the words. 1. That in the work of conversion and begetting of faith, besides the preaching of the word, there is a powerful, internal, immediate work of the grace of God, exercised within mens hearts, as well as the word preached outwardly to the ear; wherever faith is begotten, these two go together, the word without, and the power of grace within, the one of which is distinct from the other.

2. That this powerful, internal, and immediate work of grace within, is not common to all the hearers of the gospel, but a rare, and peculiar thing to some, *to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* It is but one or few of many to whom it is revealed: To these we have spoken already.

3. The third is (which indeed holds out the scope of all) that there is an inseparable connexion betwixt these two, the begetting of faith in the hearers of the gospel, and the application of this powerful work of the grace of God for working of it; so that where this powerful work of grace is not, there is neither faith nor conversion wrought; and where this powerful work of grace is, there is faith and conversion. The prophet makes them reciprocal and commensurable: Who is the believer? He to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed: And who is the unbeliever? He to whom the arm of the Lord is not revealed. These two are so conjoined and knit together, as they are never separated, and so they must stand or fall together.

That we may be the more clear, we shall explain the doctrine in two distinct branches. The first whereof is; that except the powerful work of God's grace

concur, the most powerful preaching of the gospel will never beget faith in the hearts of hearers. The second is, that wherever this powerful work of grace goes along with the preaching of the gospel, or wherever the Lord applies his grace with the word preached, there faith is begotten in the heart; and that soul is effectually united to Christ, and savingly changed: the one of these branches serves to shew the necessity of God's grace from the consideration of our sinfulness and impotency or inability, and of the emptiness and ineffectualness of all outward means in themselves, and so to stop mens mouths, as being utterly unable to contribute any thing to their own spiritual good or conversion, that being the product of the grace of God. The other branch serves mightily to commend the grace of God, as being the powerful arm of the Lord that brings to believe, that calls and converts such and such persons, according to a prior engagement and transaction betwixt the Father and the Son.

As for the first of these, it will easily be believed among men and women, that have any true sense and feeling of the corruption of their nature, and find daily somewhat of the law of the members warring against the law of the mind: and we are persuaded, if all that ever received faith were brought to depose in this matter, they would bear witness, that there is no means that without the effectual power of the grace of God, can bring a sinner to close with Christ, and believe on him: and if all that are now before the throne of God in heaven, were called to speak to this great truth, they would put their great seal to it, and say, *Not unto us, but to thy name be the glory of our believing; we had never believed, if it had been left to the power of our own free-will; and if the power of thy grace had not wrought in us the very will as well as the deed or act of believing.* Yet because this doctrine (as we said) serves to discover the sinfulness and impotency

cy of nature, and how little we are obliged to it in the work of faith and conversion, and to hold forth withal the emptiness and ineffectualness of all outward means without this grace; and because it meets with considerable opposition from the enemies of the truth, we shall give you some grounds for confirmation of it. The first whereof is drawn from these express instances of scripture, wherein it is clear, that there hath been much powerful preaching, and by the most eminent preachers, and yet the generality of people have been fruitless under it, and their fruitlessness hath been ascribed to this very ground, to wit, that the work of God's grace and his out stretched arm went not along with it. The first instance is *Deut. xxvi. 4.* That *Moses* was a skilful preacher, who will deny? he being faithful in all the house of God; yet, says he, after much and long preaching, and after many signs and wonders wrought, *the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear unto this day*: where he not only puts a difference betwixt the preaching of the word without, and the work of grace within, but shows the necessity of the concurrence of the work of grace, and lays the great weight of the people's profiting or not profiting, on the wanting or having of that. A second instance is in this prophet *Isaiah*; were there any among all the preachers before or since, that preached in a more evangelic strain than he did? and yet when he hath complained of the fewness of believers, saying, *Who hath believed our report?* He fixes and stays on this as the cause, *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* And chap. vi. 9, 10. He gives an account of the sad commission he had from the Lord, who said to him, *Go and tell the people: Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not, make the heart of this people fat, &c.* Where there is also a clear distinction made betwixt the inward working of grace, and the outward ministry. A third instance, and one that is beyond

beyond all exception, is in our blessed Lord Jesus, *who spake as never man spoke*, and preached with such power and life, that even carnal hearers *wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, for he preached with authority, and not as the Scribes*; and yet John vi. 44. when they begin to murmur at him, what says he? *Murmur not at these things; none can come unto me, except the Father draw him*: None can believe, except the powerful grace of God work faith in him, there must be a higher hand than ought you see or hear; a more powerful work than any external preaching of mine, as prophet of my church, e'er a soul can believe on me: And though his hearers were not free of the guilt of this their unbelief, but had there own sinful accession unto their continuing in it; yet your Lord looks on the sovereign way and work of grace, and holds there, telling them that his external ministry will not do; but there must be an inward, powerful, immediate work of grace for the working of faith. We add a fourth instance, and it is of that chosen vessel Paul who laboured more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles; and yet when he is preaching, Acts xxviii. 25. *and some believed, and others believed not*, before he dismisses the multitude, he adds this one word; *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive, &c.* where he expressly makes a difference betwixt his external preaching, and God's inward working; and tells us, that so long as there was a judicial stroke on the hearts of the people not taken away; no external preaching could work their conversion, and bring them to believe; which he also does to guard against any offence that might be taken at the unsuccessfulness of his ministry, by those who would be ready to say, what ails these people that they will not receive the gospel? To whom he answers; Isaiah long before told the

the

the reason of it, to wit, that there is a plague on their hearts and minds, which God must remove e'er they can receive it.

2. To these plain and clear instances we may add two or three grounds or reasons. As 1. The exceeding greatness of the work of conversion, O how great and difficult is it! Therefore it is set out by the similitudes and expressions of *raising the dead, creating a new heart, of removing the stony heart*, and the like; all tending to set out the necessity of an omnipotent power, or a powerful work of grace, in the begetting of souls to Christ: And if it be so great a work, what can the outward ministry do, if the power of God be not added? Or what can the man himself do here? Can a man quicken, raise, create, or beget himself? It is true, these comparisons are not to be extended and applied in every respect; yet they hold out, that man being naturally dead, can no more contribute to his own quickening and raising, and to the begetting of spiritual life in himself, than a dead man can contribute to his own quickening and raising to his natural life; for which cause, the Holy Ghost hath made choice of these expressions, even to hold out the exceeding greatness of the work. 2. Consider the condition that men are in, when this work is wrought; and we may see they can contribute nothing to it, that they have no aptitude for it, except that they are subjects capable to be wrought upon, being as it is, Eph. ii. 1. *dead in sins and trespasses*: Being as to their souls estate, and as to their spiritual condition, like Adam's body before the Lord breathed in it the breath of life, and made him a living soul; as his body could not move, stir, nor act till then, no more can the natural man stir or act in the ways of God, till a new principle of spiritual life be put in him. To clear it further, we would consider, that the scripture speaks of these three in the natural man. 1. Of an utter inability and deadness, as to that which is good; *dead*
in

in sins, Eph. ii. 1. *We are not sufficient* (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 5.) *of ourselves; as of ourselves, to think any good thing*, not so much as a good thought. 2. The scripture holds him not only as unable for good, but perverse, and bent to every thing that is evil, Col. i. 21. *Alienated and enemies in our own minds by wicked works; the carnal mind being enmity against God*, Rom. viii. 7. it is plainly opposite to any thing that is good, and so to the way of faith. 3. Man's mind is not only naturally perverse and stuffed with enmity, but in an incapacity to be healed while it remaineth such; Rom. viii. 7. *It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*; and therefore in the work of conversion, there is not only an amending; but also a renewing of our nature called for; there is more requisite than the rectifying of something in the man, even the creating of new habits, and the infusing of the principles of spiritual life and motion into the soul. It is true, in some sense the whole image of God is not absolutely removed, the faculties of the rational soul still remain; for man hath an understanding and a will, and some sort of reason, but without any tendency to spiritual life, or to any action for God: He hath an understanding, but it is wholly darkened: he hath a will, but wholly perverse, and not in the least inclined to good: he hath affections, but wholly disordered and corrupted, and set wholly upon wrong objects; so that it is with man's soul as to good, as it is, with spoiled wine: Wine when wholesome, serves to cheer and refresh, but when it is spoiled, it is quite another thing, not only not conducing to health, but it is noisome and hurtful. It is just so with man's soul, it is by the fall quite spoiled and corrupted; it is not indeed annihilated or made to be nothing, for it retains the same faculties still, it hath, to speak so, the same *quantity* still; but as to its *qualities*, it is utterly corrupted and carried quite contrary to God; *It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*; and

and renovation by grace, is the taking away of the corrupt qualities in part of this life, and wholly in the other life, and the bringing in of new qualities for recovering the beauty of that image of God which man hath lost. 4. Consider the end that God hath in the administration of his grace, and the glory that he will needs have it get in every gracious work: and more especially in the work of conversion, and the silence, as to any boasting that he will have all put unto that shall partake of it: His end in the administration of his grace, is to bring down pride, to stop all mouths, and to remove all grounds of boasting from the creature, that he only may have the glory of conversion; that whenever that question is proposed, *What hast thou O man, but what thou hast received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast? Who made thee to differ from another?* The soul may answer, it was not external preaching, nor my own free-will, nor any thing in me, but the power of God's grace; I have nothing but what I have received. It is on this ground that the apostle Phil. ii. 12, 13. presseth and encourageth Christians to their great work, *Work out, saith he, your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure:* The Lord leaveth not to man the working of the will in himself; and of him, saith the same apostle, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. *are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord,* as he said before, v. 29. *that no flesh should glory in his presence:* There is one ground of boasting that the Lord will have removed in a sinner's justification, and obtaining the pardon of sin by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; but there is another ground or matter of boasting, that man might have, if he could reach out the hand to believe and receive that righteousness, and so put a difference betwixt himself and another, which in effectual calling

the Lord puts to silence and quite removes ; that man may have it to say, I have not only pardon of sin, but grace to believe, freely bestowed on me ; God made me to differ, and he only ; he opened my heart as he did the heart of Lydia. Thus the Lord will have all the weight of the whole work of our salvation lie on his grace, that the mouths of all may be stopped, and that his grace may shine gloriously, that we may have it to say with the Psalmist, Psal. lvii. 2. *It is the Lord that performs all things for me ;* and with Paul, 1 Tim. i. 14, 14. *I obtained mercy, and the grace of God was exceeding abundant towards me.*

The Uses are these. 1. It writes to us in great and legible letters the great emptiness and sinfulness of all flesh, who not only do no good, but have sinned themselves out of a capacity to do good ; all men and women have brought themselves thus lamentably low by sin, that now if heaven were to be had by a wish sincerely and singly brought forth, yet it is not in their power to perform that condition ; and though it now stands upon the stretching forth of the hand of faith to receive Jesus Christ, yet of themselves they cannot even do this. How then ought sinners to be deeply humbled, who have brought themselves to this woful pass ? I am afraid that many of you do not believe that ye are such as cannot believe, nor do any good till his grace work effectually in you.

2. It teacheth you not to idolize any instrument or means of grace, how precious and promising soever. No preaching, if it were of a prophet, or an apostle, yea, of an angel, will do the business, except grace come with it ; there is a necessity of the revelation of God's arm, and of the assistance of his grace, not only to your conversion, but to every duty ye go about ; ye should therefore fear and tremble when ye go about any ordinance, lest the arm of the Lord be not put forth in it.

3. It should make you more serious in dealing with
God

God for his effectual blessing to every means and ordinance, seeing without that no ordinance can profit you.

4. It serves to reprove and repress pride, and to promote humility in all such who have gotten good by the gospel. Have ye faith, or any measure of holiness? What have ye but what ye have received? from whence came your faith and your holiness; ye have them not of yourselves; these are not fruits that grow upon the tree of nature, or in its garden; but on the tree, and in the garden of free-grace, and ye are not to thank yourselves for them?

5. The main Use of it is for confirming and establishing you in the faith of truth proposed in the doctrine, and for confuting and overturning the contrary error, that, in contempt of the grace of God, exalts proud nature, and gives man's free-will so great a hand in the work of conversion; that the main thing that makes the difference shall not be attributed to the grace of God, but to the free-will of the creature, which of itself choosed the grace of God offered when another rejected it. It may indeed seem strange that the devil should so far have prevailed with Christians that profess the faith of original sin, and of the necessity of a Saviour, as to make them look at grace as useless in this prime step of conversion and renewing of a sinner, that when the grace of God and man's free will come to be compared, man's will should have the preference and preheminance, the highest place and commendation in the work, and that the great weight of it should ly there, and that proud nature should be thus bolstered up, that it shall stand in need of nothing for the man's conversion, but making the right use of what it hath in itself; And yet it's no wonder that the devil drive this design vigorously, for what shorter cut can there be taken by him to ruin souls, than to make them drink in this error, that nature and free-will will do their turn?

and so take them off from all dependance on free-grace, and on Jesus Christ, and give them ground of boasting in themselves; for when it is thus, of necessity they must ruin and perish; this should sure, make you loath this error the more; and we are perswaded, that the day is coming, wherein the truth opposite to this error shall be confirmed on the souls and consciences of all the opposers of it, and wherein the maintaining of this error shall be found a confirmation of man's enmity to God's grace, which is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be.

But there are three questions that may be moved here, to which we would speak a word. 1. If the preaching of the gospel cannot beget faith, without the powerful work of God's grace, what is the use of the gospel, or wherefore serves it? 2. If men cannot believe without the work of grace, which the Lord sovereignly dispenseth, why doth he yet find fault and expostulate with men for their not believing? 3. If grace performs all, and men can make no means effectual, nor do any good without it, what then should men do to come by a believing frame, and this work of his grace?

For the first, We shall not say much to it; only, seeing the Lord hath made choice of the gospel to be the ordinary external means of grace, and of the begetting of faith, there is no reason to say that it is useless; for though it be not the main and only thing that turns the sinner, but the Lord hath reserved it to himself as his own prerogative, to convert and change the heart of a rebel-sinner; yet he hath appointed it to be made use of, as he hath appointed baptism and the Lord's supper, for many good and notable ends, uses and advantages that are reached and come at by the preaching of it. As, 1. By it the righteousness of God is manifested that before lay hid. Ye may by the preaching of the gospel come to the knowledge of the covenant of redemption and of the great design
that

that the Lord hath laid down for bringing about the salvation of lost sinners, Rom. i. 17. *Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.* 2. By it the Lord revealeth the duty he calleth for from men, as well as his will concerning their justification and salvation; he lets them know what is wrong, what is right, what displeaseth him, and what pleaseth him, Yea, 3. By the preaching of the gospel, he holdeth out what men's ability, or rather what their inability is, and by his external calling gives them occasion to know the necessity of a Mediator, and to seek after another way of justification than by their own works; for so it proves a notable mean to humble men, to stop their mouths, and to make them plead guilty before God. 4. Its profitable as the Lord is pleased to make use of it to call and gather in so many as he hath ordained to eternal life; for tho' in itself it be not able to convert, without having the power of God going along with it, it is the instrument of conversion, and the Lord ordinarily makes use of it to the begetting of faith in them that believe; as Rom. x. 17. *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God preached,* and 1 Cor. i. 24. it is called *the power of God to salvation*; and it hath pleased God by the *foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe*; for though God can work without it, yet he hath thought good to make use of it, to inform the judgment, and to stir up the affections of hearers, and so it proves instrumental to the begetting of faith in them. 5. If it do not promote the salvation of all the hearers of it, yet it promotes it in all the elect, and serves to make others the more inexcusable, and in this respect it *triumphs always*, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. In some it is *the savour of life unto life*; in others, *the savour of death unto death*, leaving them the more inexcusable, and the more obnoxious to wrath by their rejecting the counsel of God against themselves.

I know this will be excepted against; we come therefore

therefore to consider the second question, which is this, How can the call of the gospel make men inexcusable, seeing they cannot without the effectual power of the grace of God believe? As Christ saith, John vi. 44. *No man can come to me, that is, no man can believe in me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him*; yea, why doth God find fault with men for their unbelief? for answer, It is no new thing for men to start questions and objections against the grace of God, and to be always striving to rub affronts and disgrace upon it; see Rom. ix. 13, 14, &c. where this same objection is started, and answered again and again; for when the apostle hath said, ver. 13. *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, the objection is moved, *Is there unrighteousness with God then?* men readily think that there is a sort of unrighteousness in God, when he takes one and leaves another, especially considering, that the leaving of the other infers (though it be not any culpable cause) the ruin of the man's soul; he answers *first* with a *God forbid*; as if it were an absurd thing so to assert; and then endeavours to answer it from God's sovereignty, as being debtor to none, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*; and it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that shews mercy. In God's administration of grace, he is debtor to no man, nor hath he any rule by which he proceeds, but his own sovereign will; and if it shall yet be said, if God doth walk by his own sovereign will in giving grace, *Why doth he yet find fault, or condemn, for who hath resisted his will?* Why is God angry that men will not believe, since none can come to Christ against the will of God? his indignation riseth at this proud and petulant objection, and he answers, *But who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?*

our? By the apostle's doubling this answer, and his not setting himself to satisfy carnal reason and curiosity, there is ground given to silence us here. It is the Lord, he is our potter, and we the clay; it is he in whose hand we are, who can do us no wrong; and this may sufficiently serve to put a stop to all reasoning and disputing against him; yet we may add a word further, seeing the apostle proceeds to another reason; therefore, 2. Consider whence it is that this inability to believe or turn to God doth come; not from God, sure; for if he had not made man perfect, there might be some ground for the objection; but seeing *he did make man upright, and he hath sought out many inventions*, who is to be blamed? Hath the Lord lost his right to exact his debt, because man hath played the bankrupt, is debauched, turned insolvent, and unable to pay? Doth not this very objection prove us guilty, and evidence that we have lost that which God gave us and made us with at the beginning? When God made Adam, he had power to believe and give God credit as to every word revealed or to be revealed, and that now after the fall, he and his posterity want that power, they have not this privation from God's creating them, but from their fall, by which they became utterly incapable for these duties that they owe to God, and for this among the rest. 5. If there were no more but simple inability among them that hear this gospel, they might have some pretext or ground of excuse, tho' it were not any real or just excuse, as hath been shewed, but it never comes to this as the only or main cause of their not believing. There is always some maliciousness, perverseness, and pravity in the will; it's not *I cannot* but *I will not*; it's a wilful and some way deliberate rejecting of the gospel, that is the ground of mens not believing; and what excuse, I pray, can ye have, who do not believe the gospel, when it shall be found that ye maliciously and deliberately

ately chose to reject it? to make this out, consider but these few things. 1. Men's neglecting of the very outward means, that through God's blessing prove instrumental in the begetting of faith, as hearing, reading, prayer, meditation, self-searching, stirring up themselves to repentance, &c. whereby the Lord ordinarily brings about and furthers the work of faith. 2. Consider the carnal, careless, and lazy manner of mens going about those means and duties, which to their own conviction are within the reach of that power which they have; ye might hear oftener and more attentively, ye might pray more frequently and more seriously than ye do, ye want even much of that moral seriousness in hearing, prayer, reading, &c. that ye have in other things of less concernment; ye will hear a proclamation at the cross with more attention than a preached gospel; ye will hear a threatening from man with more fear than ye will hear a threatening from God's word; ye will be more serious in seeking somewhat from man, than in asking grace from God; the reason is, because your heart is more to the one than to the other. Can ye then rationally think that ye are excusable, when believing is not in your heart and thoughts, but ye go about the means that lead to it unconcernedly, carelessly, and negligently? 3. Consider how often ye do willingly choose some other thing than Christ, to spend your time and set your affections upon, laying obstructions and bars in the way of God's grace, setting up idols in the heart, and filling Christ's room before-hand with such things as are inconsistent with his company, and all this is done willingly and deliberately; ye have said in your hearts as those did, Jer. ii. 25. *We have loved strangers, and after them we will go*: And will ye, or dare ye make that an excuse why ye could not come to Christ, because your hearts were taken up with your lusts and idols? So then the matter will not hold here, that ye are unable, and had not power to believe, but it will come to this, that
your

your conscience must say, that ye willingly and deliberately chose to lie still in your unbelief, and that ye preferred your idols to Christ Jesus. 4. Consider, that sometimes ye have met with some more than an ordinary touch, motion, and work of the Spirit that hath been born in upon you, which ye have slighted and neglected, if not quenched and put out, which is your great guilt before the Lord. Is there any of you, but now and then at hearing sermons, or when in some great hazard, or under sickness, or some other sad cross, ye have been under convictions of sin, and have had some little glances of the hazard ye were in of the wrath of God, more than ordinarily ye had at other times; and I would ask you, Have these been entertained and cherished, or rather have they not been slighted and worn out by you? and may ye not in this respect be charged with the guilt of resisting the Spirit of God, and marring the work of your own conversion and salvation? These things, and many more, which will cry loud in the consciences of men and women one day, will quite remove and take away this objection, *That ye could not do better*; ye might have done better than ye did, ye might have abstained from many evils that ye committed, and done many duties that ye omitted, and done them with more moral seriousness than ye did; but ye were perverse, and did willingly and deliberately choose to continue in your natural condition, rejecting Christ, and the offer of salvation through him: This also serves to refute and remove that profane principle or tenet that many have in their minds and mouths, *That they have no more grace than God hath given them*; will ye dare to come before God at the great day with any such objection? No, certainly, or if ye dare, God will aggravate your guilt by it, and beat it back again into your throat. Then, O! then all such subterfuges will be no shelter to you before him, nor in the least able to intrench your souls against the strong bat-

teries of the wrath of God, that will be as a storm against the wall.



S E R M O N XV.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

—And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

MINISTERS have not done with their work when they have preached, and people have not done with their work when they have heard: that which is of greatest concernment follows, which either in the want of it, has influence on the fading of both minister and people, or in the obtaining of it, has influence on their consolation: This is the thing that we find Isaiah upon here, who having preached the gospel, looks what fruit it had in his own time, and should have in our time, it grieves him exceedingly; and indeed it is very sad that Isaiah should be so much grieved in foreseeing the unfruitfulness of the gospel in our days, and that we ourselves should be so little grieved with it, and so senseless under it.

He casts in this word, *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* partly to confirm the former word, *Who hath believed our report?* and partly to help us to make the right use of it, by drawing men to the discovery of the sovereign hand of God in the matter, and of the necessity of his grace for making the gospel effectual in the hearers of it wherever it comes, *Who, saith he, hath believed our report?* To whom is this preached gospel made effectual for faith and salvation? it is but to very few, even to as many as have the arm of the Lord, the effectual power of his special grace revealed to them, and no more.

The

The last *doctrine* we proposed, and began to speak of as the scope, was, that believing and receiving of the gospel, and the Lord's exerting a powerful work of his grace with it, are ever joined together; they are of equal extent, as many believe as he stretches out his hand of power with the word to work faith in them, and as many lie still in unbelief as his hand of power is not revealed unto; this is his scope.

We opened this *doctrine* in two branches, *First*, That the most powerful means cannot work nor beget faith in the hearers of the gospel, except there be an inward powerful work of grace on their hearts accompanying them; and this we cleared, and spake a little to two *questions* in the *use*, and left off at a third, to wit, what the hearers of the gospel should do that have the call and offer of the gospel, seeing without the effectual work of the grace of God they cannot believe? which we shall forbear to speak to, till we open the second branch of the *doctrine*; because this question relates to both.

The second branch then of the *doctrine* is, That wherever the Lord applieth the powerful work of his grace, there necessarily faith and conversion follow; or the stretching forth of God's arm in the work of his grace, hath always the work of faith and conversion, and the engaging of the soul unto Jesus Christ following it; and indeed if it be true, as we said, that there are as many unbelievers as there are persons on whom grace doth not thus powerfully work, or that they are all such that this work of grace is not manifested on, then the work of conversion and believing is as broad as this work of grace: for the prophet maketh them of equal extent, who is he that believeth? even he to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed; and on the contrary, who is he that believeth not? even he to whom the arm of the Lord is not revealed, and on whom this work of grace is not manifested. By which we may see it to be very clear, that the prophet

puts the believing of the gospel on the Lord's manifesting his arm; so that where it is not manifested, this work of faith is not brought forth; and where it is manifested it is necessarily brought forth.

This being a doctrine concerning the efficacy of God's grace, which ought not to lie hid from the Lord's people, we shall a little, first, clear it, and then secondly, confirm it to you.

First, for clearing of its meaning. 1. Ye must not take our meaning so, as if we made every common work, that lively means may have on the hearers of the gospel, to be conversion. The preaching of the word will sometimes make people tremble, as we see in Felix, and raise convictions and terrors in them, and put them into an amazement, and yet leave them there: For all these convictions may be, and are often resisted, as to any saving fruit at least. This we conceive to be what Stephen points at, Acts vii. 51. while he saith, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did, so do ye*: And what he means by this, is explained in the words following, *which of the prophets have not your Fathers persecuted*, &c. even their contending with the word of the Lord in the mouths of his servants: Yea, in that same place, where it is said, *They gnashed upon him with their teeth*: its insinuated, that they came over the belly of the cutting conviction, which his sermons had fastened upon them. Nor do we, 2. Mean that every common operation of the Spirit, whether illumination of the mind, or a touch on the affections (such as may be in temporary believers and apostates, as is clear, Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Heb. vi. 4. and downward) is conversion: there is a great difference betwixt a common work or gift of the Spirit (which in a large sense may be called *grace* because freely given) and the saving work of grace, which before we called a peculiar work: and oft-times that common operation of the Spirit is quenched and put out;

out ; therefore the apostle, 1 Thess. v. 19. exhorteth thus, *Quench not the Spirit.* 3. When we speak of an effectual bringing forth of faith by this grace of God, we would not have you think, that we suppose no reluctancy to be in man in so far as he is unrenewed ; for though where grace effectually worketh, faith follows necessarily, yet corruption being in the man, it is disposed and apt to thwart with, and to oppose grace, and the will hath its averfeness to yield. But the meaning of the doctrine is this, that though there be such a strong power of corruption in the man to whom grace comes, and on whom it is put forth ; yet the power of grace is such, that it powerfully masters and overcomes corruption, and wins, the heart to believe in, and to engage with Christ, though (to speak so) there be something within that strives to keep the door shut on Christ ; yet when it comes to that, Cant. v. iii. *He puts in his fingers by the hole of the lock, and makes the myrrhe to drop :* The heart is prevailed with so, as it is effectually opened, as the heart of Lydia was to receive the word that Paul preached. Thus, notwithstanding corruption's opposition, grace gains its point ; and the Lord never applies his grace on purpose to gain a soul, but he prevails. 4. When we speak of the power and effectualness of grace in conquering and gaining the heart and will of the sinner to believe in Christ Jesus, we do not mean that there is any force or violence done to the will, or any exerting of a co-active power, forcing the will contrary to its essential property of freedom, to close with Christ : but this we mean, that though corruption be in the heart, yet grace being infused and acted by the Spirit, the pravity in the will is sweetly cured, and the will is moved and made to will willingly and upon choice, by the power of the Spirit of grace taking in the strong hold. This great work is wrought by an omnipotent sweetness, and by a sweet omnipotency ; and it needs not at all seem strange ;

strange; for if a man in nature, be by the power of habitual corruption, made necessarily to will evil, so that notwithstanding he doth freely and willingly chuse evil: why should it be thought strange or absurd to say, that when a principle of the grace of God is infused into the soul, and acted by the Spirit of God, it hath so much influence, power, and efficacy as to prevail with the will, it keeping still its own freedom, to make it willing to embrace Jesus Christ, and yet not at all thereby wrong that essential property of of the will? Sure, grace is as powerful as corruption, and the Lord is as dexterous a worker, and can work as agreably to the nature of the creature in this gracious work, as the creature can in its own sinful actings. So then we say, when the Lord is pleased to apply the work of his grace to convert a sinner, that work is never frustrated, but always hath necessarily the work of faith, renovation, and conversion following it.

Secondly, We shall a little confirm the doctrine; and the grounds of confirmation are these. 1. The express scriptures wherein this truth is asserted, as John vi. 44, 45. It is said in the 44. verse, *No man can come to me except the Father draw him*: And on the contrary, it is expressly set down, ver. 45. *It is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me*: And this being contradistinguished from external preaching, and being that which is called *drawing*, ver. 44. he knits believing to it, and makes believing, called *coming*, a necessary effect of it, that to whomsoever God gives that inward lesson, they shall come; which confirms the doctrine, that whomsoever the Lord teaches and schools by his grace, and calls effectually, they do necessarily believe. Another passage we have, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out the work of your salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and*

to do of his good pleasure; where the apostle makes the work of grace not only to work ability to will and to do, but to work also to will and to do actually: And grace never worketh *to will*, and leaves the man unwilling, but necessarily supposeth the man's closing willingly with Christ, on whom he works thus. A 2d. Ground of confirmation is drawn from these expressions, whereby this work is set forth, and the promises comprehending it in God's covenant, wherein it is called the *giving of a new heart, a heart of flesh, the writing of the law in the heart, the putting of his Spirit within his people, and causing them to walk in his statutes*, &c. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. And it is impossible to conceive aright of the fulfilling of these promises without including the effect: The giving of the new heart is not only a persuading to believe, but the actual giving of the new heart, whereof faith is a special part; which promise is peculiar to the elect, though the offer of it be more large, and be further extended: And what can that promise of God's writing the law in the heart be, but an effectual inclining of the heart to the will of God? or inward renovation contradistinguished from the external ministry, that can only hold out his will in a book; and speak it to the ear. 3. This may be cleared and confirmed from the nature of the work of grace, which is such a mighty work and so powerful, as it is impossible it can be frustrated, or disappointed; unless we say that grace in God, or the grace of God is not so powerful as corruption in us, which were blasphemy: To this purpose the apostle prayeth in behalf of Christians, Eph. i. 19, 20. that they may know *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead*: He speaketh so in this high strain, to set out both the exceeding stubbornness of our nature that needs such a work, and the exceeding great power of the grace
of

of God that worketh irresistibly, not only in the conversion of the elect at first, but in all the after acts of believing; so Eph. iii. 7. the same apostle says, *According to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power*; and Col. i. 29. *According to his working which worketh in me mightily*: The power that worketh in believers is God's omnipotent power, which worketh effectually and mightily; and if this power be exercised in the continuing and promoting of faith, as said before, it must be much more exercised in the begetting of faith: Yea, and what need is there that he should exercise it, if not for this end, that where he exerciseth it, it may also prevail? A 4th ground of confirmation may be drawn from the Lord's great end which he hath before him in this work; and that is the gaining of glory to his grace, and to have the whole work of conversion attributed to it: And if this be his end, he must and will prevail by his grace in carrying through the work in order to this end: If it were left indifferent to man to yield or not to yield to God as he pleaseth, the whole weight of the work of conversion should not lie upon grace, man's mouth should not be stopped; but when that question should be asked, *Who hath made thee to differ*; and *what hast thou, O man, but what thou hast received*? He should still have something to boast of, and the work of his conversion, should at best be halved betwixt grace and his own free-will: This would necessarily follow, if grace did not carry through the work, and so God should miss his end. A 5th ground of confirmation is taken from the consideration of God's decree, of the covenant of redemption betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator, and of the power and wisdom of God in carrying on this work, which we put together for brevity sake: from all which, it is clear, that there is, and must be a necessary connection betwixt the work of grace on believers, and the effect; and that it is not in the power

er of man's free-will to resist it, which indeed is not freedom, but bondage. 1. Then, we say, that if we consider the decree of election, we find that where grace is applied, faith and conversion must follow; otherwise, if the work of grace were not effectual to convert, God's decree should be suspended on the creature's free-will, and be effectual, or not effectual according as it pleased; and is that a little matter to make his decree depend upon, and be effectual, or not according to man's pleasure? That which secures his decree, and makes it infallibly to take effect, is, that he hath effectual means to bring about his decree. 2. If we consider the covenant of redemption, betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator, we will find that upon the one side the Mediator particularly undertaketh for them that are given to him, that he shall loose none of them; and upon the other side, we have (to speak with reverence of the majesty of God after the manner of men) the Father's obligation to make such persons in due time believers, that Christ the Mediator may see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, according to that promise made to him, Psal. cx. 3. *In the day of thy power thy people shall be willing*; and that other, Isa. liii. 11. *He shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, &c.* and accordingly himself saith, John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given to me shall come unto me*; where it is clear, that these who are given must necessarily come: and he also saith, John x. 16. *Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring*; and it cannot be supposed without horror and blasphemy, that this determinate, solid, and sure transaction, having all its means included in it, and being, as to its end, so peremptory, shall as to these laws, and that end, and as to their being carried through, not be in God's hand, but in the hand of man's free-will? if it were there, O! how uncertain and loose would the bargain, and God's design

in begetting faith, and in bringing souls through grace to glory be! 3. If we consider the Lord's power, in beginning and promoting, and his wisdom in carrying on of this work, his power whereby he raiseth the dead, and his wisdom whereby he leads from death to life; is it possible to conceive or imagine these to be applied by the Lord in the conversion of a sinner, but this doctrine must needs hold, that the work of his grace powerfully applied, hath always faith and conversion following on it, and that the Lord leaveth it not to the option of elect souls, to believe, or not to believe as they please? He must not, he cannot be frustrated of his end and design, but he must bring them to a cordial closure with Christ by faith in order to their salvation.

Use 1. The first Use serves to fix you in the faith of this great truth, and though we use not, neither is it needful to trouble you with long questions and debates; yet when the like of this doctrine comes in our way, especially in such a time, when the pure truths of God, and this among the rest, are opposed and called in question, it is requisite that a word be spoke for your confirmation and establishment; and we would hence have you fixed in these two. 1. Of the impotency of nature in the beginning or promoting any thing of the work of grace which belongs to the first branch of the doctrine. 2. Of the effectualness and irresistibleness of grace; that wherever God begets and brings in a soul, he does it by his own powerful grace; and wherever he applies that work, faith and conversion necessarily follow, which belongs to the second branch of the doctrine: and we would rather speak a little to this, because it is questioned by the enemies of the grace of God, than which there is nothing they set themselves more to dethrone and debase, and to exalt and cry up nature and free-will, as if it did sit on the throne, and grace beloved to come and supplicate it; and as if it might accept or reject
its

its will at pleasure, as to the conversion of a sinner. In opposition to which, this doctrine holds good, that wherever the Lord applies his grace, he effectually finishes the work of faith and conversion, and there is no soul that can utterly resist it; and wherever the Lord applies this grace, the grace that converts one cannot be frustrated by another. These things we hold in opposition to the direct assertion of the enemies of grace, whereby they make the work of conversion, not ultimately to terminate on grace, but on man's free-will; and how dangerous and damnable this error is, may easily appear. For, 1. It overturns and runs cross to the whole strain of the gospel; for if we loose but this one pin, in making faith and conversion not to depend on grace, but on free-will, then the whole fabrick of grace falls down flat; then God should elect us, because we were to elect him, contrary to the scripture; which tells us, that he elects us, and not we him; and that our closing with him by faith, depends on his electing of us: It overturns our free justification by grace, for supposing faith comes in with justification, as it doth, none being justified but by faith, and that believing is of our selves, and that it is in the power of man's free-will to close the bargain; all is not here of grace, our justification is not free, but someway depends on free-will: it overturns the perseverance of the saints; for if believing depend on free-will, then our perseverance depends on it also; for if the man's free-will change, he may fall back and break his neck in a manner, at the very threshold of heaven; whereas if it be the work of grace (as indeed it is) that brings forth faith, and carries it on; and if this work of grace cannot be frustrated or restrained by the malice and hardness of heart, to which it is applied, because it cures the hardness, and removes that malice; then certainly this error cannot stand: And we are perswaded when we plead thus for grace, we have the best end of the

debate, and the surest ground to go upon, most for God's honour, and most for the comfort of believers.

2. This error thwarts with the glory of the grace of God; for it is an error that strikes at the richest and and most radiant diamond of the crown of the glory of Christ; it places election and the effectuallness of God's decree as to effectual calling, faith, justification, and perseverance on the person himself, and makes God and Christ to be in man's debt, and reverence, to make his decree effectual; whereas it is the glory of grace to have all flesh in its debt, as having loved freely, elected, called, justified, sanctified, and carried on the work of grace till it end and be perfected in glory freely, which is the song of the redeemed, Rev. i. 5. 6. *Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion*: If eternal love be free, then the expression or manifestation of it in making us kings and priests unto God, is also free. 3. This error is exceeding destructive to the consolation of God's people: Is it not a comfortless doctrine that founds their believing and perseverance on their own free-will? If ye were to make the bargain of grace, whether would ye think it more comfortable and sure, that the effectuallness of believing and perseverance should hang on the grace of God, or on your own free-will? especially considering the pravity of your will; doleful would your condition be, if free-will were the basis or foundation; and God used no more but external perswasion: How specious soever this opinion seems to be, because it puts it in man's option to believe, and convert himself, or not, as he pleaseth; yet it overturns the whole strain of the gospel, and quite eclipseth the glory of grace, and cuts the very throat of your consolation, and is the great ground of Popery, Pelagianism, and Arminianism, to which ye would therefore so much the more advert; and

and we do the rather speak to it, that ye may be guarded against it, and that ye may be settled in the truth, especially since the same errors are a reviving in another shape in these days, as is manifest in that foolry of Quakers, who talk of a light within them, and talk so of that light, as if it were of power sufficient to convert and guide them, if it be not resisted. As also that other conceit of being above ordinances, implies something of the same error, which ye should set yourselves to abhor, as that which the devil is again labouring to sow the seed of amongst us, and labour to be confirmed in the truth; for if there be any truth at all in Christianity, these are two main truths; the utter inability that is in mens heart by nature to exercise faith in Christ; and the efficacious and irresistible power of the grace of God, in the begetting of faith where it is begotten; which when we shall all appear before the tribunal of God, will be found to be so; and none will have a mouth opened to oppose them. And what absurdity, I pray, is there here, notwithstanding all the clamour of corrupt men? that God hath reserved this work of converting sinners by his grace to himself, and hath not put it in the hand of their own free-will; which supposeth men to have a stock within themselves, and hath many fearful effects following it, tending to the depreciating of the grace of God, and to the drawing men off from dependance on Christ, and to the giving of them ground of boasting in themselves, and of vanity and security; all which this doctrine of God's grace overthrows, and stops the mouth of the creature from all vain boasting, to the high exaltation of God's free, sovereign, and efficacious grace, and to the great comfort of his people.

Use 2. The second Use serves to commend the grace of God to the hearers of the gospel, and especially to believers. There cannot be a greater commendation given to it than this, that it works effectually; and indeed

indeed it could not be called grace, I mean, saving grace, if it should want this effect, even to save such as it is applied to; but this highly commends grace, that if there be mighty corruption in us, there is a strong arm of grace put forth by him for perfecting that which concerns us, notwithstanding this great strength of corruption. And if ye think yourselves not to be believers, and think this doctrine to be hard, that ye cannot believe without this grace, and yet would fain believe; consider that as none can believe, neither can believers stand without grace; so grace can help you to do that which ye cannot do, which is the commendation of grace, and should make it more lovely to you: This gives encouragement to any poor soul, that is, as it were, in the place of the breaking forth of children, and layeth greater ground of confidence that they shall come speed, than if they had it in their own hand; and serves to obviate that grand objection of souls that would fain be at closing with Christ, and cannot come to him, here is a powerful arm reached forth to draw them.

Use 3. The third use serves to humble believers who have any thing of the work of grace, and so to work them up to thankfulness to him that hath communicated any of it to them. Is there any of you that have grace, who hath made you to differ from others? It was not yourselves but free-grace, and therefore ye have reason to acknowledge it with thankfulness, and to say, If this same doctrine had not been true, I would have been a stranger to God all my days, and remained under the dominion of Satan and sin with these that are in nature; and with David, Psal. xvi. 7. to say, *I bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct me in the night-seasons.* This counsel was not the common advice that all got from the word preached, but the inward counsel of the Spirit that made his reins instruct him, and made him inwardly to follow the advice that the word gave him out-

outwardly; and it is this inward work of the Spirit that keeps in the life of grace, as well as begets it; as it is, Psal. lxxiii. 23, 24. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right-hand, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory; whom have I in heaven but thee, &c. my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* The Psalmist glories in this, that the work of his being carried thro', did not depend on his own flesh and heart, but on God, who was the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. If believers would consider what they were in their natural condition, and how much they are obliged to the grace of God, that with power was applied in their conversion, it would stop their mouth as to boasting; make them admire grace, and sound forth its praise: and they would think graces sweet way of prevailing, to be no coactive forcing of their will, but the greatest part of their freedom: and so far would it be from being looked on as a violating or wronging of their will, that it would be esteemed their truest and greatest liberty: We are persuaded that the saints in heaven count it no bondage that God hath so fully freed them from all corruption, that they serve him with delight, and do so necessarily; and shall any sojourning saints here below, count it wronging of their will, that God takes such pains on them, to subdue corruption, and to bring them to some measure of conformity to them who are above? God forbid.

Use 4. The fourth use of it is, To let us see, what great ground of encouragement there is here for the hearers of the gospel, to set about the work of believing, and what ground there is to make them all utterly inexcusable, who shall continue in their unbelief; which may be thought somewhat strange, when we say that no means can be effectual for working of faith, without the effectual grace of God be applied. But
let

let these two be put together, 1. That though we be insufficient of ourselves, and though all outward means be of themselves ineffectual, that yet there is a sufficiency in the grace of God. And 2. That this grace shall be powerful to work faith in the hearers of the gospel, if they make not themselves guilty of frustrating this grace in the offer of it (as they may do.) These then who will not believe, will be found most inexcusable. But to return to the main intent of this use, we say, that the encouragement lies here, that though we be unable, we have an able Mediator, and grace is powerful; and therefore we should with the greater encouragement set about the work of believing, as the apostle reasons, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to do will and to do of his good pleasure:* Ye might possibly think it had been more encouraging to have said, ye are able of yourselves to will and to do; but certainly grace is a more encouraging motive than any thing in the creature; say not then, ye cannot, will not do, for that excuse is taken away by God's offering to work both in you by his grace; but let me exhort all, both these that are begun to be believers, and those that are to begin to be believers, to be so far from disputing themselves from it, as that they rather encourage themselves to work out the work of their own salvation with fear and trembling; because God's grace which ye have in your offer, is so powerful to work the work, and will admit of no utter opposition from corruption in you, if ye receive not the grace of God in vain that is offered to you in the gospel. If grace were so weak as we might cast it back at our pleasure, and if it were but a helper in the work of faith and conversion, as Arminians make it, what encouragement could we have from it? And as to practice, is not this doctrine as encouraging? What advantage or comfort is it to undertake any thing in our own strength, which is
none

none at all? Is not this much more encouraging, to undertake in the strength of God's grace; knowing that the same work of grace that begets faith, is as effectual to carry it on, and to make us persevere in it, and to enable us to every good word and work; let grace work then, and take a proof of it, and ye shall find it powerful. The Lord himself give you wisdom so to do for your salvation and consolation.

S E R M O N XVI.

ISAIAH LIII. I.

— *And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

IT is difficult to walk evenly and steadfastly under the pure doctrine of grace, and neither thence to take occasion to give way to looseness and carnal liberty, nor to become faint and discouraged, and fearful at the way of God; corrupt nature is ready to abuse the best things. That word which we have, 1 Pet. iii. 16. that there are many *that wrest and pervert the scripture to their own destruction*, holds true, not only of doctrinal heresies, but it holds also true in respect of men's practice, or practical errors; for some hearing of the impotency of nature, and of the power and perfection of grace in bringing about its designed effect, are ready to think that they need to do nothing, alledging that if grace undertake the work it will be wrought, and if not, it will not be wrought; and thus atheism and profanity steal in secretly upon the heart, and the sweet doctrine of grace is abused, and perverted by such to their own destruction: There are

others again, who, it may be, will not dare so to contend with God, who yet have their own fainting and discouragement when they hear of this doctrine, and think it hard that they themselves can do nothing, and fear that they will never get to believe, because they cannot do it of themselves; these also fail, and make not the right use of grace.

Ye remember the question which we proposed to speak a little on the last doctrine, to wit, That seeing both these branches of it are true, that except grace concur, the most powerful preaching of the gospel will not beget faith; and that wherever the work of grace goes along with the gospel, there faith is begotten; what is called for from the hearers of the gospel as the use of this doctrine?

Before we come to answer this question more particularly, we would $1/2$, premise this word in general, that none should account the preaching or hearing of the word to be useless or fruitless, albeit that without the work of grace, men cannot yield the fruit which it calleth for from them; for our blessed Lord Jesus, Isaiah and Paul preached this doctrine of grace, and the necessity of the Lord's arm to be revealed in the conversion of souls; and yet they taught the word in season and out of season, and were gathering in some, and to some this doctrine was made the favour of life unto life; though to others (through their enmity and corruption) it became the favour of death unto death. To conclude therefore, the inconsistency, or to deny the consistency of these two, to wit, Of the necessity of preaching the doctrine of grace, and of the pressing in sermons the practice of holy duties, and the use of ordinary appointed means, would reach this dreadful length, even to condemn the prophets of old, yea, and our blessed Lord Jesus himself, who says, John vi. 44. after he had preached long, *No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him;* and verse 65.—*Therefore I said unto you, that no man*
can

can come to me, unless it be given him of my Father. And will any think that his hearers, who accounted this with some others, *hard sayings, and from that time went back, and walked no more with him,* were excusable in their doing so? Or that his preaching was useless, needless, or impertinent, as having a tendency to tempt men to abandon all use of means, because he preached this doctrine of the impossibility of believing in him, without being drawn by his Father's arm?

But *secondly*, We shall a little more particularly, in answer to the question, speak, *First*, To what uses people should not make of this doctrine, or what things they should abstain from, as tending to a wrong use of it. *Secondly*, To some considerations for pressing this doctrine, and removing from it the construction of hardness that we are ready to put upon it. *Thirdly*, To what is the native use it calls for; and, *Lastly*, To some considerations to press this.

For the *first*, When we say to all that hear this gospel, that there is a necessity of a powerful work of grace e'er this word can be profitable, ye should, *1st*. Abstain from, and lay aside curiosity, in seeking satisfying answers to all those objections that are moved against it, and absurdities that it is loaded with by the devil, and man's proud nature, and learn to stoop to, and reverence the sovereign dominion of God, and his deep and unsearchable wisdom and knowledge, in this sovereign way of his grace, as the apostle doth, Rom. xi. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out?* ye should also consider that other word, Rom. ix. 20. *Who art thou that repliest against God? or expostulatest with him? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* It is good to enquire and seek to know the use the Lord calls for of this doctrine with sobriety; but there is an enquiring to satisfy curiosity, which the Lord abhorreth, as we may gather from,

Exod. xix. 21. where the Lord being to deliver his will, saith to Moses, *Go down, charge the people, (a word of peremptory command) lest they break thro' unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.* The Lord is not displeased that his people should endeavour to behold, and take him up aright; but when their end is not good, but to satisfy an itch of curiosity, it displeases him. This may be useful in many cases, and particularly in this we have in hand, to teach us sobriety in seeking to know the way of God's grace, as the Lord would have his people, Exod. xix. waiting for as much of his mind as he thought fit to acquaint them with, and to write on the two tables of stone, but he would not have them break in over the boundary or march which he did set to them, lest he should break through on them, and they should be made to perish. So would he have men in their studying the knowledge of his ways, and particularly of the way of his grace, to keep his measures, and to contain themselves within the limits that he pleaseth to set them. 2. Abstain from carnal fretting at and expostulating with the way of God, whether in the highest degree, of upbraiding grace and snarling at it, that ye should not have the stock in your own hand; or in an inferior degree, having a heart inwardly discontent, that ye are not more able of yourselves than ye are to believe, which is the thing that the apostle opposeth, Rom. ix. 20, 21. *Should the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, &c.* especially since none can answer that question with any just reflection upon God; who is to be blamed for that defect or inability? Or whence did that inability or defect in man's nature proceed? God was gracious, free, and liberal, in making man perfect; and whose fault is it that it is otherwise? 3. Abstain from, and beware of drawing desperate conclusions as to the giving over the use of the means, or of becoming more lazy and

and secure in the duties of holiness, and in the practice of piety, because of the necessity of this grace; but on the contrary, be the more diligent and serious, that ye have so much need of grace, and that of yourselves ye can do so little, or rather nothing that is truly good without it.

I know that profane hearts are very fertile of arguments to plead this point of neglect of means, and will readily say, what is the fruit of diligence, and the prejudice of laziness? the one will do us no good, and the other can do us no ill, seeing it is grace that doth all the work. But, 1. By your laziness ye mar your own fruitfulness, and that through your own fault, and make this addition to your guilt, that ye not only continue graceless, but do so thro' your sin wilfully: 2. Ye may draw on to your natural impotency, habitual and judicial hardness of heart, and blindness of mind; it is on this very ground that many ears are made heavy, many eyes made blind, and many hearts made fat; and is that a little or light matter? 3. Tho' ye may think this little, yet that which will bear the weight of your sentence at the day of judgment, will not be your natural impotency, or that grace was not made efficacious to your conversion, but this will be it, that when God sent out his word to win you, and offered his grace for enabling you to yield, ye did maliciously and deliberately reject it. So that it will never be suffered to come to this, I was unable; because the word was wilfully rejected before it came to this.

But *Secondly*, Because there are some others possibly that have more seriousness in the use of means, who, tho' they dare not quarrel with grace, yet it grieves and discourages them because they can do so little, and they are made heartless to essay, and hopeless to come speed; and it may be, that this is in some whom the Lord allows not to draw any such conclusion, but would rather have encouraged; we
would

would say to such, that they would beware of fainting, or being discouraged; as if that were impossible to God and his grace which is impossible to them; they would by all means beware of sitting down, and slackening their hand in duty, because they can do so little. We know there are some that need not much to be spoken to for satisfying them in this point, but there are others who are affected with this doctrine, to whom the Lord allows more tender usage, and would not have them to faint, nor be discouraged; you that are such (if any be) may know that there is ground for us to press this, and that we may remove the construction of hardness from the sovereign way of God's grace, wherein he hath thought fit to draw men unto an absolute dependance on himself. In the dispensing of it, we shall propose these few considerations. 1. That (which was hinted at before) never a man that hath heard this gospel when he comes to count with God, shall have it to say, that the reason why he did not receive and embrace it, was his impotency and inability, but the real reason shall be found to be his willful rejecting of it; and upon the contrary it shall be found, that there was never one that would in earnest have had strength to run the way of God's commandments, and faith to grip to and embrace Jesus Christ offered in this gospel, that for want of ability came short; and if so, what reason is there to complain? if none want faith, but such as would not have him, and if none that would have him complain of their want of him, upon these two we have great ground of encouragement to them that have a sincere affection to him, and there is no ground for people to sit up or fall lazy in pursuing after union and communion with him in the use of means: None shall have cause to complain of their want of him, but such as with their own consent gave him over; and any that would fain have had him, shall not miss him; for this real willingness to close with Christ, being

being a work of the grace of God, and it being no less power that works this will, than the power which doth effectuate the work of conversion, and bring it to perfection; he that begins the work will perfect it; and therefore in this case, men had more need to reflect upon their unwillingness to have Christ, and to close with him on his own terms, than to dispute their impotency and inability. 2. Consider what they have been whom the Lord hath brought through, were they not such as had as much need of grace as ye have? Had they not the same corrupt nature that ye have? Were they not as impotent and unable to do for themselves? Could any of themselves do more than ye can? Consider all them that are before the throne, was it not this same grace of God, and not their good nature, nor their free-will that did the work? And they were not expressly, nor by name included in the promises more than ye are; and ye are not expressly excluded more than they were; the Lord brought forward the work of grace in them that same way that he dealeth with you; by the preaching of his word, he brought them first to know their sinfulness, impotency and weakness; to know that there was need of a Saviour, that their salvation was not of themselves; neither was it in them to make right use of the Saviour, and salvation offered, but in the power of his grace; and what if he be doing so to thee? and if that condition be hard and hopeless now, it had been a hopeless and hard condition to those many that are now before the throne. 3. Consider, that there is no question but grace is effectual to carry on the work, and to make it go through: all the difficulty and dissatisfaction is, because God keeps the application in his own hand, which the man's heart would have in its hand; and which of them, do you think, is most sure and encouraging? all your fainting and discouragement resolveth in this, because ye can do so little; if ye be in good earnest desirous to have
grace

grace through the work of faith and conversion, would ye possibly make choice of another, or better hand than God's to put it in? Is it not as suitable and sure, that his wisdom should contrive and lay down the way, as it is to his power to set it forward, and to the freedom of his grace to make application of it, and all more suitable and sure than if it were in your own hand? May ye not think shame to be discouraged on this ground, because any thing ye do ye must needs get it from God; and that should be an obstruction in the way of godliness, which is a main encouragement to it? Is the Lord an upbraider? Is there any that can quarrel with him as niggardly in dispensing of his grace? *Doth he not give to all men liberally, and upbraideth no man?* And doth it not become him well to have the conduct and guiding of his own grace?

4. Consider how many the Lord hath given grace to already; and how he hath given it freely, surprizingly, and unexpectedly; if ye could bring forth any proof that never one got good of God, ye might have a pretext for your discouragement; but when as many as are before the throne are proofs of his being gracious to sinners, when so many have gotten good of God before you, and when there are several, who to your own certain knowledge, are daily getting good of him sensibly, freely, and unexpectedly, who were as undisposed to believe as ye are, and as faint and discouraged as ye are; and when he says that, *He is found of them that sought him not*; is it not as likely that a poor creature that is longing for his grace shall be satisfied as well now as ever? according to that word, Matt. v. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*; the soul that fain would have holiness shall get it. I know there will be a question made here, and a new objection started, whether this longing or hunger be real or not? but if your longing and hunger be not real, it will not trouble you much to want; it is not to encourage

courage or comfort such, that have no real longing, that all this is spoken; we know there is more need to make some vomit up the conceit of their ability, than to encourage them against any seen and felt inability. There are many, alas! that think little of the grace of God, with whom the error about universal grace would agree well, they having a presumptuous conceit of faith, and that it is not so difficult a thing to believe as is alledged; we must profess that we have not much to say to such for their encouragement, only we would let them know, that there is a time coming when God will refute and silence them: but as for such as see their inability, and are put to any measure of suitable seriousness and longing in earnest after believing, the Lord allows that they be strengthened and encouraged; and to such we would say this, if their missing of Jesus Christ grieve them, if it be their burden, that they cannot believe, and if their longing, hunger, and thirst, be some pain and piece of exercise to them, so as other things relish not with them, they are so taken up with that; and if they had their souls choice, it would be this, even a satisfying sight of union and communion with him; their longing and hunger is real, and we may turn over that just now cited word to them, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*; this hunger and thirst was never begotten without some spiritual physic from Christ the physician, who hath made provision for satisfying it; and as we used to say of the natural life; he that gives an appetite provides food: so we may say of this hunger; he that gives this spiritual appetite, gives always the food with it; would to God there were many enlarged appetites to receive, our Lord would, no doubt, be found ready to satisfy them all. If the mouth were wide opened, the affections enlarged, and the soul sick under hunger and thirst for Christ and holiness, that sickness should not be found to be unto death,

but to the glory of the grace of him who is the great healer.

For the *third* thing that we proposed, to wit, That seeing there are many ways how men may go wrong, and yet none should give over hope, what is the native use and exercise that this doctrine calls for? I shall speak to this, first in general, and secondly, in some few steps or particular directions. 1. Then in general, ye should consider that place, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out the work of your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; where it is clear, that the exhortation given to them, to work out their salvation, is drawn from this same doctrine of the efficacious work of God's grace working in them to will and to do as the great motive; God, saith he, worketh in you to will and to do, therefore work ye out the work of your own salvation. There are in this general exhortation four things implied; the first is the very entry or beginning of the work of salvation, that is, the exercising of faith in Jesus Christ; it is of God, therefore work out that work; as if he had said, believe to the saving of your souls, as the word is, Heb. x. ult. *For it is God that works the will in you*. The second is the work of repentance, that is also taken in here, for his bidding them *work in fear and trembling*, respects their sinfulness, and necessarily implieth repentance. The third is their aiming at perfection in holiness, the putting forth themselves in improving of all means, and in the exercising of all duties for that end; *work out*, says he. And fourthly, it looks to the manner, that it be not carnally, or in carnal confidence, but *with fear and trembling*; and if it should be asked, how doth that conclusion flow from this doctrine, it is God's work, or he works in you to will and to do, therefore work ye out your salvation? men would rather think the conclusion should be, since God doth all this, do ye nothing:

No,

No, but the just contrary conclusion is drawn, and it hangs on these two. 1. On the efficacy of grace, it is God that works to will and to do, it is his grace that strengtheneth you; and where he works the will, he works the deed; where he begins a work, he will also finish and effectuate it, therefore take ye encouragement to work; as if he had said, fight well, for ye have a brave second, though it be not proper to call grace a second: Set yourselves to the exercise of holiness in earnest, and God will make it go on with you. 2. On the consideration of sinfulness and weakness in them, which should make them work in fear and trembling; as if he had said, seeing it is God, and the efficacy of his grace that doth the work; be not ye vain and presumptuous: the first part says, it is God that works, and not you, therefore be ye the more holily confident: the second part says, it is not you, but God, and therefore do the work with fear and trembling; and both tend to this, that men should be serious in minding and prosecuting the work of their salvation, from the first step to the last, in fear and trembling, on this ground; that though they have nothing in themselves, yet there is enough in God and his grace to do their work. How is it then, or what can be the reason, that we in our hearts do draw the just contrary conclusion to that which the Spirit of God draws here from this ground; when we have the offer of grace, and hear of the power and efficacy of it, it should as to our part provoke us to be more busy, reasoning thus with ourselves, that though our corruption will soon overcome us, yet it will not, it cannot overcome grace; and though the exercise of faith be above our reach, yet it is not above the reach of grace; though we be weak, yet grace is strong, and therefore we will work it out. And on the other side, we ought to continue humble, and in fear and trembling work it out, because it is not we, but grace, that doth the work. If grace were well considered,

there is nothing that would more strengthen mens hands to work ; and on the other hand, there is nothing that would make people more watchful, and to walk in holy fear, considering that we are poor beggars, and through our unwatchfulness, or conceit, and presumption, may mar the dispensations of his grace, especially if we grow secure, and ungratefully forget what we receive from him.

2. I come now to some steps or particular directions implied in this use, because it will be asked, what then should people do? And before I touch on particulars, take these two caveats in the entry. 1. That we can propose nothing to be done by you, neither can ye do any thing of yourselves that is a gracious act or deed. 2. That we understand not that any thing can be done by men in their natural state, that doth infer or procure, and far less deserve the giving of grace to any ; but seeing God hath given direction to us how to walk in order to the working out of our salvation, we say, 1. That it's safe to us to walk in the way he hath directed us to walk in, and in the use of the means he hath prescribed, and much more safe than to lay them aside. 2. That there is a greater suitableness betwixt the use of the means, and the finding of grace, than there is betwixt the neglect of means and the finding of it. 3. That it agrees well with God's way in bringing about the conversion of sinners, to bring them piece and piece forward ; sometimes bringing them to the use of external means, and to the performance of outward duties ; sometimes convincing them of sin, and letting them see their need of Christ ; sometimes discovering the worth that is in Christ ; and bringing them to fall in love with him e'er they actually close with him ; and making them in their practice to follow any appearance or glimmering of light that is let out to them, and to go such lengths as that light discovereth to be the way, and make it plain as to their duty,

Now

Now for particular directions, we would, 1. Bid you study to be fixed and established in the faith of these general truths that relate to man's sinfulness and misery, and insufficiency in himself, *That in us, that is, in our flesh dwelleth no good thing*; that naturally we are dead in sins and trespasses, and cannot quicken ourselves; and in the faith of the necessity and powerfulness of grace, and that its Christ that must give and work faith, and that grace can do the business, and prevail where it is put on work; ye should also consider, and believe the great hazard of missing grace, and the advantage that cometh by it; ye should meditate on these things, on the scriptures that hold them forth, and on the experiences of the saints that confirm them, that ye may not only have a glance and transient view of them, but may be confirmed in the faith and truth of them. 2. Content not yourselves with a general faith of the truth of this doctrine, but labour to be suitably affected with these things that ye believe; and tho' every affectedness be not special grace, yet I speak to them that are ready to lay the blame and fault on the grace of God, and yet were never affected with their own gracelessness: ye should study to be affected with the gracelessness of your nature, and let it put you to some sanctified disquiet and trouble, till with Ephraim ye be made to *smite upon your thigh*, and till ye be put to a holy deliberation and consultation about your own condition; a man that is under the hazard of a civil penalty, will think on it again and again, it will affect him, and he will not be at rest till he be without the reach of it; much more should ye be affected with the hazard that your souls are in through sin: ye are not excusable, so long as ye come not this length. 3. Add to this diligence in the use of all outward means and duties, whereby, and wherein the Lord useth to communicate his grace, *abounding always in the work of the Lord*, as the apostle exhorteth, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Be diligent in

in secret prayer, reading, meditation, conference, self-examination, hearing, keeping good company, and the like, which indeed hypocrites may do, yet they cease not for that to be duties. 4. Be sincere and serious in the use and performance of these means and duties; that which I mean, is a moral sincerity and seriousness, such as a man will readily have in a civil cause that he hath depending before a civil judge, or in hearing of news, or the like, which is a thing that may be, and is often found in men that are void of a principle of grace; and yet people are very often defective in this, and make themselves exceeding guilty before God, because they come not this length. 5. Take heed and beware of entertaining any thing that holds and bars out grace, or of doing any thing that may mar or quench the working or moving of grace; if ye cannot get Christ entertained in your heart as ye should, be sure to give it to no other; if ye cannot get corruption thrust out, nor mortified, watch against the rising or harbouring of that which ye know to be corruption, and against the entrance or rising of such evils, as ye know will keep or put away the beloved; guard also against the neglecting of such means, as by the neglect whereof ye may grieve his Spirit. 6. Study and seek after a composed frame of spirit in your ordinary walk, and especially in duties of worship: Carnal mirth and jollity, loose company, and suffering the heart to go a whoring after the things of the world, do not only provoke Christ as they are sins, but indispose us for duty, and mar the exercise of grace where it is, and keep it back where it is not; therefore the wise man saith Eccl. vii. 3. *That sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.* Carnal sorrow is not to be commended, but sober sadness, or a grave and composed frame of spirit is better than a light and unsettled frame, it being very hard, if not impossible to keep the heart right even where

where there is grace, but where there is some counterpoise ; and it must be far more impossible to keep it right where the work of grace is not, or but in the very first beginnings of it ; and tho' I do not call this composedness of frame, *Grace*, yet it keeps men in some capacity, yet as it were, to receive grace. It is said, Lam. iii. 27, 28. *That it's good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth, he sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath born it upon him, he puts his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope :* For tho' crosses are not always blessed to conversion, yet we may see now and then that sad times are the beginnings of better times ; even in hypocrites, their sad times ordinarily are their best times. I neither desire nor allow any to bring crosses upon themselves, yet I would desire all to make the best use of any cross they are under, and to be acquainting themselves with their sin and infirmities, and with their hazard, and such other things as may effect and compose them without nourishing discouragement and anxiety ; and to love as well to speak and hear such things spoken of, as may provoke to sighing and sadness, as those that may provoke to laughter : *I said of laughter, (saith Solomon, Eccl. ii. 2.) it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it ?* and Prov. xiv. 13. *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness :* Though oft-times our laughter may be so sinful, yet it readily more indisposeth us for any spiritual duty than sorrow doth ; the heart is like a clock, whereof when the inner wheels are set a reeling, it is not soon put right and settled. 7. I would propose Ephraim's example to you, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. And desire that ye would in the sight and sense ye have of your sinfulness, weakness, and silliness, bemoan yourselves and your sad condition to God, put up that prayer to him, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned :* These words flowing from suitable sense are good ; and then follows, *after that I was turned, I repented :* It is observable, that in
the

the very entry he is graciously taken notice of by the Lord, *surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus* : So it is with God's people, when they consider how great strangers they have been to God, how sinful and stubborn, and how impossible it is for them to mend themselves of themselves, they retire themselves into some corner, and there bemoan their case, and cry out, O! what a sinful nature is this, and when will it be amended! *I am as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*, says Ephraim, and the Lord tells, he heard and observed it; when possibly he thought he was scarcely, if at all praying, but rather sighing out as it were a short ejaculation to God, O! that I were amended! the last word of his prayer is, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, or convert thou me, and I shall be converted: He sees that when all is done, he must cleanse his hands and leave the matter to God; I cannot, but thou canst work the work, and it ends sweetly in words of faith, *for thou art the Lord my God*; and where words of faith are after serious exercise, that exercise hath often times faith going along with it; hence are those words, Lam. iii. 20. *If so be there may be hope*: Psal. cxix. *Incline mine heart, open mine eyes*, &c. and Luke ix. 13. *How much more will your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him*? It is good to pray for the efficacy of grace, and to offer ourselves subjects to be wrought upon, and objects to receive what grace offers to us.

As we began these directions with a word of caution, so we would close them: Do not think that these things in a natural man, following his sinful course, will bring forth grace; neither conclude, that where these things only are discerned and no more in some persons, that there grace is wanting, it being to help such forward that we mainly speak to them: only in some, 1. Keep clean and clear the light ye have. 2. Improve the strength bestowed. And 3. What ye have not, put it over on God, and seek from him, who

who hath grace to give for working that in you ; and it would seem that in reason ye should refuse none of these three. 1. We say, keep clean and clear your light, for if ye detain the truth of God in unrighteousness, and make as it were a prisoner of it, by setting a guard of corrupt affections about it, ye may bring on blindness. 2. Improve what strength ye have, for if ye improve not your strength, were it but in natural parts and endowments, that makes you inexcusable, when spiritual and gracious qualifications are denied to you, for ye have procured this to yourselves. Are there not many things that ye thought yourselves able for, that ye never seriously once essayed ? Much more might have been done as to repentance, love to God, charity to others, and the like : And when ye have not stretched yourselves to the utmost in these, there are sure many things left undone that ye might have done. 3. What ye cannot do, or find yourselves unable to do, put it on God to do for you, seriously, humbly, singly, and self-deniedly ; for if ye come not to God with that which ye are unequal and unable for, ye are still short of your duty, and without excuse. Take these then together, improve any strength ye have according to any measure of light God hath given you ; and coming to God thro' Jesus Christ, seek what ye want from him, and leave the acceptation of your persons and of your performances on him. This is the result of all that we have spoke of this doctrine of grace, that ye may not take occasion from the way of God's dispensing grace, to continue graceless, which if ye do, it will be ground of a most grievous challenge against you ; but that you may see an excellent consistency betwixt the sovereignty of grace, and your going about the means appointed of God in order to faith and conversion, and the study of holiness ; that ye may go on in the use of these means, with an eye to grace, in the sense of your own insufficiency to think as of your

selves, so much as a good thought, leaving all your duties at Christ's feet, walking before him with stopped mouths; when any thing is wanting, standing at his door and begging it from him; and when any thing is received, ascribing nothing of it to yourselves, but giving him all the thanks, praise, and glory of it. To him be praise for ever.

S E R M O N XVII.

ISAIAH LIII. *Verse 2, 3.*

Verse 2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Verse 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

IN the former Verse the prophet hath asserted the rarity and scarcity of believing the gospel, and receiving of Jesus Christ offered therein, *who hath believed our report?* saith he, who hath made Christ? *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* To whom hath this gospel been made effectual by the power of God for the engaging of their hearts to him?

In these two Verses he gives a reason as it were of this, which runs upon these two. 1. The low appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of his outward condition, it hath no outward beauty, splendor nor greatness to commend it, but is attended with

with much meanness, and with many afflictions. 2. The itching humour of men who are taken up with worldly grandeur, or greatness and glory, and make little account of any thing that wants that; as if he said, it is no wonder that Christ get few to believe on him, and that few receive this gospel, for he will not come with much worldly pomp and grandeur, which the men of the world greatly affect and are much taken up with.

To open the words a little, we shall first consider the matter of this reason and then the consequence of it; or what influence it hath on mens offending at Christ, and continuing in their unbelief: only we shall permit two or three words to both.

That which we premit first is this, That the *he* that is here spoken of, is our Lord Jesus Christ who in the New Testament hath this text applied to him, for albeit there be no *he* so expressly mentioned in this chapter before, yet in the 13 Verse of the former chapter, to which this relates the *he* that is spoken of here, is called *the Lord's servant*; and it is said of him that *he shall be exalted, and made very high*; and it is not unusual to speak of Christ singularly by a relative without an antecedent, as Cant. i. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*; because Christ to believers is so singular an one, that whenever he is spoken of by way of eminency and excellency, as here, they cannot mistake him, or take another for him. Secondly, this want of *form and comeliness* is not to be understood of any personal defect in our Lord's human nature, but in respect of, and with reference to the tract of his life, and what accompanied his humiliation, to wit, that it was low and mean, without that external grandeur, pomp and splendor of outward things, which the world esteem to be comeliness and beauty. 3. Where it is said, *He shall grow up before him*, &c. It relates to the hearers of the report of the gospel concerning him, or to the man that

believes not the report spoken of before ; and so relates to the words of the first verse, *who hath believed our report?* which is certainly meant of the man that hears of him, and to whom he seems nothing worth, because of his mean and low outward condition ; for if we should apply it to God, we cannot see how it will so well infer the scope, and be the reason of the unbelief asserted formerly, for which end it is brought in here.

We come now to open the words a little, and here we would know that Christ's low condition is two ways set down in these two verses. 1. In the 2d ver. In respect of his want of the abundance of the things of this world, 2. In the 3d ver. In respect of the accession of outward crosses and afflictions ; for not only doth he want credit, respect and esteem, but he hath contempt, despight and reproach ; Not only wants he great riches, but he hath poverty, and is in a poor and low condition. The first verse expresseth him negatively, to be no worldly great man ; The second verse expresseth him positively, to be a mean and despised man, 1. Then these words. *He shall grow up as a plant out of a dry ground*, are expounded by the words following, *He hath no form nor comeliness* ; For as shrubs or scrogs growing up out of dry ground shrink and wither, when trees are planted in a fat soil are fresh, fair and beautiful : So shall it be with Christ when he comes forth (saith the prophet) to the eyes of the world ; he shall, as it were, be like a shrub in the edge of a heath. Our Lord had personal and much divine comeliness in him, as we may see, John i. 4. Where he saith that *the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* ; but the comeliness here spoken of, is that outward state, pomp, and splendor which great men in the world use to have, which Christ wanted : This is confirmed by the following words, *And when we shall see him there*

there is no beauty that we should desire him. There is in men naturally a delight and complacency in that which is beautiful to the natural eye: but, saith he, there shall be no such thing seen in Jesus Christ when he cometh; and therefore no great wonder that few believe on him. And that he saith *we*, it is either according to the phrase used in scripture, to make some very hard thing digest and go down the better with the hearers, whereof the speaker is not guilty; or it is his expressing what is the humour generally in all men naturally; as if he had said, had even we who are elect and godly, no more but carnal eyes we would think no more of Christ than others; for we should get no satisfaction to carnal reason.

The second thing whereby his low condition is set out, is in these words, *He is despised and rejected of men*, &c. Not only shall he want that which carnal hearts and eyes seek and look after, but he shall be so very low, that men shall set him at nought, mock and reject him: and what wonder then that he be not believed on? *A man of sorrows*; as for the course of his life, it shall be spent in sorrows; *and acquainted with grief*; he shall not be a man that shall be a stranger to crosses, griefs, and heaviness, but he shall be familiarly acquainted with them, and they with him; *and we hid as it were our faces from him*; a consequent of the former. As men will not give their countenance to them whom they despise; so, saith he, we shall think shame to see or look at him; he shall be the object of men's contempt and scorn, and we shall not so much as countenance him; he shall be despised and set at nought by Herod and the Roman soldiers: *and we esteemed him not*: That is, we the people of the Jews, who owe him more respect, esteemed him not. And hence he concludes, that it is no wonder that but few believe on him. And so in the words following he goes on to describe his humiliation, and to remove the offence that might be taken at it; *Surely he*

he hath borne our griefs, &c. as if he had said, There is no such cause to shun and stumble at Christ for his lowness and base outward condition; for it was not for himself but for us that he became so low, and therefore it did not become us to think so little of him; his griefs and sorrows are human infirmities that he subjected himself to for our sake; for the wrath of God which he suffered for us is spoken of afterwards. And because there is great difference betwixt Christ's bearing of infirmities, and our bearing of infirmities, he being like to us in all things, except sin; I shall for clearing of this, name three distinctions given by *divines* when they discourse of this subject.

1. They distinguish and put a difference betwixt the *taking on* of infirmities, and the *contracting of* infirmities. The taking on of infirmities, is the assuming of the effect without the cause, the infirmity without the sinful defect; contracting of infirmity is the drawing on of the defect, with, and by the cause. Now, we draw on the cause with the effect; Christ took on the effect, but he had no sinful defect in him to draw on such infirmities; he might have taken on the nature of man without the infirmities, if he had so pleased, but he took on the nature and infirmities without the cause. 2. They distinguish betwixt those infirmities which are simply natural, such as man might have had though he had never sinned, and those infirmities which flow from man's nature, as fallen and corrupted. The first sort may be called *passive*, and relate to suffering, as to be hungry, thirsty, weary, sensible of that which hurts the body: The second sort may be called *active*, and are sinful, as flowing from sin, and tending to sin, as inclination to ill, and indisposition to good, dulness as to the knowing of God's mind, &c. Our Lord took on the first sort of infirmities that are simply natural, and may be without sin; but he was free of the other that imply corruption in the nature: *He was in all points tempted like as we are,*
yet

yet without sin, saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 15. 3. They distinguish infirmities into those that are called *natural* and *common* to all men as men, and those that are *personal* and *acquired*, as flowing from some defect in generation, or are drawn on by some intemperance, grossness in the life and conversation. As some families are subject to diseases that come by generation; others draw on diseases by whoredom, drunkenness, and the like. Now our Lord was free of these last; because, being conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin, there was no defect in his generation; and being blameless in his life and conversation, he could acquire none of those infirmities; and therefore the infirmities which he bare are of the first sort, that is, such as are common to all men, and to men as men. And hence we think it probable which some say, that as our Lord was not sick, so he was not capable of sickness, being so perfect in his constitution or complexion; which makes for the glory of grace, and saith, That our Lord behoved to die a violent death, there being no principle in him tending to a natural death, though notwithstanding he died most willingly to satisfy justice for sinners. And this may serve to explain these words, *That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*

We come now to observe some things from the words. And 1. From the condition our Lord is described to come to the world in; *observe*, That the Messiah, the Lord's servant that was to redeem his people, was to become man. This is here supposed and prophesied of, as the first step of his humiliation, he is called *a man*; and it is an aggravation of it, that he was to be *a man of sorrows*: Or taking our Lord Messiah to be already come, we may take the *observation* thus, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father is also a true and real man; a common truth yet a truth fundamental to the gospel, whereof we are not to think the less or the worse, because

cause it is a common truth : *When the fulness of time came* (saith the apostle, Gal. iv. 4.) *God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law ; who, as it is, Phil. ii. Thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the shape of a servant, and was made in likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient, &c.* So Heb. ii. 14. it is said of him, *That forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, &c.* And ver. 11. *Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren ;* and ver. 16. *He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren ;* he was made even like unto us in all things except sin. And if we look to the way of grace, there was good reason for this, that the Redeemer of sinners, behoved to be man. * 1. If we consider the interposed or adjoined threatning to the covenant of works, *The day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die ;* there must be a satisfaction to justice, and the curse threatened must be borne. 2. The curse must be borne by man ; the nature that sinned must die ; the party offending must satisfy in his own person, or in a surety. And 3. By our Lord's becoming man, 1. He came to have a right, as being near a-kin to sinners, to redeem them. And 2. By this the law hath right to pursue and exact the debt of him. And 3. By this grace hath access to commend the Redeemer of sinners to sinners, Heb. ii. 17, 18. and iv. 15, 16. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, &c.* And that we have such a Redeemer, it makes God reconcilable, and grace to have access, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,* and this gives man access to come to God. 4. This makes the mystery of godliness to shine

shine the more radiantly, and the wisdom and love of God to shine the more conspicuously through it, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh: and John i. 14. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, &c.*

Use 1. It serves to be a prop and foundation to our faith; we may say of this truth, as the apostle, speaking of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 14. says, *If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain.* If Christ were not man, our preaching and your hearing were in vain. 1. By this we have an evidence that our Lord is the true Messiah, who was to become man. 2. By this we see a clear way how he was liable to our debt, and how his satisfaction is communicable to us. And 3. In this also we see a main and most attractive argument to draw sinners to Christ for the actual application of his purchase: Our Lord Jesus is man, our brother, made of a woman, made under the law: O! this puts a sweetness and loveliness on the Mediator, to commend him to sinners for the engaging of their hearts to him.

And therefore, as a second use of it, seeing there is a Man-Mediator, 1. We pray you, men and women, neglect not such a salvation as is to be had by his becoming man, but let this argument prevail with you to make use of him, that he is a true man: And we may say, when this Son of man comes in the clouds to judge the world, it will be one of the greatest aggravations of the sin of unbelievers, that he came thus low as to be man for the good of men, and yet was not made use of by them. 2. Sinners that would come to him, may on this ground be confident and chearful: The Steward of grace is a friend, he is a man, their brother, and claims kindred to them, that honestly aim to do the will of his Father, *Whosoever shall do the will of my Father*, saith he, Mat. xii. *the same is my brother, sister, and mother.* Sinners wrong

Christ and themselves often times, when they stand aloof from this cordial of consolation, that by Christ's becoming man is allowed them. Indeed if we were immediately to go to God, *who is a consuming fire*, it were no wonder that we stood at a distance; but when God is in the Mediator Christ, God-man, to reconcile the world to himself, as the word is, 2 Cor. vi. *Let us, as the apostle saith, Heb. iv. ult. come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* O! make this use of it, because he is a friend that sits on the throne.

2dly, *Observe*, That our Lord Jesus did not only become man, but a man in an exceeding low and afflicted condition. It had been much for the Son of God to have come in the shape of a man, though he had been emperor of the whole world; but he thought not that meet; for since it was his errand in his first coming, not to judge, but to save the world, he came not to be ministred unto, but to minister; and therefore John xiii. 12. he washeth the feet of his disciples. We may take both the branches of the doctrine together, our Lord Jesus not only became man, but he was a man without all worldly grandeur or pomp, in a low and mean condition; and not only did he want that grandeur, but he had much affliction, shame, and sorrow in the place of it. Need we to prove this? any who are acquainted with the history of the gospel know it; he was for the whole tract of his life, not only in a low condition, but a man of sorrows, griefs, and afflictions; under much persecution, contempt, and reproach. We might instance this 1. In his birth. 2. In his life. And 3. In his death. The meanness and lowness of his condition, and the afflictions he met with appear clearly in all these, wherein ye may behold the glory of grace and of truth; for the more low he became, the more doth the glory of grace shine, and the more also doth the glory of truth, in that he fulfilled all righteousness.

1. Then

1. Then for his low condition, and that 1. In his birth, he was not born of any of the greatest queens; however, the birth of Mary was noble, yet she was in a mean condition, espoused to a carpenter; he was not born in a great palace, but in a common inn, which too being taken up with guests, his mother was thrust out, or constrained to betake herself to a stable, where our blessed Lord is brought forth, and laid in a manger, crib, or stall, out of which the beasts eat their meat, for his cradle; neither was the room hung with rich hangings and tapestry, as the rooms of great ones use to be. 2. In his life he was low; for no sooner is he born but his mother is forced to flee away with him to Egypt; he dare not be seen; and when he returns, he cohabits with, and serves his supposed father and his mother, was obedient to them, ran their errands, and wrought their work; therefore he is called, Mark vi. the *carpenter*. There is no outward or worldly pomp and grandeur here, and thus he was for the space of thirty years. And then when he came to his public ministry, he hath no great men for his followers and disciples, but a few poor fishermen, over whom he exalts not himself loftily, but humbles himself to wash their feet, and to serve them. And to hold forth this a little further, ye may take notice of some scripture expressions to that purpose; as namely that of Luke ix. 58. *Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*; that of John i. 10, 11. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not; he came unto his own, and his own received him not; tho' he could have made a thousand worlds at a word; yet so low was he, that he had not a foot of ground to lay claim to, or to lean his blessed head on.* And if we look to Luke viii. we find that he was provided for in his necessity by some few women, such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others, *who mini-*

stred to him of their substance ; he lived upon the charity of others ; and yet 2 Cor. viii. *By his poverty he made many rich* : And when he went from place to place, his diet was often a seeking, neither do we read of any great cheer he had, but of some barley loaves and fishes : And often the disciples were sent to seek for meat for him. And 3, When it comes to his death, O ! how very low is he brought there ? When he is crucified, they hang him up betwixt two thieves, as the most notorious malefactor of the three ; and he could hardly come under greater reproach than was cast upon him at his death ; and as a dead man being really dead, he is laid in the grave and buried, as if death had gotten the victory over him ; and so he dies a most shameful death, after he had lived a most mean and abject life.

2. For his afflicted condition, it is clear if we consider, what troubles did accompany him in his life, and at his death. No sooner was he born, but he is persecuted by Herod, so that himself and his parents must needs flee down to Egypt, and they being but poor folks, behoved in so long a journey to meet with many difficulties : That they were but poor may be seen by Mary's offering after her purification. And when he came forth in his public ministry, at his very entry to it, he was most terribly tempted of the devil, taking occasion of his hunger after long fasting ; and all along the exercise of it, what contradiction did he meet with from the scribes and Pharisees ? How did he travel on his feet from place to place ? Often subject to weariness and fainting ; sometimes men will not so much as give him lodging, which he suffers patiently, and rebukes his disciples for their impatience and preposterous zeal, Luke ix. Many calumnies and reproaches were cast upon him ; He was called *Beelzebub, a deceiver, a friend of publicans and sinners* ; How did some of his friends, according to the flesh, snarl at him, and offer to bind him as a mad-

mad-man? What plots and conspiracies were laid and made to take away his life? And when it came to the upshot of all, Peter shamefully denied him and all the other disciples forsook him, and fled. Many other things befel him, as may be seen in the history of his sufferings, written by the evangelists. We read that he wept thrice, to let us know that it was his frequent and familiar exercise; and a little before his death we read that he was in a great agony, and did therein sweat blood, and offered prayers with strong cries and tears, but we read not that he did laugh, or that ever any wordly mirth was found in him, which clearly makes out this truth, *That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*

For *Use*, it would require the tongues of men and angels to speak of it, it being the most remarkable and soul-refreshing subject that ever the world heard of, even that of which the angels sing, Luke ii. 10, 11. *Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, that unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you, ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloaths, lying in a manger.* Sure we should not sing less, but more than angels, men being more concerned than angels in these things; and therefore, 1. Behold, believe and wonder, that he ‘that was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich;’ that ‘he that was Lord of all became servant to all;’ that he ‘that was the infinite God, the express image of his Father’s person, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himself and became of no reputation; and took on him the form of a servant,’ &c. Behold, we say, believe, and wonder at this, 1. In respect of the cause it came from, to wit, everlasting love; he did and suffered all this most willingly, there was no constraint on him, but as it is, Psal. xl. ‘He delighted to do his Father’s will; he had power to lay down his

‘ his life and to take it up again.’ 2. In respect of the end, it was not to add to his own glory ; for as God, his glory being infinite, it was not, neither is, capable of diminution or addition ; but he became poor that we might be made rich ; he was a man of sorrows, that we might be made to rejoice ; he wept that we might laugh ; he wanted that we might have : Is not this love stooping thus low to be wondered at ? ‘ God commendeth his love to us.’ saith the apostle, Rom. v. 8. ‘ That while we were yet sinners Christ ‘ died for us ;’ and saith himself, John xv. ‘ Greater ‘ love hath no man than this, that a man lay down ‘ his life for his friends ; but when we were enemies ‘ Christ died for us ;’ were it then an unsuitable use of this doctrine, to be beholding, believing, and wondering at his love, and to be often thinking and saying, ‘ What is man that God should be mindful ‘ of him,’ as to send the heir of all things, his own Son into the world, as his great ambassador and commissioner, to negotiate a peace betwixt himself and rebel-sinners, which he was to purchase by becoming so very low, and by suffering so very much ?

2. See in this the great evil and hurt of sin, and the difficulty of making peace with God and a sinner who hath provoked God. Is it a little matter that made our Lord condescend and stoop so low ? O ! if men knew the evil of sin ! and that e’er justice could be satisfied, the Son of God behoved to become man, and a deeply humbled man : The sword of his avenging justice, behoved to awake against him, and smite the man that was his Fellow, rather than that sin should go unpunished, and justice should want satisfaction ! Beware slightly to boast and brag of mercy, or to think it easy to make your peace with God ; and remember, that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

3. See in this, much condescension in our blessed Lord Jesus ; and a motive as well as a copy of patience

tiency in him, who is content to be made of a woman, made under the law, and takes on a mean and afflicted state of life in the world. It is a wonder that Christ's members should take so ill with a mean, suffering, and hard lot, seeing their lot is far, very far from the contempt, reproaches, sorrows, weights, and griefs that accompanied their Head and Lord; and it is a shame that believers minds and hearts should be set so much on these things, that he who was and is their Lord and Master, and the Heir of all things, possessed so little of; or that they should place their happiness in whole or in part in the enjoyment of these things, or their misery in the want of them. More patience under the cross, under watchings, weariness, reproaches, &c. would become us much better; our blessed Lord Jesus had a great many more.

4. Take this to be not only a motive to patience in respect of outward things, but a step and ground of encouragement to go forward to Christ with every want spiritual and temporal. It is much that our Lord became man, but it is more that he became a man under griefs, afflictions, sorrows, and temptations, and was subject to death itself; and that he hath bowels of sympathy from experience of these temptations, vexations, and sorrows, as they are sinless, as is clear from Heb. ii. and iv. at the close; he knows what hunger, thirst, poverty, contempt, reproach, and persecution are; he knows what it is to be set upon with the violence of a temptation, though there was no sin in him to comply with it.

5. Observe here a most real Saviour, since he is a suffering Saviour. Why did our Lord become thus low? but that he might come under the curse in the several degrees of it, for the satisfying of justice for our sins. And see in every part of Christ's suffering, a reality of the grace and love of God; a reality in the covenant and bargain of redemption; a reality in Christ's satisfying of justice, and performing his engagement

gagement according to the tenor of that transaction. And seeing there is a reality in this Saviour, and in his suffering and satisfying of divine justice, and in the price that he paid to the full; *Put not this Saviour again to open shame*, as the word is, Heb. vi. 6. *Tread not the Son of God under foot*, neither *account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*; *do not despise to the Spirit of grace*, as it is, Heb. x. 29. He hath suffered enough already, let him not be a sufferer again; O! grieve him not by your unbelief, but give him credit by adventuring your souls on him upon his own terms; you yourselves will have the advantage, and he the glory. This is the pure simple truth of the gospel; do not only receive it as a truth, but receive him that holds it forth, and let your hearts close with him, and your faith feed upon him, *who became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich*. Happy they for evermore who are made rich through his poverty, and miserable are they, and much more miserable eternally will they be, whose practice saith, that they think they have another way to be happy than by his suffering and satisfaction, and in disdain reject both him and it.

SER-

S E R M O N XVIII.

ISAIAH LIII. *Verse 2, 3.*

Verse 2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Verse 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

IF our hearts were suitably tender, the reading of these words, knowing of whom they are spoken, would some way prick and wound them: It is hard to determine, (though it may be we should not make the comparifon) whether there is more grace in our Lord's condescendence, or more wickedness and perverseness in the unkind and ill treatment that he gets from finners: But surely there is much grace on the one side in his coming so low, and much wickedness and perverseness on the other side; for what meets he with, even the blessed Jesus, *Who is the glory and praise of all his saints; yea, the brightness of his Father's glory? He is despised and rejected, and we esteemed him not*: Even when he thus humbled himself, and took on him our nature, and was and is prosecuting the work of our salvation, and evidencing his grace in an unconceivable manner.

These are the two things that are spoken of here, his condescending to be a man, and a meer man; and which is yet more, *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; which if we believed, and knew really

what he were, that it was even he, *by whom all things were created, who is the beginning of the creation of God, the first born of every creature*; yea, he *for whom all things were created*, for whose glory the world and all things in it were made and continue; he for whom all things are as their last end, and through whom they are preserved in their being, and governed in their operations, and shall be seen to tend to his glory in the close; we would certainly wonder more at this his condescendence: And yet alas, it is he that is *despised and rejected*, and that *we hid, as it were, our faces from*, and would not give him our countenance: It is he by whom the world was made that is despised, and we esteemed him not. And this is the *second* thing in the words which we are now to speak to, even the abominably unsuitable meeting that men give to our Lord Jesus, who hath so far condescended, as to leave some way his Father's glory, not to receive a kingdom of this world, but to be trod upon in it as a worm: He is despised and rejected, and we will not entertain him, nor make him welcome when he cometh: *We esteemed him not.*

Only take this advertisement for clearing of the words, and for grounding of the doctrine, that this that is spoken of Christ's humiliation, and man's stumbling at it, is not precisely to be restricted to his humiliation in his own person only, and mens stumbling at that, for it is given as the reason of mens stumbling and offending at Christ in all times: But it is to be extended to Christ in his gospel and ordinances throughout all ages, and so it comes in as the reason why so few believe on him. If ye ask the reason why men do not now believe and receive Christ in the offer of the gospel? Here it is, for *we esteemed him not*, for *he shall grow up before him as a tender plant*: He shall be mean and contemptible to the men of the world, and in an afflicted condition, therefore he is not esteemed, therefore he is not believed on.

These

These two are the main *doctrines* to be spoken to here. 1. That Jesus Christ who thus condescends and humbles himself for the salvation of lost sinners, is not esteemed, but despised and undervalued, which is implied in the words, *when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him*; and is more clearly holden out in the following words, *He was despised, and we esteemed him not*. 2. That this undervaluing and little esteeming of Jesus Christ, is the great ground of mens unbelief, or the reason why men do not believe on him, even because they think him not worthy the receiving; two very clear truths in the words and in experience, though as sad in their consequents.

As to the 1. Which is this, that our Lord Jesus Christ is usually and ordinarily exceedingly undervalued, and little esteemed of by the men of the world, to whom he is offered in the gospel: There are two things implied and supposed here in and about the doctrine, that will clear it, and be as two reasons of it. 1. That he hath no form nor comeliness, and no beauty whereof he should be desired; which holdeth out this, that men are ordinarily taken with, and seek after worldly grandeur and greatness, splendor and beauty; that is it that filleth mens eyes, and is that which Christ wanted. This we say is one reason why Christ is so little thought of, even because he cometh not with external pomp, observation and grandeur, nor with great temporal gifts to his followers: That which mainly is desirable to natural men, is that which hath earthly beauty in it; a very deceitful consideration and ground, though such an one as men are often carried away with, and therefore they despise and reject the Saviour. 2. Which is another reason of the doctrine, and also clearly implied, that our Lord Jesus Christ's humiliation and coming so low for man's sake, his very condescending and stooping for their good, is the great ground of their stumbling at him; and because of that he is the less thought of:

Even the very height of his grace, and that great stretch thereof that the Son of God became thus low as to become man, a mean man, and a man of sorrows, is a greater ground of stumbling to men, than if he had never become thus low: Now these two being supposed, and thus explained, the *doctrine* is clear; to wit, that Jesus Christ that became man, and performed the satisfaction due to the justice of God for our sins, is usually and ordinarily disesteemed and undervalued by them to whom he is offered in the gospel.

1. It was so under the Old Testament, and is so likewise under the New: What is almost all the gospel spent on? but to hold forth Christ upon the one side to be a man of sorrows, and upon the other side to shew that men esteemed him not: How was he undervalued at his birth, when his mother was thrust out to a stable, and he laid in a manger? And no sooner doth he appear in the exercise of his public ministry, but his friends offend at him, and look on him as a distracted man, Mark iii. His countrymen condemn him, and were offended at him, Mark vi. *Is not this, say they, the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph?* And how was he esteemed, or rather disesteemed and undervalued at his death? So that it is said; Acts iii. 14. ‘They denied the holy and just one, and desired that a murderer should be granted unto them:’ They rejected the prince of life, and chose Barabbas; and judging him not worthy to live, they cry *away with him*: Hence our Lord saith, Matt. xi. ‘Blessed is he that is not offended in me,’ which insinuates that there were but very few to whom his humiliation proved not a stumbling block.

3. If we consult experience we will find this to be true. How little is he thought of among Turks? amongst whom his precious name is blasphemed, though they pretend more respect to him than meer heathens do: How little is he thought of among the Jews, who call him a deceiver? And if we come nearer, even to the

the Christian church, and to such as profess their faith of his being the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, that he is Judge of quick and dead, and that they look for salvation through him; yet if it be put to a trial, how few are they that will be found to esteem of him aright? since there are but few that believe the report that is made of him, but few that receive him as he is offered in the gospel, few that have but such respect to him as to prefer him to their idols, and that give him the first and chief seat in their hearts: And if we consider how little eager pursuing there is after him, that he may be enjoyed; and how indifferent people are, whether they have or want him: how many things men dote upon and prefer to Jesus Christ, as the Lord complains, Jer. ii. 13. ‘My
‘ people have committed two evils, they have forsaken
‘ me, the Fountain of living waters, and have digged to
‘ themselves cisterns, even broken cisterns that can hold
‘ no water;’ the thing will be clear beyond all debate. We may take in another branch of the doctrine here, when he saith, *We esteemed him not*; and it is this, that even believers are in so far as unrenewed, inclined, and not without culpable accession to this same sin of undervaluing of Jesus Christ; it is indeed true that the apostle Peter saith in his first epistle, chap. ii. verse 7. *To you that believe he is precious*; which place, though it confirm the first part of this doctrine, that to them that believe not he is not precious, but a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; albeit that believers being compared with unbelievers, have some precious esteem of Jesus Christ; yet if we consider the corrupt nature that in part cleaves to them, the degree of their estimation of him, and that it is but very little and low, in respect of what it should be, and the many peevish fits, to’s and fro’s, up’s and down’s that they are subject to, so that though they were just now fresh and lively in the exercise of their faith, and of their estimation of Christ, yet
within

within a little, even by and by, they give way again to their jealousies; the doctrine will also hold true of them, *We esteemed him not.*

We shall give the *second doctrine* (and then speak to the use of both jointly) which is this, That there is nothing more culpably accessory to the abounding of unbelief, than the poor thoughts and little estimation that men have of Jesus Christ; the undervaluing of him is the great ground and reason why they believe not on him: And on the contray, if the hearers of the gospel had higher thoughts, and a more precious esteem of Christ, and valued him according to his invaluable worth, there would be more believing in him than there is. When the gospel comes to invite men to the wedding, Matt. xxii. When Christ is praised and commended as to what he is, what he hath purchased, and what he freely offereth to sinners; it is said, *That those who were bidden, made light of it, and went away one to his farm, another to his merchandize, &c.* When Christ was spoken of, and the offer of life made through him, they undervalued and despised it, and made light of the offer, and therefore turned their backs, for they thought more of the house, of the oxen, of the farm, and of the married wife, than they thought of him. Acts xvii. When Paul is preaching Christ at Athens, the philosophers, and orators, these learned heads, despise and disdain him as a setter forth of some strange and uncouth God. If we compare this with its contrary, it will be further clear, to wit, wherever there is an estimation of Christ, it proves a help to faith and a ground of it; so wherever Christ is despised, disesteemed and undervalued, it conceives in men, and is a ground to them of these three. 1. It cools or rather keeps cool their love and affection to him; where he is disesteemed and undervalued, he cannot be loved; and people in that case become like those that are brought in Jer. xlv. 17. saying, *It was better with us when we did bake cakes*

cakes to the queen of heaven : The Lord is counted by them to be as *a wilderness and land of darkness* ; and they say, as in Jer. ii. 31. *We are lords, and will come no more unto thee* : And when men esteem not Christ, they seek not after him, they care not for an interest in him, they trust not to him : When a man valueth a pearl, he will readily sell all that he hath, that he may buy it ; but that which is not esteemed, there will be no care to come by it. 2. It hath influence to obstruct mens giving him credit, which is of the very essence of faith, so that, where he is not esteemed of, he is not, he cannot be believed on ; the former says, that we will not be married to him ; this says we will not believe him, nor trust the reality of his offer : Where he is not esteemed of, he is not taken to be really in good earnest, and faithful in what he says : His offers are looked upon as having neither solidity nor reality in them, therefore, Rev. xix. these two are put together ; first, it is said, *Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb* ; and then it is subjoined, *These are the true and faithful sayings of God* : So that when Christ is not esteemed of, he is not thought worth the crediting and trusting to. And it is on this ground that the Lord founds his controversy with his professing people, Jer. ii. 5. ‘ What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that ‘ they have gone far from me, and have walked after ‘ vanity, and are become vain ? ’ They undervalued his word, they thought him not worthy of credit, and therefore they turned the back on him : The same is insinuated by the Lord, Mic. vi. 3. ‘ O my people, ‘ what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I ‘ wearied thee ? Testify against me. ’ 3. This little esteem of Christ weakens hope or expectation of any good that men may have from him ; when we esteem him not, there is no expectation of getting our needs supplied, and our wants made up by him, nor of attaining in him the happiness that we would be at, and there-

therefore there are no serious addressies made to him for the same. These three, love to him, trust in him, hope from and through him, being the prime graces in a Christian, when they are weakened, unbelief most certainly in so far prevaieth: And it being Christ's worthiness, and the estimation thereof that gives ground to all these; then sure, when he is not esteemed but undervalued, these must also fail in their exercise. Now laying all these together, there can hardly be any thing more culpably accessory to the abounding of unbelief, than the undervaluing of precious Jesus Christ; it is impossible that he can be cordially welcomed where he is not at all esteemed.

As for the uses of these doctrines, they are of large extent, serving to make manifest a root of bitterness, that undoes multitudes of souls, and which men and women will not easily be persuaded to believe. Let this therefore be the first use of it, To discover a great sin that is incident to the hearers of this gospel; among many other things that may be charged on them, this is one and not the least, even little esteem of Jesus Christ; so little, that when he is speaking, they count him scarce worth the hearing: Hence is the slumbering and sleeping of so many when he is preached to them, which holds forth something of the nature of all men and women; this despising, undervaluing, and thinking little of Christ, is a sin that may for a long time cleave fast and close to the hearers of the gospel; it may be ye will think this a strange and uncouth charge, and that whoever disesteem, ye do certainly esteem him much; but it were better ye were seriously and humbly saying with the prophet here, *He was despised, and we esteemed him not*: There are many who never once suspect themselves as guilty of, or chargeable of this evil; for whose conviction, let me speak but a few words: Is there not such a bitter root in you? If it be natural to all men and women, how comes it to pass that ye are free of it? Is there
nothing

nothing of the seed of the serpent in you? And if there be, will there not be hatred at the seed of the woman in you? Are ye any other sort of hearers than they were to whom this was spoken? Were they not hearers of the gospel as well as ye? He here speaks of hearers of the gospel in all ages, and yet ye will disdain to take with this sin, and will account it to be an uncouth, if not an unjust charge and imputation, to say of you that ye are undervaluers and despisers of Christ: but the reason of it is twofold, the first whereof is, Because ye know not what Christ's worth is, and therefore ye do neither esteem him, nor know that ye disesteem and undervalue him: whereas they who have won to some knowledge of his worth are always, or very often complaining that they cannot get him suitably thought of and esteemed. The second reason is, Because ye know not yourselves, and therefore ye take self-love and estimation of yourselves to be love to him and estimation of him; ye think yourselves so well, that ye cannot endure to think that ye want any grace or good thing; and estimation of Christ being a good thing, and ye thinking that ye could not hold up your face and own the reproaching and despising of him, ye will not let it light that ye want this grace and good thing, a precious esteem of him: But there is no greater evidence that ye are lying under the power of the deceit and delusion of your own hearts, that your natural distemper and fever is not cooled and calmed, but that ye are still roving in nature; and therefore, though ye be living in enmity at God and Christ, yet ye cannot be made sensible of it. We really think it somewhat strange, that men and women should live twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years under the gospel, and yet never be brought to groan under this enmity, nor to lay to heart this sin of undervaluing Christ: But if it be a truth that none naturally do love and esteem him, then certainly many of you are grossly mistaken, that think ye esteem high-

ly of him: Ah! your fancied esteem of him will be counted an undervaluing of him.

And if ye ask, What is it to undervalue Christ, or when is he undervalued? I answer, He is undervalued. 1. When he is not matched with or married, when the match with himself, whereof he maketh offer, is not closed with upon his own terms; for what, I pray, can hinder the ending of a bargain, or finishing a marriage-contract, especially when it is so full, free, and rich, on the proposer and suiter's part, but either that people think it is not fit for them, or that they think nothing of it at all? And this is it that hinders closing with Christ, Matt. xxii. *They made light of it, and went away, &c.* and Psal. lxxxi. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* 2. When any thing is made equal to Christ, much more when any thing is preferred to him, he is undervalued and not esteemed of; when he gets little or none of people's care and labour, little of their time, little of their love and delight, few or none of their thoughts, &c. but they are quite carried away after other things; for *where the treasure is, there the heart will be also*; and were Christ our treasure, and precious in our esteem, our hearts would be more set on him; but it is strange, sad, and even astonishing to think, how little our spirits are exercised with the thoughts of Christ, how little they are taken up with longing for him and delighting in him, and yet we will think that we esteem him. 3. Our Lord is undervalued when he is not made use of, and employed, and trusted to as an able and sufficient Saviour. If there be a learned and skilful physician in a city in all or most diseases, or an able lawyer to plead all causes; if men have diseases to be cured, and causes to be pleaded, and yet do not employ such a physician or such a lawyer, but go to some other, though far less skilful and able, they undervalue him; it is even so here, when men have many sins, and they seek not to him

him for pardon, many, not only temporal wants, but also and mainly, many spiritual wants, and do not acknowledge him in them, neither seek to him for supply of them, many predominant evils; and they seek not to him to mortify them, many snares and temptations, and they do not make use of him to prevent and lead them by them, and many spiritual causes to be pleaded before God, or at his bar, and they do not employ him as advocate to plead for them. 4. He is undervalued when men think not themselves happy enough in him, nor safe enough in bargaining with him, and when he doth not satisfy and fully content them, as if he were *yea and nay*, and as if *all the promises were not yea and amen in him*; when he is not credited entirely, and rested upon, he is not esteemed of, hence he complains, John v. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*: and Matt. xxiii. *How often would I have gathered you and ye would not?* He would, to say so with reverence, fain do them a good turn, but they will not trust him. O! how much undervaluing of Christ is there even among believers, when they hold and draw with him, entertain jealousies and suspicions of him, scarcely credit him, and when they do at any time credit him, are in a manner ready to take back their word again. How often are creature-comforts over-valued by them? And how often are the consolations of God of small account with them? These, and many other ways are they, even they, in some considerable measure and degree guilty of undervaluing of Christ.

Use 2. Take with this sin, acknowledge and seek pardon for it; it were a good token of some tenderness, to be mourning for enmity against Christ, and for undervaluing of him, as well as for drunkenness, fornication, theft, or any other gross sin. And where that gracious and right mourning that is spoken of, Zech. xii. 10. comes, it will be in special for this undervaluing of Christ to the height of piercing of him.

We would ask any of you that think ye repent, if this sin of slighting him hath pierced you as it did those, Acts ii. ? It may be, some think themselves so cleanly and perfect, that ye have not many sins to mourn for, O! dreadful mistake; but though ye had no more, is not this enough that ever there should have been enmity in your bosom to Christ? And should not this prick you to the very heart, that ever ye should have so undervalued him? But readily they that see fewest sins in themselves, will own this sin least.

Use 3. It serves to be a warning to all men in nature, to consider what their condition is. Do ye that have this enmity, and are undervaluers of Christ, know what is in your hearts? And do ye consider what posture ye will be found in, if grace make not a change in the day of Christ? ye will be found amongst these despisers and haters that would not have him to reign over them. How will ye dare to appear, or in what posture will ye appear before him, when he whom ye despised shall come in the glory of his Father will all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory? And yet appear ye must. How will the conscience then gnaw, and the heart be affrighted? How will challenges awaken, yeasting and prick you on this ground, that the Son of God, the Heir of all things, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, who proposed marriage to you, was undervalued, and a match with him made light of, and that a thing of nought was put in his room and place? Will not this be a horrible accusation in that day? And if ye would consider what will be their posture that mocked and buffeted him, and plucked off his hair, that nodded with the head, and cried alha, and bade him, come down from the cross, that did scourge him, and hang him upon the cross betwixt two thieves; such a posture will all of you be in who have despised and disesteemed him; ye will meet with that same sad sentence, *Bring out these mine enemies that*

that would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before me. O! what a strange punishment, suppose ye, will that be, when the Saviour of sinners shall stand by and look on, till he see vengeance executed on sinners that despised him? Think on it, for there is such a day coming, when ye must all appear before him, and when your accounts will be cast up. Suffer not yourselves to be cheated into an opinion that it will be accounted a little sin to be found under this guilt of despising Christ, and let not one of you put it off himself, and over upon another; they will be found despisers of him that would never own it, nay, even many that have preached him, and that would have been angry at prophanity in others, as may be gathered from Matth. vii. 22.

The 4th Use serves to commend this to you as a piece of your duty, to study to know Christ, and to have the suitable impression of Christ and of his worth, as the great means contributive to the bringing you to credit him, and believe on him, and to the removing a main obstruction that hinders your faith, and that is the undervaluing of him; for if undervaluing of him be the great cause of unbelief, and that which mainly obstructs faith, then the esteeming of him from a due impression of his worth, must be a great means of, and help to faith; and the more he be esteemed of, the more will he be believed on. It hath an attractive virtue to draw sinners to love him, a screwing virtue to screw up the affections towards him; and withal a fixing and establishing virtue to settle and stay the soul upon him by believing. The soul that from the right impression of his worth esteems him, knows that it may trust to him, for he is holy and true; and hence it is, that the great thing that believers take to ground their prayers upon, is some excellency in God, some one or other of his titles and attributes upon which they fix, to bear them up, under and against any difficulty that presseth hard upon them

them. This fixes also their hope and expectation of attaining to any good thing that they want through him : And therefore upon the one side we would commend to you the study of Christ's worth, and upon the other, an high estimation of him, as that which will fix your faith, and love, and hope on him. This we see to be in a high degree in Paul, Phil. iii. *I account all things, saith he, to be but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and his transcendent worth ; ye should not think it lost labour, to read and study these places of scripture, that shew what our Lord Jesus is in his person, natures, and offices, that ye may have the faith of his God-head fixed, and may be clear as to the excelling fulness that is in him ; as namely that of, Isa. ix. 6. To us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, of whose kingdom and government there shall be no end.* And to study his excellent properties, his eternity, omnipotency, faithfulness, mercy, &c. common to him with the Father and Holy Ghost ; and the excellent qualifications that as Mediator he is replenished with ; being full of grace and truth, and in all things having the pre-eminency ; See Col. i. John i. 14. and Heb. 1, 2, 3, &c. The reason why we press you to this, is not only that ye may have a more clear theory and contemplation ; but also and mainly that your affections may be delighted in him, and that your faith may without stop or hesitation come to give him credit. Ignorance of Christ breeds disesteem, and disesteem makes you not to give him credit, and thus ye are kept at a distance from him. There is no study more pleasant, more precious, and more profitable. Here then is a task for you that ask what ye shall do ? even to read and study the excellency of Jesus Christ, and to labour to have it well fixed in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts ; it will
give

give you notable direction what to do, even that which is well-pleasing to God, and may be very profitable to you through his blessing.

Use 5. See here the great necessity and conveniency of studying the disesteem of Christ that is in us, as well as of studying the worth that is in him, and what he hath out of love suffered for us : These two are put together in the text ; it being as needful for us to be as well acquainted with the one as with the other. We shall give you this use in two short doctrines ; the first whereof is, That it is a necessary duty for the hearers of the gospel to study thoroughly, and to be convinced of, and clear in their disesteem of Christ, as well as of his worth and excellency, because it awakens repentance, and maketh it flow, and thoroughly humbleth the sinner, when he findeth this desperate wickedness and perverseness to be in himself, and maketh him truly to loath and abhor himself ; and unless this desperate wickedness be seen and felt, that great and bitter mourning spoken of, *Zech. xii. 10.* will never flow forth.

The 2^d. is, That where folk have any just estimation of Christ and of his worth, and are sensible of the evil of unbelief, there will also be some sense of the sin of undervaluing of him ; and the more sense they have of the evil of unbelief, they will be the more sensible of their undervaluing of him. And will with the prophet here cry out, *He was despised, and we esteemed him not* : And from both these ye may see the necessity of studying to find out this corruption ; the search and discovery whereof will let you see into the evil and perverseness of your nature, and so deeply humble you ; and also serve highly to commend Christ and his grace to you ; and without the discovery of this corruption, it is impossible ever to be humble thoroughly, or to have right thoughts of Christ and of his grace.

Use 6. It serves to let us see the necessity of believing in Christ, and of the imploying of him ; because
there

there is no other way to be free of the challenges of undervaluing of and not esteeming of him, but by receiving of him, and believing on him.

A 7th Use may be added, and is, That the more there be that despise Christ, and the greater difficulty there be in believing on him, the more reason have they to be thankful in whom he graciously works any suitable estimation of himself, and brings them to believe on him. Those who have got any glimpse of his glory which hath lifted him high in their estimation to the drawing forth of their faith and love after him, should praise him for it. It is he, and only he that opened your eyes to see him, and gave you that estimation of him, and circumcised your hearts to love him; let him therefore have all the praise and glory of it. This is the word of God; and may he himself bless it to you thro' Jesus Christ!



S E R M O N XIX.

ISAIAH LIII. *Verse 4, 5.*

Verse 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Verse 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

THIS is a most wonderful subject that the prophet is here discoursing of, even that which concerneth

eth the sufferings of our blessed Lord Jesus, by way of prediction several hundreds of years before his incarnation. It was much that he was to be *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; but this was more, that *he was despised, and we esteemed him not*. There is wonderful grace upon the one side, that our Lord became so very low; and wonderful contempt and enmity on the other side, that we despised him, and esteemed him not, even because of his lowness.

In the words now read, and that follow, the prophet sets himself to remove the offence that men took at our Lord's humiliation, by shewing them, that although he became so low, yet he was not to be the less esteemed for that: And the ground which he lays down to remove the offence is in the first words of the text, which in sum is this, that there was nothing in himself wherefore he should have been brought so low, there was no sin in him, neither was there any guile found in his mouth, but he was graciously pleased to take on him that which we should have born; and therefore men ought not to stumble, and offend at his stooping to bear that which would with its weight have crushed them eternally; and that he did this to make their peace with God. In the 6th verse, he shews how it came to pass that he stooped so low, *All we, saith he, like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one of us to our own way, and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*. We had lost ourselves, but God in the depth of his eternal wisdom, love, and good-will, found the way to save us; wherein, to speak so, a covenant was transacted betwixt God and the Mediator, who becomes answerable for our sins, which are transferred on him. From the 7th verse to the 10th he goes on, shewing the execution of this transaction, and how the bondsman performed all according to his engagement; and from the 10th verse to the close, we have the promises made to him for his satisfaction. The scope is, to remove the scandal,

of the cross, so to hold out our Lord's pursuing the work of satisfaction to the justice of God for elect sinners, and the good success he had in it.

In the 4th and 5th verses we have three things, 1. This ground asserted, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* 2. Mens enmity aggravated from this, *Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* In the very mean time that he condescended to stoop so low for us, and to bear that which we should have borne, we esteemed him but little, we looked on him as a man under a plague. 3. This is more fully explained, ver. 5. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, he was so handled for our sins; and the chastisement of our peace was on him, that which made our peace with God was on him; By his stripes we are healed, the stripes that wounded and killed him, cured us.*

We have here then rather as it were a sad narration, than a prophesy of the gospel, holding out a part of our Lord's sufferings, yet a clear foundation of the consolation of the people of God; it being the ground of all our faith of the pardon of sin, of our peace with God, and of our confident appearing before him, that our Lord was content to be thus dealt with, and to give *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluckt off the hair.*

We shall clear the words in the assertion, which will serve to clear the words of the whole chapter, and also of the doctrines to be drawn from it. 1. The thing that Christ bore is called *griefs and sorrows*, by which we understand the effects that sin brings on men in the world; for it is the same that in the 5th verse is called his being *wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquity*: It is a wounding that iniquity causeth, and meritoriously procureth; it is not sin itself, but the effect of sin, to wit, the punishment, the sorrow and grief that sin bringeth with it, called
griefs

griefs and sorrows ; partly because grief and sorrow is necessarily joined with sin, partly to shew the extremity and exceeding greatness of this grief and sorrow, and the bitter fruits that sin brings with it. 2. How is it said that Christ hath *borne* and carried their griefs and sorrows? By this we understand not only Christ's removing them, as he removed sicknesses and diseases, as it is said, Matt. viii. 16, 17. but also, and mainly his actual and real enduring of them, as the phrase is frequently used in the scripture ; *That man shall bear his iniquity*, or he shall bear his sin, Lev. v. and many other places ; it sets out a real inflicting of the punishment that sin deserves, on him. 3. That it is said *our* griefs, and *our* sorrows, it is not needlessly or superfluously set down, but to meet with the offence that men take at Christ's humbling himself so low. As if he had said, what mean you to stumble at Christ's coming so low, and being so afflicted? It was not for his own sins, but for ours, that he was so handled ; and they are called *our* griefs and sorrows, 1. Because we by our sins procured them, they were of our deserving, and due to us, the debt was ours, though he, as our surety, took it on himself. 2. Because, tho' the elect have distinct reckonings, and peculiar sins, some more, some fewer, some greater, some lesser, yet they are all put to Christ's account ; there is a combination of them, a gathering of them all on him, as the word is, ver. vi. *He hath laid on him*, or made to meet on him, *the iniquities of us all*.

The meaning then of the assertion is this ; surely this is the cause of Christ's humiliation, and this makes him not only to become man, but to be a mean, poor man, and have a comfortless and afflicted life in the world, that he hath taken on him that punishment, curse, and wrath that was due to us for our sins ; and therefore we ought not to be offended and stumbled at him.

Now because Socinians, the great enemies of Christ's

satisfaction, and of the comfort of his people, labour to elude this place, and to make Christ only an exemplary Saviour, and deny that he really and actually did undergo these griefs and sorrows for the sins of the elect; we shall a little clear and confirm the exposition we have given. The question is not about taking away of sin, but about the manner of removing it. They say that it is by God's pardoning of it without a satisfaction. We say it is by Christ's satisfaction; so the difficulty in expounding the words, is, whether to expound them of Christ's removing our sorrows and griefs from us, or of his bearing of them for our sins, and so really taking them away: And that this scripture means not a simple removing of them, as he did remove sickness, Mat. viii. 17. but a real taking them on himself, and bearing them in order to the satisfaction of the justice of God for our sins; we shall give these reasons to confirm it: 1. Because these words are to be understood of such a bearing of sorrows and griefs, as made Christ to be contemptible and despised by others: This is clear from the scope; for they are given as a reason why Christ was rejected and despised, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and why men should not stumble at him for all that; because it was for them. Now, if he had only removed sorrows from them, as he did sickness, it had not been a cause of his sorrow and grief, nor of any man's stumbling at him, but had rather been a cause of his exaltation in mens esteem? But it is given here as a cause of that which went before in the first part of the 3^d ver. and also a reason why men should not stumble at him, and withal an aggravation of their guilt who did stumble at him. Now it is clear, that the ground of the Jews despising and mocking him, was not his removing of sicknesses and diseases, but his seeming to be given over unto the power of death. 2. Because that which is called here *bearing of sorrows and griefs*, is in the words following called

a being

a being wounded for our transgressions, which imports not only that he was wounded, but that our iniquities were the cause of his being wounded, and that the desert of them was laid on him. 3. This wounding is holden forth to be the *stripes* whereby we are healed; and all we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all; we did the wrong, but he made the amends; and it was such a wounding as proves a cure to us, and makes way for our peace and reconciliation with God; and such, as without it there is no healing for us; for *by his stripes we are healed*; it is by his swallowing up the river and torrent of wrath that was in our way, and would have drowned us eternally, had not he interposed for us, that we escape. 4. Consider the parallel places to this in the New Testament, and we find that this place holds forth Christ's real and actual bearing of our sorrows and griefs: I shall only name three; the *first* is that of 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; which can be no other way expounded but of Christ's being made an offering and sacrifice for our sins; he not being a sinner himself but becoming our surety, and engaging to pay our debt, and to pay down the price for the satisfaction of divine justice: he is reckoned to be the sinner, and our sins are imputed to him, and he is dealt with as a sinner. A *second* place is that of Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*. The sorrows and griefs that Isaiah says here, he should bear, and there expounded by the apostle, to be his being made a curse, or his bearing of the curse that we should have born; it is not meant simply of his removing the curse from us, but it also sets forth the manner how he removed it, to wit, by his own bearing of it himself, being nailed to the cross, according

to the threatening given out before. The *third* place is that of, 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who, his ownself bore our sins in his own body on the tree*; where there is a direct reference to this place of Isaiah, which is cited for confirmation of what the apostle saith, and every word is full and hath a special signification and emphasis in it, *He his ownself bore*, the same word that is here, and *our sins* and *in his own body*, and *on the tree*; intimating the lowest step of his humiliation, *by whose stripes ye were healed*; for *ye were as sheep going astray*, &c. By his bearing of our sins the burden of sin was taken off us, and we are set free.

I know that place of Mat. viii. 17. hath its own difficulty, and therefore I shall speak a word for clearing of it; he hath spoken, verse 16. of Christ's *healing all that were sick*, and then subjoins in the 17th verse, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses*; whereupon these enemies of Christ would infer, that this place of scripture hath no other, nor further meaning, but of Christ's curing of some sick people, and of the deputed or committed power which he hath to pardon sins; but we suppose that the reasons which we have already given makes it clear, that this cannot be the meaning of the place, to which we shall add first a reason or two, and secondly give you the true meaning of it.

The reasons why this cannot be the meaning of the place, are, 1. Because Acts viii. 32. this scripture is spoken of as being daily a fulfilling by Christ; and therefore it could not be fulfilled in those few days wherein he was in the flesh upon earth. 2. Because this bearing of our griefs and sorrows is such a piece of Christ's humiliation, as thereby he took on himself all the griefs and sorrows of all the elect at once, both of those who lived in Isaiah's time, and of those who lived before, and since his time, and therefore cannot be restricted to the curing of temporal diseases in
days

the days wherein he was on earth ; nay, not the pardoning of the sins of the elect then living, there being many elect before and since comprehended in this his satisfaction for the sins of the elect that were dead, and to be born, as well as for the sins of them that were then living.

2. For the meaning of the place, 1. We are not to look on Christ's curing of sicknesses and diseases, Mat. viii. 16. as a proper fulfilling of this place, Isa. liii. 4. but as many scriptures are spoke of by way of allusion to other scriptures, so is this ; there is indeed some fulfilling of the one in the other, and some resemblance betwixt the one and the other, and the resemblance is this, even to shew Christ's tenderness to the outward condition of mens bodies, whereby he evidenced his tenderness and respect to the inward sad condition of their immortal souls, whereinto they were brought through their sin ; the great thing aimed at by the prophet. 2. If we consider the griefs and sorrows that Christ bore complexly in their causes and effects, he in healing those of diseases and sicknesses, bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; because when he took on our debt, he took it on with all the consequences of it ; and so, though Christ took on no disease in his own person, for we read not that he was ever sick ; yet in taking on the debt in common of the elect, he virtually took on all sicknesses and diseases, or what they suffered in the diseases, or should have suffered, he took it on together ; and hereby he had a right, to speak so, to the carrying them off, he had respect to the cause of them, to wit, sin ; therefore to such as he cured, he says very often, *Thy sins be forgiven thee* ; he studied to remove that in most of them he did deal with ; and so looking on our Lord as taking on our sins complexly, with the cause, as having a right to remove all the effects of sin, evidencing itself in the removing of these diseases, whereof sin was the cause, these words may be thus fulfilled ; and so they

they are clear, and the doctrine also; we have here no mere exemplary Saviour that hath done no more but confirmed his doctrine, and given us a copy how to do and behave, but he hath really and actually borne our sorrows and griefs, and removed our debt, by undergoing the punishment due to us for sin.

Observe here 1st, That sin, in no flesh, no not in the elect themselves, is without sorrow and grief; tribulation and anguish are knit to it, or it hath these following on it; or take the doctrine thus. Wherever there is sin, there is the cause of much sorrow and grief, it is the plain assertion of scripture, Rom. ii. 8, 9. *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil*; which one place, putting the four words together, says, 1. That there is sorrow most certainly, and inseparably on every soul that hath sinned. And 2. That this sorrow is exceeding great, (which may also be the reason why this sorrow is set out in two words in the text) therefore four words are used by the apostle to express it. It is not our purpose here to dispute, whether God in his justice doth by necessity of nature punish the sinner? These three things considered, will make out the doctrine, which is, That there is a necessary connexion betwixt sin and sorrow, and that this sorrow must needs be very great; 1. If we consider the exceeding unsuitableness of sin to the holy law of God, and how it is a direct contrariety to that most pure and perfect law. 2. If we consider the perfectly holy nature of God himself, *The righteous Lord*, saith the Psalmist, Psal. xi. 7. *lovetb righteousness*; and the prophet, Hab. i. 13. says, *He is of purer eyes than he can behold evil, and he cannot look upon iniquity*; and tho' we need not to dispute God's sovereignty, yet it is clear that he is *angry with the wicked every day*, Psal. vi. 11. and he *will by no means clear the guilty*, Exod. xxxiv. 7. and that there is a greater suitableness in this inflicting sorrow and grief on a sinner that walks

con-

trary to him, than there is in shewing him mercy; and there is a greater suitableness in his shewing mercy to an humbled sinner, that is aiming to walk holily before him. 3. If we consider the revealed will of God in the threatning, who hath said, *The day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die.* We may say there is, as they speak in the schools, a hypothetic necessity of grief and sorrow to follow on sin, and that there is a necessary connection betwixt them; and this may very well stand with the Mediator's coming in, and interposing to take that grief and sorrow from us, and to lay it on himself; but it was once ours because of our sin.

If it be asked what grief and sorrow this is? We said it is very great, and there is reason for it; for though our act of sin, 1. As to the subject that sins, man: And 2. As to the act of sin itself, a sinful thought, word, or deed that is soon gone, be *finite*; yet if we consider sin, 1. In respect of the object against whom, the infinite God. 2. In respect of the absolute purity of God's law, a rule that bears out God's image set down by infinite wisdom, and that may be some way called infinitely pure; and sin, as being against this pure rule, that infinite wisdom hath set down; and 3. If we consider it in respect of its nature, every sin being of this nature; that though it cannot properly wrong the majesty of God, yet as to the intention of the thing, and even of the sinner, it wrongs him; sin in these respects may be called *infinite*, and the wrong done to the majesty of God thereby, may be called infinite; as those who built Babel, their intention in that work breathed forth infinite wrong to God, as having a direct tendency to bring them off from dependance on him; and so every sin, if it had its will and intent, would put God in subordination to it, and set itself in his room; and therefore sin, in some respect, as to the wrong against God, is infinite.

2. *Observe*, That the real and very great sorrow that the sins of the elect deserved, our Lord Jesus did really and actually bear and suffer; as we have expounded the words, and confirmed the exposition given of them, ye have a clear confirmation of the doctrine from them. 1. *Griefs* and *sorrows* in the plural number, shew intenseness of sorrow and grief. 2. That they are called *ours*, it shews our propriety in them, and 3. That it is said Christ *bore* them; these concur to prove the doctrine, that the same sorrow which the sins of the elect deserved, Christ bore: It not only says, that our Lord bore sorrows, but the sorrows, that by the sins of the elect were due to them; and so there was a proportionableness betwixt the sorrows that he bare, and the sorrows they should have endured; he took up the cup of wrath that was filled for us, and that we would have been put to drink, and drank it out himself; suppose that our Lord had never died (as blessed be his name, there is no ground to make the supposition) the cup of sorrow that the elect would have drunken eternally, was the same cup that he drank out for them: It is true, we would distinguish betwixt these things that are *essentially* due to sin as the punishment of it, and these things that are only *accidentally* due to it; the former Christ bare, but not the latter. To clear both in a word or two, 1. These things essentially due to sin as necessarily in the threatening, *The day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*; and in the curse of the law according to that, ‘Curst is every one that abides not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,’ are death and the curse, these are essentially the desert of sin; in which respect it was not only necessary that Christ should become man and suffer, but that he should suffer to death, or should die; and not only so, but that he should die the cursed death of the cross, as the threatening and curse put together hold out: And as to all those that he underwent, and met

with

with before, and at his death, they were the accomplishment of the threatening due to us, and fulfilled in and by him in our room; so that as he himself saith, Luke xxiv. 6. ‘ O fools and slow of heart to believe ‘ all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ ‘ to have suffered these things, and to have entered ‘ into his glory?’ Therefore he behoved to be in agony, and to sweat great drops of blood, to be crucified, and die, and to be laid in the grave. 2. The things which we call accidentally due to sin, are mainly two. 1. That horrible desperation of the damned in hell, where they gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme God. This we say is not properly and essentially the desert of sin, but only accidental. 1. In respect of the creatures inability to bear the wrath that sin deserveth; and hence ariseth not only a sinless horror which is natural, but a sinful desperation. 2. Add to this inability of the creature, the enmity thereof, whereby it cometh to thwart with and contradict the will of God; hence the desperation not only ariseth, but is increased: Now, our Lord Jesus not being simply a creature or a man, but God and man in one person, he was able to bear the sorrow and wrath due to the elect for their sin; and their being no quarrel, nor ground of any quarrel betwixt God and him, on his own account, though he had a sinless horror at the cup of his Father’s displeasure, when put to his mouth; yet he had no sinful desperation. The second thing accidentally due to sin, is the eternal duration of the wrath or of the curse, because the sinner being a mere creature, cannot at one shock meet with the infinite wrath of God, and satisfy justice at once, therefore the Lord hath in his wisdom and justice found out a way of supporting the creature in its being, and continuing it for ever under wrath, because it cannot, being finite, satisfy infinite justice: But our Lord being God and man, being of infinite worth and value, and of infinite strength, was also to

satisfy justice, and bear at once, that which the elect could never have borne; yet he had the essentials of that which sin deserved, to wit, Death and the curse to meet with, and did actually meet with them, as the hiding of his Father's face, and the suspending and keeping back of the consolation, that by virtue of the personal union flowed from the God-head to the man-head: And he also had the actual sense and feeling of the wrath of God, the awakned sword of the justice of God actually smiting him; so that men wondered how he could be dead so soon. We shall only add a word or two of reasons for clearing and confirming the doctrine; and for proof of it, these three things concur, 1. That sins desert by God's appointment, is to have sorrow following it, 2. That by God's appointment according to the covenant of redemption, the Son of God undertook that same very debt that was due by the elect. And 3, That it was God's design not to pass one of their sins, without satisfaction made to justice, but to put at the surety for them all; for the declaration of the riches and glory of the free grace of God, when the sinner is delivered, and not put to pay: And for the declaration of the holy severity and justice of God, when not one farthing is owing, but the surety must needs pay it; and that both these meeting together, there may be to all generations a standing and shining evidence of the unsearchable riches both of God's grace and of his justice.

This is a sweet doctrine, and hath many massy, substantial, and soul-refreshing uses: Out of this eater comes meat, and out of the strong comes sweat. This being the marrow of the gospel, holding forth, not only Christ's sufferings, but that he suffered not at random, or by guess, but that he suffered the sorrows and griefs that we should have suffered; and though the equivalent might have been received, yet he would needs undergo the same sufferings in their essentials; which may exceedingly confirm the faith and hope of believers

believers in him, of their exemption and freedom from the wrath and curse of God, seeing he suffered the same that they should have suffered, had not he interposed betwixt them and it, as their bondsman and surety.

Use 1. Hereby we may know what an evil and bitter thing sin is, that have such effects; would to God we could once prevail this far with you, as to make you conceive and believe, that sin hath sorrow and grief inseparably knit to it, and that the sinner is miserable and liable to death, and to the curse of God: And there is no difference but this, that sinners are insensible how miserable they are, and so in greater capacity to be made obnoxious to that misery. Do ye mind this, O sinners, *That God is angry with you every day? That indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, is to every soul of man that does evil?* Tremble to think upon it; Many of you pass as good people who will be found in this roll: And would ye know your condition, and the hazard that ye run? It is of wrath and the curse of God eternally with desperation and blasphemy: And if that be misery, sin is misery, or brings it. And the day comes when there shall be a storm from heaven of fire and thunder, that will melt the elements above you, and not leave a stone upon a stone of these stately buildings on earth about you, in which day sinners will be confirmed in the belief of this truth, *That it is an evil and bitter thing to depart from the living God.*

To press this *use* a little; there are two sorts of sinners, who if they would soberly let the truth of this doctrine sink in their minds, they would see their folly. The first sort are those who lie quietly under by-past guilt unrepented of, as if the sorrow were past, because the act is so, but think not so, will the just God avenge sin on his Son, and will he let it pass in you? You that will grant ye are sinners, and are under convictions of sin, had need to take heed what follows it:

As ye treasure up sin, ye are *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*: O wrath is a heaping up in store for you! A second sort are these that go on in sin, whatever be said to the effects of it, and will confidently put their hand to it, as if there were no sting in it at all, and drink it down as so much sweet liquor; but these stolen drinks that seem sweet in secret, will be vomited up again with pain, torment and sorrow: And either it shall be grief and sorrow to you in the way of repentance, or eternal grief and sorrow, when the cup of God's wrath shall be put in your hand, and held to your head for evermore.

Use 2. By this we may see a necessity of making use of the Mediator Jesus Christ. It is God's great mercy that he hath given a Mediator, and that the Mediator is come, and that he hath taken on him our debt: What would our eternal perishing and wallowing in hell's torment with devils have been, to his sufferings? This doctrine therefore saith, that there is a necessity of making use of him, and receiving him; and therefore either resolve to meet with this sorrow in your own persons, or betake you to him, that by his interposing it may be kept off from you; weigh these two, that sorrow, death, and the curse necessarily follow sin: And that Jesus Christ hath died and undergone that curse for elect sinners, and then ye will see a necessity of being found in him, that ye may be free of the curse, which made Paul make that choice, Phil. iii. 8, 9. *I count all things dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him.* Oft-times the allurements of the gospel prevail not to bring sinners to Christ; but if its allurements do not prevail, will not the consideration of the vengeance of God persuade you? However in these two doctrines ye have in sum this, the curse of God following sin, and a free and full Saviour holden out to you, by whom ye may shun the curse, ye are invited to make him welcome: Choose you, death and life are set before you, whereby you are put to it, whether

whether ye will adventure to meet with the curse, or to make him welcome: Now God himself make you wise to make the right choice.



S E R M O N XX.

ISAIAH LIII. *Verse* 4, 5.

Verse 4. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

Verse 5. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

IF we had the faith of that which the prophet speaks here, and the thorough conviction, who it is of whom he speaks, we would be in a holy transport of admiration and astonishment at the hearing of it; that it is he who is the Prince of life, that was bruised and wounded; and that these bruises, wounds and stripes are ours, were for us, and the price and satisfaction for our iniquities to divine justice: And yet that even he in the performing of all this, is reproached and despised by those, whose good he is thus pursuing and seeking after, oh how should it be wondered at!

These words, as we shewed, hold forth these three things. 1. The cause or end of Christ's suffering; *surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, which is to remove and take away the scandal that might arise from Christ's humiliation, described in the foregoing

foregoing words : He was low indeed, but there was no guile in his mouth ; it was for no quarrel that God had at himself, but he undertook our debt, and therefore carried our sorrows. 2. The aggravation of mens enmity and desperate wickedness ; that yet notwithstanding all this, *We esteemed him smitten of God, and afflicted.* 3. We have the exposition of the first part more clearly set down, *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, &c.* Where more fully he expounds what in the beginning of the 4th verse he asserted.

We expounded the first part of the words, and shewed that these griefs and sorrows held forth the due desert of sin, called ours, because they are the due and particular desert of our sins, and that which they procured, and that Christ's bearing them, was not only meant of his taking away, or removing from us sorrows and griefs, as he did diseases ; but of his real undergoing of that which we should have undergone, even such a bearing as made others think him smitten and plagued of God, and such as wounded and bruised him, even such as made him become a curse for us, and such as procured healing to us ; all which proves that it was a real undergoing of sorrow and grief.

We spoke to two doctrines from this part, 1. That sin hath sorrow necessarily knit to it, and never wanteth sorrow following it. 2. That Christ Jesus undertook the same sorrows, and really bare these same griefs that sin procured to the elect, or that by sin were due to them.

That we may proceed to observe somewhat more, and for clearer access to the doctrine, we shall speak a word to a question that may be moved here.

What is meant by these words, *our*, *we*, and *us* ? He hath born *our* griefs ; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us* all ; by his stripes *we* are healed. And the rather I would speak to this, because throughout the chapter we find these *pronouns* very frequent.

We

We know in scripture *our* and *us* are sometimes extended to all mankind. So *we* are all lost in Adam, and sin hath a dominion over *us* all; and that part of the words, verse 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray*, may well be extended to all mankind; sometimes it is to be restricted to God's elect, and so *all* comprehends only such and all such: And in this respect *our*, *us* and *we*, and *all*, are contradistinguished from many others in the world, and take not in all men, as Gal. iv. 26. *Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all*; which is spoken in opposition to the bond-woman and her children spoken of before: So that this *our*, *us* and *we*, are not to be extended to all individual men in the world, as if Christ had satisfied the justice of God for all; but it is to be applied to God's elect, separated in his purpose from others, and in God's design appointed to be redeemed and satisfied for by Christ: And the words being thus expounded, they lead us to this doctrine, that Jesus Christ in bearing the punishment of sin, had a particular and distinct respect to some definite sinners. For confirmation of it, we shall not go out of the chapter, the scope whereof we would clear a little: And if we look through the chapter, we find five grounds to clear that these words are to be thus restricted.

For 1. We are to expound this universal with respect to God's purpose and covenant, the contrivance of the elects redemption, and to the death of Christ, the execution of it; and so these words, *our*, *us*, *we*, *all*, are and must be restricted to these, and in them we are to find out who they are: Now whose these are, we find clear, John vi. 37, 39. in the 37. ver. where he saith, *All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me*, and ver. 39. *This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing*: It is in a word those whom the Father hath given to Christ, and as many as are given will believe. And certainly those that are given to Christ to

be redeemed by him, are the same whose iniquities the Father makes to meet on him: And these are distinguished from those not given, John xvii. 6. 11. and are called *his sheep*, John x. 15, and 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, to wit, for my sheep.* And all the strain of this chapter being to shew God's way of contriving and prosecuting the work of redemption, and Christ's executing thereof, according to the covenant of redemption: All this spoken of Christ's suffering must be expounded according to that engagement. 2. Whereas it is said, ver. 8. *For the transgressions of my people was he stricken*; it is certain, this *our* and *us* and *we*, for whom Christ was stricken, must be restricted to God's people; that is, his peculiar people, who are his by electing love as Christ saith, John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me*: They are not his, as all the world are his, but are contradistinguished from the world as his own peculiar, purposed, designed people. Sure all the world are not God's people in this sense, therefore they are called *his sheep*, and contradistinguished from those who are not his sheep, John x. 17. and therefore we are to look on these words, *our*, *us*, and *we*, as of equivalent extent with the peculiar people of God; he carried the punishment of the sins of all God's people that are his peculiar election. 3. So ver. 10. 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed:' Hence we gather this, that those whose iniquities Christ bare, are Christ's seed, and for them he purposely laid down his life, as those whom he expected should be saved to satisfy him for the travel of his soul, and for no more; and these cannot certainly be all the world, there being such contradistinction betwixt Christ mystical, or his seed comprehending the elect, and the seed of the serpent comprehending the reprobate and wicked, who are said to be of their father the devil: Those are Christ's seed who are spiritually begotten of him; and these doubtless

doubtless are not all the world, and for these only he suffered; so that *our* sins here, are the sins of all the seed. 4. Look to ver. 11. where it is said, ‘ By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities:’ Where it is clear, whose sins they are that Christ bears; it is theirs who are justified by his knowledge, or by faith in his blood; and justification by faith in his blood, and redemption by his blood, are commensurable, and of equal extent. Now, it being certain as to the event, that not all the world, nor all in the visible church, are justified by the faith of Christ; it must also be certain, that the sins of others who are not, nor shall not be justified, were never purposely born by Christ. And this ground, as all the rest, will be the more clear, if we consider that it is given as an argument why they must be justified, because he hath borne their iniquities. A 5th Ground may be gathered from the last words of the chapter, ‘ He made intercession for the transgressors:’ Whence we may reason, that Christ’s intercession and his satisfaction are of equal extent, he satisfies for no more than he interceeds for: Now, it was not for all the world, nor indefinitely and by guess for all in the visible church that Christ did interceed, *but for them that the Father had given him out of the world*, John xvii. ver. 9. and 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, and ver. 10. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*: Christ’s death being the ground of his intercession, and it being by virtue of his death that he interceeded, his death and intercession must be of the same extent: He interceeds for such and such sinners, because he hath payed a price for them, that there may be a good account made of them at the last day.

The 1. use of it serves to clear a great and precious truth concerning God’s covenant, and discriminating love, whereby he hath put a difference betwixt some and others. 2. It serves to stir them up who are thus

differented, to admire at, and to commend his love, who hath been graciously mindful of them, when others are past by. 3. It serves also to clear other scriptures, and this same chapter, and to teach us not to make common to all, the privileges bestowed on some peculiar ones; and to guard us against the vilifying and prophaning of our Lord's sufferings, as if he had no special and peculiar design in them, or as if they might be frustrated in the design of them, contrary to the promise made to him by the Father.

And therefore here to obviate an objection which is made from the 6 verse, *All we like sheep have gone astray*: Whence some would infer, that it is all, who like sheep have strayed, whose iniquities Christ hath born: We say, That that *all* is not intended to comprehend them whose iniquities Christ hath born only, but to hold out the extent of straying; or the meaning is not, to shew that his suffering and satisfying of justice, extended to all that strayed; but to shew that the elect for whom he suffered, had all of them strayed, as well as others: And this is like the reasoning which the apostle uses, 2 Cor. v. 14. *If one died for all, then were all dead*; the meaning whereof is not, that Christ died for all that were dead, but that all for whom Christ died were once dead; so here while it is said, *All we like sheep have gone astray*: It is to shew that the elect strayed, and esteemed him not as well as others, and had God's curse lying on them as their due, till Christ interposed and took it off them as well as others. The point might have also an use for confirmation, but we insist not on it.

2. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, that is *our* griefs and sorrows who are his elect, his people, his seed, who flee to him for refuge, and are justified by his knowledge, or by faith in him, and for whom he maketh intercession. Hence observe, that believers should endeavour to strengthen themselves in the faith of this, that Jesus Christ hath borne
their

*their griefs and sorrows, and hath satisfied justice for them in particular ; they should study to be in case on good ground with the prophet, to say, Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows, to make it sure that they are in the roll of elect believers, and justified persons : To say with the apostle Paul, Gal. iii. 13. He was made a curse for us : And with the same apostle, 2 Cor. v. ult. to say, He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him : And to say with the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 24. Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree : They speak always by way of application : So these places whereby we confirmed the doctrine, that Christ really bore that punishment of the sins of the elect, are expressed in an applicatory way : And that notable place, Gal. ii. 20. where, as if it were not enough to say, he loved us, and gave himself for us, he draws it nearer and more home, and saith, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* But that ye may not mistake the point, my meaning is not that every body should off hand make application of Christ's death : O ! the presumption and desperate security that destroys thousands of souls here ; as if there were no such distinction as we held forth in the first doctrine, nor any barr to be put in the way of that fancied universal application of Christ's dying for all sinners ; whereas we shewed that it was for his sheep, and those given to him of the Father only, that he died, and for no more : But this is my meaning, that (as it is, 2 Pet. i. 10.) ye would *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*, and that in an orderly way ye would secure your interest in Christ's death ; not to make this the first thing that ye apprehended for the foundation of your faith ; that he died for you in particular ; for that were to come to the top of the stairs, before ye begin to set foot on the first step : But the orderly way is to make sure your fleeing to Christ through the sense of sin, by your closing with him on his own*

terms,

terms, and your having the characters of his people ingraven on you: And then from such premises, ye may draw this conclusion as the result thereof, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*: Then ye may be satisfiedly confirmed in this, that when Christ transacted and bargained with the Father about the elect, when he prayed, and took the cup of his Father's wrath and drank it out for them, he minded your names, and was made a curse in your room. The reason is drawn from the advantage of such a doctrine, as having in it the consolation of all the promises of God; for we can never comfortably apply, nor be delighted in the promises, till we come to make particular application of Christ's purpose and purchase in the work of redemption. This is it that rids marches, and draws a line betwixt us and reprobate men, and that keeps us from the fear of eternal death that pursues them: And it gives some ground of hope to lay hold on, and cleave to as to our enjoying of Christ's purchase. I know there is nothing that men had more need to be sober and wary in the search of, and in the securing themselves in, than this; yet by the same command that enjoins us, to make our covenant-state, our calling and election sure, we are bound to make our redemption sure: And having at some length spoken of the way of making sure our believing, on the first verse we need insist the less on this, of making sure our redemption by Christ.

The *1 use* serves for information, to let you know, that there are many professing Christians, that account this a curious, nice conceit, to study to be sure, and to make it sure, that Christ in his death and sufferings minded them in particular; others may think it impossible: And all may think it a very hard and difficult thing, and indeed so it is. But yet we would have you to consider; 1. That simply it is not impossible, else we should say, that the comfort of the people of God were impossible. 2. That it is no curious thing,

thing, for the Lord doth not lay the obligation to curiosity on any, though we could wish that many had a holy curiosity to know God's mind towards them, that they might not live in the dark about a business of such a concern. 3. That *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, P^{sa}l. xxv. 14. and even this same secret concerning redemption is with them, *and he will shew them his covenant* : And indeed it would be no small matter to have this manifested.

And therefore as a 2^d. use of the point, we would commend to you the study of making this sure; for it hath many notable advantages attending it: It would provoke to humility, and to thankfulness to him *that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood* : It would give us a comfortable and chearful Christian life; it would warm the heart with love to God, and to Jesus Christ who hath thus loved us as to give himself for us. When we commend this to you, it is no uncouth, nice, needlessly curious, or unattainable thing, nor would we have you when ye cannot attain it, to sit down discouraged; neither would we have you take any extraordinary way to come by it; nor wait for any new light but that which is in the Bible; nor would we have you resolve to do no other thing till ye attain to this: But this we would have you to do, even to make faith in Christ sure, by fleeing to him, and casting your burden on him, by cordially receiving him, and acquiescing in him; and then ye make all sure: The committing of yourselves to him to be saved by his price payed to divine justice, and resting on him as he is held out in the gospel, is the way to read your interest in his redemption: And this is it that we have, Gal. iii. and ii. 19. where it is disputed at length, that we are heirs of Abraham by believing, and by *the law*, faith the apostle, *I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God: I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I live in the flesh*
is

is by the faith of the Son of God : Hence he concludes, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me* : And this he proves in the last words, *I do not frustrate the grace of God*, I do not disappoint it ; I mar it not in its end and design : It is (as if he had said) seeking a lost sinner to save, and I give it a lost sinner to be saved : For though God's decree be the first step to salvation, and the work of redemption follows on it, and then believing on both ; yet to come to the knowledge of God's decree of election, and of our concern in the covenant of redemption, we look downward, and seek first to know, if we have a right to make application of that which was thought upon long since concerning us ; and this we do by reflecting on the way we have come to believing : If we have been convinced and made sensible of sin, and of our lost condition by nature ; if we have not smothered that conviction, but cherished it ; if we have not run to this or that duty, for satisfying divine justice, and for making our peace thereby ; but were necessitated to betake ourselves to Jesus Christ, offered in the gospel for the salvation of sinners ; and if we have closed with him as he was offered ; and if we have done so, we may thence conclude that he hath loved *us*, and given himself to save *us* : Because he hath humbled me for sin (may the serious soul say) and given me this faith to believe in him ; and this is his promise which I rest upon, that I shall be saved. Or thou mayest try thy interest in his redemption thus ; whether am I one of God's people or no ? Whether do I walk like them ? and so go through the marks and signs of holiness, asking thyself, What sincerity is there in me ? What mortification ? What humility ? meekness, love to God and his children ? And what fruits of faith in new-obedience ? These two, faith and holiness, are the pillars that bear up the house of assurance : Working and not resting on it ; believing and yet not growing vain and light because of it, but so much the rather studying holiness :

holiness: And to go on betwixt, and with these two, till we come to read God's mind about our election and redemption; for neither believing nor holiness can make any alteration in the bargain of redemption, yet it will warrant our application of the bargain, and clear our interest in it: As the apostle Peter plainly insinuates when he thus exhorts, *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* How is that? Will diligence make God alter his decree of election, or make it any surer in itself? No, by no means, but it will assure us of it; for *by so doing an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into his everlasting kingdom*; by giving all diligence to add one grace to another, there shall be a wide door opened for us to go into heaven. And there is no hazard in commending this doctrine to you all, even the study of faith and holiness, thereby to come to the knowledge of God's secret council concerning you.

And therefore as a third *use* of this point, know that all of you that prejudge yourselves of this comfort of your interest in Christ's purchase, do bring the blame of it on yourselves. If any shall prophanely *object*, if God hath purposed so many shall get good of Christ's sufferings, and more, what will my faith and holiness do, if I be not elected? And how can my unbelief, and negligence prejudge me, if I be elected? We shewed in the former *use*, what faith and holiness will do; and we tell you here, what your unbelief, and negligence will do, and it is this, it will exclude you from all the blessings of the covenant, and bring you under the sentence of condemnation; for as the conditional promise looks to the believer and unbeliever; so it is not Christ's purchase, nor the difference God hath made in his purpose of election, that is the cause why ye are damned and not justified; but ye are damned because ye transgressed God's law, and when salvation was offered to you thro' Christ, ye would not close with the offer: And are ye not justified,

tified, because ye betook not yourselves to him for righteousness, but continued in your sin, and in seeking righteousness by the law: For although this universal be not true, *That Christ died for all men*, yet this universal is true, that *they are all justified that by faith flee unto Jesus Christ for refuge*. Hence these two are put together, John ix. 37. *All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out; for I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the Father's will that sent me*. If it should be asked, What is the Father's will? He answers, *This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing*. There are (are as if he had said) some committed to me to be redeemed by me, and I will lose none of them: And lest it should yet be objected, but I wot not, if I be given to Christ to be redeemed by him; he adds, *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life*: In which words, we have two wills, to say so, both having the same promise and effect; the first relates to the secret paction of redemption, ver. 36. And the second is his revealed will pointing at our duty, ver. 40. And so if any should say, I know not if I be given to Christ, I know not if I be elected; this answer is here given, What is that to thee? It is not to be searched into at the first hand, and broken in upon *per saltum*, and at the broad side; That is God's secret will; and that which is his revealed will belongs to thee, and that is, to see that thou believe, and if thou believest, the same promise that is annexed to believing is annexed to election, and they sweetly tryft together, and are of equal extent, to wit, believing and to be given to Christ: And therefore let me commend it to you, to hold you content with God's revealed will. For it is not the ground of your faith, I mean as to its closing with Christ, That of all given to Christ, he shall lose none; But this is the ground

of it, That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life : And we may add this word as one motive amongst others to faith and holiness, that by your studying of these ye may turn over the words of the prophet here to yourselves, and say, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ;* and that of the apostle, Gal. ii. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me ;* also, that word of Peter cited before, *His ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* And O ! what consolation is there !

The 4th use of it is, To commend the practice of this to the believer that hath indeed fled to Jesus Christ ; and to shew the great privilege that they have who are such : The practice of it is, that believers should seek to be established and confirmed in the particular application of Christ's death to themselves, not only to know that he suffered for the elect and for believers, but for them in particular, that, as it is Heb. iv. 16. *They may come with boldness to the throne of God,* and confidently assert their interest ; and, as it is Heb. vi. they may grow up *to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* We suppose there are many believers that dare not disclaim the covenant, and their interest in Christ, who yet are fearful to make this particular application, *Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me ;* but if they could knit the effects, with the cause from whence they came, they might attain to it ; for the man that can say, I am fled to Christ for refuge, he may also say, that he purposely laid down his life to pay my debt ; and he is warranted of Christ to make this application of his particular intention towards him : Upon the other side, the more consolation he in this to believers, it speaks the greater ground of terror to unbelievers, because of the prejudice they sustain by the want of this. And as many of you as make not faith and holiness your study, ye lie out of the reach of this consolation that flows from Christ's bearing the griefs and sorrows of his own :

And therefore let the profane, senseless multitude that know not what it is to die to the law, or to live to holiness, as ye would not commit sacrilege, stand back, and not dare to meddle with this redemption, till ye stoop and come in at this door of faith and holiness. And let as many as are in this way admit of the consolation; for it is the Lord's allowance upon you: But for others, if ye presume to take hold of it, the Lord will wring it from you, and let you know, to your cost, that ye had nothing to do with it.



S E R M O N XXI.

ISAIAH LIII. *Verse 4, 5.*

Verse 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Verse 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

THESE words, and all this chapter, look liker a piece of the history of the gospel than a prophecy of the Old Testament; the sufferings of the Messiah being so directly pointed at in them. We shewed that this first part of the 4th verse holds forth the cause of his sufferings, and it is applied to our Lord, Matt. viii. 17. and 1 Pet. ii. 24. As for the second part of the verse in these words, *Yet we esteemed him smitten of God, stricken and afflicted*; those who are acquainted with

with the gospel, cannot but know that it was fulfilled in him; and it is an aggravation of their sin who did so undervalue and despise him, that though he condescended to come so low for us, yet we slighted him; and even then when the greatest love was let out, we abused it, and made it the rise of the greatest malice: And for the 5th verse, it is applied by Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 24. This whole chapter then being so gospel-like, and directly fulfilled in Christ, we may draw this general doctrine from it.

That our Lord Jesus Christ who was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, and rose again the third day; is the very same Messiah that was prophesied of in the Old Testament, and was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom the fathers before his coming in the flesh were waiting for. And though this may be looked on as but a very common and useless doctrine, yet it is the main ground and foundation of our faith; we take many things for granted, wherein if we were well tried and put to it, we should be found uncertain, and in this among the rest. Now for confirmation of it, this same argument will make it out; we shall not pursue it at length, but in the prosecuting of it shall tie ourselves to this chapter: The argument runneth thus, if in Christ Jesus, that which was prophesied of the Messiah, and promised to the fathers, have its fulfilling and accomplishment, then he must be the same Messiah that was prophesied of, and promised to them; for these things spoken of the one and only Messiah, can agree to no other: But whatever was prophesied and spoken or promised of the Messiah to the fathers, even to the least circumstance of it, was all fully accomplished and fulfilled in Christ; therefore the conclusion laid down in the doctrine follows, to wit, That our blessed Lord Jesus is the same Messiah that was prophesied of and promised to the fathers, and whom before his coming they were looking for:

So

So that that question needs not now to be proposed, ‘Art thou *he* that should come, or do we look for another?’ ‘Go,’ says Christ, Mat. xi. 4, 5, 6. ‘and tell John, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me;’ blessed is he, who because of my humiliation is not stumbled. Now not to make a rehearsal of the general prophecies in scripture, all of which are exactly fulfilled in Christ, we shall only speak to two things here for making out the argument proposed. 1. That this chapter speaks of the Messiah. 2. That what is spoken in it, is literally fulfilled in Christ.

1. That this chapter speaks of the Messiah; tho’ of old the blinded Jews granted it, yet now they say it speaks of some other; but that it speaks of him these things will make evident, 1. If we look to the 13th verse of the former chapter, where it is said, *My Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high*; there our Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Father’s Servant, or great Lord Deputy; and the Jews themselves grant that this is meant of the Messiah; and there is nothing more clear than that what is spoken in this chapter relates to him, who is called *the Lord’s Servant* in the former chapter, as we shewed before. 2. If we look to the description of his person, it can agree to no other; for it is said, *There was no guile found in his mouth, he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shear-er is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, &c.* he had no sin of his own, which can be said of no other; therefore this chapter speaks of him. 3. If we consider the ends and effects of his sufferings, they do also make it clear; the end of his sufferings; for it is for the transgressions of his people, and as in Dan. vi. 27. *He was to be cut off, but not for himself*; the effects, *He shall*
see

see his seed, and by his knowledge justify many. The New Testament is full to this purpose, there being no scripture in all the Old Testament more made use of, nor oftener applied to Christ than this.

2. What is spoken in this chapter is really and literally fulfilled in Christ, and we may briefly draw it to these *five* heads, all which we find clearly fulfilled in him. 1. To his sufferings. 2. To the ground of his sufferings. 3. To mens account and estimation of him. 4. To the promises made to him. 5. To the effects that followed his sufferings. 1st, For his sufferings it is said, *That he should be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; that he should be despised and rejected of men, and not be esteemed; that he should be looked on as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; that he should bear our sorrows and griefs, and be wounded for our transgressions; that he should be oppressed and afflicted, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter; that he should be numbered amongst the transgressors; and, that he should die and be buried, and make his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death:* all which are exactly fulfilled in him. And the clearing of his sufferings, whereof we spoke before, clears this, that not only he suffered, but that he was brought so low in suffering. 2^{dly}, For the ground of his sufferings, it is said to be for the sins of his own elect; *He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; there was no guile found in his mouth;* the greatest enemies of our Lord could impute nothing to him; Pilate was forced to say, that he found no fault in him: All which shew that it was for the transgressions of his people that he suffered. 3^{dly}, As for mens little esteem of him, it is also very clear; for he was despised and rejected of men; we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not; the world thought little of him, and we that are elect thought but little of him. And what is
more

more clear in the gospel than this? where it is told, that he was reproached, buffeted, spit on, despised; they cried, Away with him, crucify him; he trusted in God, let him deliver him; but God hath forsaken him. *4thly*, As for the promises made to him, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands, he shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, and by his knowledge shall many be justified, &c. What mean all these, but that he shall die, and rise again, and have many converts, that God's work shall thrive well in his hand, and that he shall have a glorious kingdom, and many subjects? Which is called afterward his having a portion with the great, and his dividing of the spoil with the strong: All this was accomplished in Christ, when after his resurrection many were won and brought in by the gospel to believe on him.

And tho' the Jews and Heathens concurred and conspired to cut off all Christians, yet his kingdom spread, and hath continued these sixteen hundred years and above. *5thly*, As for the effects that followed his sufferings, or the influence they had on the elect people of God; as many converts as have been and are in the world, as many witnesses are there, that he is the Messiah; every converted, pardoned, and reconciled soul seals this truth. Hence 1 John v. 7, 8. it is said, *There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one; and there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit in his efficacy, the Water, in the sanctifying virtue of it, in changing and cleansing his people, and the Blood in the satisfying and justifying virtue of it; and these Three agree and concur in one, even this one, to wit, That Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and then it follows, he that believeth hath the witness in himself, because he hath gotten pardon thro' him, and therefore can set his seal to this truth, and say, truly Christ is the Messiah.* The

The *use* is, To exhort you to acquaint yourselves with these things that serve to confirm this truth; the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistle to the Hebrews are much upon it, to hold out, and to prove Christ Jesus to be the true Messiah, and Saviour of his people. If this be not made sure and certain, we have no firm ground for our faith; and tho' it be sure in itself, yet so long as it is not so to us, we want the consolation of it; and there is a two-fold prejudice that comes through our want of thorough clearness in, and assurance of this truth. 1. To the generality of hearers, there is this prejudice, that they are so careless and little solicitous to rest on him. And as it made the Jews to reject him, who to this day stumble at him on this same very ground, that they know him not to be the Messiah, the Christ of God, in whom is accomplished all that was spoken of the Messiah; so Christians not being thoroughly versed in it, they do not rest on him, nor close with him as the true Messiah. 2. There is a prejudice also from it to believers, who have only a glimmering light of Christ's being the Messiah, they come short of that consolation they might have, if they were fixed in the faith of it: There is this great evil among Christians, that they study not to be solidly clear and thoroughly versed in this point; so that if they were put to reason and debate with a Jew, if there were not a witness within themselves of it, the faith of many would be exceedingly shaken.

2. From this, that the prophet never speaks of Christ's sufferings, but he makes application of them; he carried *our* griefs, he was wounded for *our* transgressions, &c. *Observe*, That believers should look on Christ's sufferings as undergone for them, and in their room and place: We cleared before, 1. That Christ suffered for some peculiarly, and not for all; and 2. That believers should endeavour the clearing of their own interest in his sufferings, and that they

have a right to them : Now we briefly add this 3^d akin to the former ; that believers, and such as are fled to Christ for refuge, should look on his sufferings as undergone for them ; and the same scriptures which we cited to confirm these, will confirm this : The reason why we would have you confirmed in this, is, because, 1. It is this only that will make you suitably thankful, it is this which is a notable ground of that song of praise, Rev. i. 4. *To him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c.* 2. This is a ground of true, solid and strong consolation, even to be comforted in the applicatory faith of Christ's purchase. 3. It is the Lord's allowance to his people, which they should reverently and thankfully make use of, even to look on Jesus Christ, as wounded, pierced, and lifted up on the cross for them ; and by doing this according to his allowance, there is way made for application of all the benefits of his purchase.

3. From the scope (looking on the words as spoken to remove the scandal of the cross) observe (which may be a reason of the former) that men will never conceive of Christ rightly in his sufferings, except they take him as suffering for them, and in their room : This looking on Christ, leads 1. To conceive highly of the glory of his grace, and condescending love to sinners. 2. It leads to Christ's faithfulness, who came to the world on our errand, according to the ancient transaction in the covenant of redemption, as he is brought in, saying, Psal. lx. *Lo, I come ; in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God.* 3. It leads to a fixed belief of God's holiness, justice and goodness, in exacting satisfaction of his own Son, and in accepting that satisfaction. 4. It gives a right view of the way of grace, and lets us see it to be a most real thing : God the offended party accepting of the price, and Christ paying it. Thus the believer's faith gets a sight of Christ satisfying, as if he saw his own debt satisfied by himself ;

self; it sees him undergoing the curse, and justice inflicting it on him, that the believer may go free.

The *use* is, To shew the necessity of studying the well grounded application of Christ's sufferings for us; much of the reason why Christ is not more prized lies here, that he is not looked on as paying our debt; otherwise when challenges of the law and of justice take hold on the soul, if Christ were seen interposing, and saying, *A body hast thou prepared unto me*: And if justice were seen exacting, Christ performing, and God accepting his satisfaction, and that in sign and token that justice is satisfied, he is raised from the dead, justified in the Spirit, and is entered in possession of glory as the believers fore-runner in their name: It would afford precious and lovely thoughts of Jesus Christ, and humbling thoughts of ourselves: Therefore there is a necessity, if we would consider his sufferings aright, and prize and esteem him, that we endeavour to make particular application of them to ourselves on good grounds. 2. Upon the other hand know, ye who have no ground to make this application, that ye cannot esteem aright of him or his sufferings, nor of the grace that shined in them, because ye have no title to, nor can, while such, have any clearness of interest in them. 3. For you that would fain have a high esteem of Christ, and yet are all your days casting at this foundation, never think nor expect to win rightly to esteem of him, so long as ye fear to make application of his purchase; and therefore that ye may love and praise him and esteem rightly of him, labour to come up to the making of this application on solid and approved grounds.

4. More particularly from this part of the aggravation, *Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*: We have a fourfold confirmation of truth, or four precious truths confirmed. 1. That our Lord Jesus in his sufferings did really suffer, and was really brought low in his sufferings, so as on-lookers thought

him a most despicable man, and one that was stricken and smitten of God, and afflicted: Of this we spoke on the beginning of the 4th verse. 2. We have here an evidence of the exceeding great freeness of grace, and of the love of Christ in his sufferings, in so far as he bare their sorrows, and payed their debt that counted him smitten: There was no good thing in us to deserve or procure his sufferings, but most freely he underwent these sufferings, and undertook our debt, Rom. v. 8. ‘God commends his love towards us; in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:’ and verse 10. ‘While we were yet enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son:’ Can there be a greater proof of infinite and free love than appears in our Lord’s sufferings? There was not only no merit on our side; but on the contrary, despising, rejecting, being ashamed of him, reproaching him, kicking against him, and rubbing of affronts on him; Paul and others having their hands hot in his blood.

Use 1. Consider here, behold and wonder at the free love of God; and rich condescending love of Christ; he stands not at the bar and prays for them that were praying him to pray for them: But as it is in the end of the chapter, it was for transgressors; it was even for some of them that were seeking to take away the life of the Prince of life, and for other transgressors.

2. Know that in them to whom the benefit of Christ’s death is applied, there is no more worth than there is in others who do not share of the benefit of it: It is the opinion not only of hereticks, but some way of many ignorant professors, that those for whom Christ died, are better than others: But here we see a proof of the contrary; he dies for them that accounted him smitten of God: And this he doth for two reasons, 1. To shew the riches and freedom of his grace, that could overcome man’s evil and malice, and outreach the height of the desperate wickedness that

that is in man, and stands not (to speak so) on stepping stones, but comes over the greatest guilt of sin and enmity in the creature. 2. To comfort and encourage his followers when engaged to him, against and out over their grossest failings and greatest miscarriages; he that loved them when they were despising and rejecting him, and spitting in a manner in his very face: Will he now give up with them when they have some love to him, for this or that corruption that stirreth or breaketh forth in them? Thus the apostle reasons, Rom. v. 10. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life*: We were enemies when Christ gave himself for us, but through grace we are somewhat better now; enmity and despite in us was then at an height, now it is weakened, restrained, and in some measure mortified: And if while we were at the height of enmity against him, he died for us to reconcile us to God; how much more now being reconciled, may we expect peace and safety, and all the benefits of his purchase through him: Thus there is a notable consolation, from his bent of malice that was sometime in us, compared with the victory that grace hath now gotten over it; and the gradation is always comfortable, to wit, that those lusts that once did reign, and were without any gracious opposition made to them or any protestation entered against them, prevailing it may be publicly, are now opposed and protested against: And if Christ stood not on the greater, will he stand on the lesser? And our Lord allows this sort of reasoning so much the more, that he may thereby strongly engage the heart of the believer against sin, and to the admiring of grace, withal to the serious study of holiness.

3. It serves to let you know how much ye believers are engaged and obliged to grace, and what thanks ye owe to it. 1. Look to what satisfies for your debt, ye pay not one farthing of it, our Lord Jesus payed all.

2. Look

2. Look to the moving cause, it is to be attributed to nothing in you, but altogether to free grace: Some poor dyver may by his pleading prevail with an able and pitiful hearted man to pay his debt: But there was no such externally moving cause in you to procure this of him, but he freely and willingly, and with delight payed our debt when ye were in the height of malicious opposition to him, doing all that might scar him from it: And had it been possible that man's malice, despising and despite could have scarred him, he had never died for one sinner; but he triumphed openly in his grace over that, and all that stood in his way.

4. We have here a confirmation of that truth that holds out man's malice and desperate wickedness; And can there be any thing that evidenceth man's wickedness and malice more? Than 1. To have enmity against Christ, 2. To have it at such an height as to despise him, and count him smitten and plagued of God. And 3. To be at the height of malice even then when he out of love was condescending so low as as to suffer and satisfie justice for him; ye may possibly think that it was not ye that had such malice at Christ; But saith not the prophet, *We esteemed him smitten of God*? Taking in himself and all the elect, which might give us this observation, That there is nothing more desperately wicked, and filled with more enmity against Christ in his condescending love, and against God in the manifestation of his grace, than when even elect souls for whom he hath suffered, despise him, and count him smitten of God and afflicted: It is indeed very sad, yet very profitable, to walk under the deep apprehension, and soul-pressure of heart-enmity against God and Christ. Are there any of you that think ye have such sinful and wicked natures that dispose you to think little of Christ, to despise and reject him and his grace? God's elect have this enmity in their natures: And if such natures be
in

in the elect, what must be in the reprobate who live and die in this enmity? If this were seriously considered and laid to heart, O but people would be humble, nothing would affect the soul more, and stound to the very heart, than to think that Christ suffered for me, through grace an elect and a believer; and that yet notwithstanding I should have so despised and rejected him, and accounted him smitten of God and afflicted: Let me exhort all of you to look back on your former walk, and to lay this enmity to heart, for the day is coming when it will be found to be a biting and conscience-gnawing-sin to many. 4. In that he aggravates their enmity from this. Observe this truth which is also here confirmed, that there is nothing that gives sin a deeper dye, than that it is against grace and condescending love, that is, against Christ when suffering for us, and offered to us: O! That makes sin to be exceeding sinful, and wonderfully abominable; and thus it is aggravated, Heb. ii. as greater than the contempt of Moses his law: And Heb. vi. It is accounted to be a *crucifying the Son of God afresh*, and a *putting him to an open shame*; and Heb. x. It is called a *treading him under foot*; an *accounting the blood of the covenant to be an unholy thing*, and a doing despite to the spirit of grace: These two last scriptures look mainly to the sin against the Holy Ghost; yet so as there is somewhat of that which is said in them to be found in all unbelievers, for despising of Christ: It is a sin someway hateful, even to the publicans and sinners to hate them that love us, to do ill to them that do good to us; how much more sinful and hateful is it to despise and hate him who loved us, so as to give himself for us, and when he was giving himself for us? There are many sins against the law that will draw deep, but this will draw deeper than all, even sinning against grace, and the Mediator interposing for sinners, and manifesting love to them: And the reckoning will run thus; Christ was manifested to
you

you in this gospel as the only remedy of sin, and set forth as crucified before your eyes, and offered to you in the gospel, and yet ye despised him, and esteemed him not : And let me say it to believers, that it is the greatest aggravation of their sin : It is true, in some respect, that the sins of believers are not so great as the sins of others, they not being committed with such deliberation and full bent of the will, nor from the dominion of sin ; yet in this respect they are greater than the sins of others, because committed against special grace and love actually communicated ; and therefore when the believer considers, that he hath requited Christ thus, it will affect him most of any thing, if he has any suitable tenderness of frame.

5. From considering that it is the prophet who expresses this aggravation, we may observe, that the believer who is most tender, and hath best right to Jesus Christ and his satisfaction, and may upon best ground apply it, will be most sensible of his enmity, and of the abominable guilt there is in despising and wronging of Jesus Christ ; therefore the prophet brings in himself as one of those that by Christ's stripes were healed, owning his guilt, *we despised* and rejected him, *we* esteemed him not, *we* judged him smitten of God : The reason is, because interest in Jesus Christ makes the heart tender ; and any wrong that is done to him to affect us the sooner and the more deeply, the scurf that sometime was on the heart being in a measure taken away ; an interest in Christ awakeneth and raiseth an esteem of him, and produceth a holy sympathy with him in all the concerns of his glory, even as the members of the body have a fellow-feeling with the head : Make a supposition that a man in his madness should smite and wound his head, or wrong his wife, his father, or his brother ; when that fit of madness is over, he is more affected with that wrong than if it had been done to any other member of his body, or to other persons not at all,

or not so nearly related to him: There is something of this pointed at, *Zech. xii. 10.* *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as a man doth for his only son:* As if he had said, the strokes they have given the head shall then be very heavy and grievous to be borne, and will be made to their feeling to be afresh; they thought not much of these woundings and piercings of him before, but so soon as their interest in him is clear, or they come cordially to believe in him, they are sincerely affected with the wrongs done to him.

The *use* is, That it is a mark, to try if there be indeed an interest in Christ, and if it be clear: The man whose interest is clearest, 1. His wrongs done to Christ will prick him most, if the wrongs be done by others they affect him; if by himself, they someway make him to faint: Hardness of heart under wronging of Christ, is too great an evidence that there is little or no ground for application of his satisfaction, but it is otherwise, when wrongs done to Christ affect us most. 2. When not only challenges for sin against the law, but for sins against Christ and grace offered in the gospel, do become a burden, and the greatest burden. 3. When the man is made sensible of secret enmity at Christ, and is disposed to muster up aggravations of his sinfulness on that account, and cannot get himself made vile enough; when he hath an holy indignation at himself, and with Paul counts himself the *chief of sinners*: Even though the evil was done in ignorance, much more if it hath been against knowledge: It is no bad sign when souls are brought to heap up aggravations of their guilt for wrongs done to Christ; and when they cannot get suitable expressions sufficiently to hold it forth, as it is a bad sign to be soon satisfied in this: There are many that will take with no challenge for their wronging Christ, but behold here how the prophet insists, both in the words before, in these, and in the following words; and he

can no more get off the thoughts of it, than he can get off the thoughts of Christ's sufferings.

6. While the prophet saith, when Christ was suffering for his own, and for the rest of his peoples sins, *We esteemed him not*, but judged him *smitten of God*; observe briefly, because we hasten to a close, that Jesus Christ is often exceedingly mistaken by men in his most glorious and gracious works; can there be a greater mistake than this? Christ suffering for our sins, and yet judged smitten and plagued of God by us, or which is more even Christ Jesus is often shamefully mistaken in the work of his grace, and in the venting of his love towards them whose good he is procuring, and whose iniquities he is bearing.

The *use* of it serves, 1. To teach us when we are ready to pass censure on Christ's work, to stand still, to animadvert on, and to correct ourselves, lest we construct unsuitably of him: He is much wronged as to his public work; as if he were cruel, when indeed he is merciful; as if he had forgotten us, when indeed he remembers us still: And as to his private work in particular persons, as if he did fail in his promise when he is most faithful, and bringing it about in his own way. And 2. (which is of affinity to the former) it is a warning to us, not to take up hard constructions of Christ, nor to misconstrue his work, which when misconstrued, himself is mistaken and misconstrued. How many think that he is breaking when he is binding up, that he is wounding when he is healing, that he is destroying when he is humbling? Therefore we should suspend passing censure till he come to the end and close of his work, and not judge of it by halves; and then we shall see there was no such ground for misconstruing him, who is every day holding on in his own way, and steadily pursuing the same end that he did from the beginning; and let him be doing so. To him be praise for ever.

S E R-

S E R M O N XXII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 5.

Verse 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

IT is hard to say whether the subject of this verse, and almost of this whole chapter, be more sad or more sweet; it is indeed a sad subject to read and hear of the great sufferings of our blessed Lord Jesus, and of the despightful usage that he met with, and to see such a flood of malice spued and spit out on that glorious faith: So that when he is bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows, we do even then account him plagued, smitten of God, and afflicted, and in a manner look upon it as well-deserved: Yet it is a most sweet subject, if we either consider the love it comes from, or the comfortable effects that follow it; that hath been the rise, the cause, and the occasion of much singing to man, here below, and is the cause and occasion of so much singing among the redeemed that are this day before the throne of God; and as the grace of God hath overcome the malice of men, so we are persuaded this cause of rejoicing hath a sweetness in it beyond the sadness, though often we mar our own spiritual mirth, and know not how to dance when he pipes unto us.

These words are an explication of the 4th verse, where it is asserted that Christ's sufferings were not for himself but for us, from, and by which the prophet having aggravated mens malice, who notwith-

standing esteemed him not, yea judged him smitten of God, he comes again for furthering and carrying on this scope, to shew more particularly the ground, end, and effects of Christ's sufferings; where ye should remember what we hinted before in general, that men will never think nor conceive of Christ's sufferings rightly, till they conceive and take him as suffering for them; and when we consider this, we think it no wonder, that the most part esteem but little of the sufferings of Christ, because there are but few that take him under this notion, as standing in their room, and paying their debt, and as being put in prison for them when they are let free.

In this 5th verse, we have these three, 1. A further expression of Christ's sufferings. 2. The cause of them, or the end that he had before him in them. 3. The benefits and fruits or effects of them.

There are in the words four expressions which I shall clear, 1. *He was wounded*, to shew the reality that was in his sufferings, he was actually pierced, or as the word is rendered in the margin, *tormented*, and the cause is *our transgressions*; and while it is said, *He was wounded for our transgressions*, he means, 1. That our transgressions procured his wounding. And 2. That his wounding was to remove them, and to procure pardon to us. 2. *He was bruised*, that is, pressed as grapes in a wine-press, he underwent such a wounding as bruised him; to shew the great guilt of sin, and the heaviness of wrath that would have come on us for it, had not he interposed: And the cause is *our iniquities*; and those two words *transgressions* and *iniquities* shew the exceeding abominableness of sin; *transgressions* or errings pointing at our common sins, *iniquities* or rebellions pointing at greater guilt. 3. *The chastisement*, or as the words will bear, the discipline of *our peace was upon him*; it supposes first, That we by nature were at enmity with, and enemies to God. Secondly, That before our peace could

could be procured, there behoved to be a satisfaction given to justice, the Mediator behoved to come under discipline and chastisement. 4. *And by his stripes we are healed*; he was so whipped, that the marks of the rod remained behind; the first benefit looks to pardon of sin, and peace with God in the first three expressions; the second in this last expression, looks to our sanctification and purging from the dominion and pollution of sin; by Christ's becoming sin for us, there is a way made to wash us from all the guilt of sin, and from all the foul spots and stains that were on us by sin, and he hath thus procured holiness to us; we come easily by it, but it cost Christ dear, yea, very dear.

These very sad, but most sweet, and soul-comforting words, hold out a short sum of the substance and marrow of the gospel; and because they do so, we shall speak of them summarily together; and ye should the more seriously attend, especially such as are more ignorant, that by the reading and opening up of this verse ye may be brought and kept in mind of the sum of the gospel; and to make the matter the more clear, I shall endeavour to make the doctrines drawn from it, as so many answers to six or seven questions. As 1. What is man's condition naturally, and what is the condition of all them that get no benefit by Christ's death? 2. How is man redeemed and freed from that condition; 3. By whom is he freed, or who makes the satisfaction? 4. How doth he perform that satisfaction? 5. What are the benefits that flow from, and come to us by the satisfaction performed? 6. Who are the persons for whom Christ hath performed the satisfaction, and to whom he hath procured these benefits? 7. What is the way how these benefits are transferred or derived to those persons? And putting these seven together, we may have a short catechism in one verse.

1. Then what is man's condition by nature? 1st,
He

He is under transgressions. 2dly, Under iniquities. 3dly, At enmity with God. And 4thly, Under wounds and loathsome diseases of a sinful nature: In a word, man by nature is a sinner, guilty, greatly guilty, under God's wrath and curse; and at enmity with God, of a most sinful and abominable nature, even sick with, and loathsome, because of sin. The first is implied in this word, *He was wounded for our transgressions*, that is our common sins; the second is holden out in the next word, *He was bruised for our iniquities*, or rebellions, which holds out great guilt; the third in that word, *The chastisement of our peace was upon him*, which supposes that we were once without peace with God; the last word, *By his stripes we are healed*, supposeth, that we continue in that condition filthy and polluted, and polluting ourselves more and more, greedy to drink in sin, and wounding and sickning ourselves by sin. Now lay these four words together, they clear this truth to our judgment, and serve to point out to us the necessity of a Mediator. Again, consider them in a second notion, and they tell us, that even the elect themselves, are by nature in the same sinful and rebellious condition with others, at enmity with, and under the curse of God, and abominably polluted before they be washed and healed, as the apostle asserts, Ephes. ii. *We are by nature children of wrath even as others*; and here it is plainly declared, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, &c.* Some are ready to think (as was hinted before) that the elect by nature were better than others, or that God foresaw they would be better than others, and therefore he elected them. This piece of Arminianism is in all naturally; but this text in down-right contradiction to such a groundless conceit, answers and asserts that by nature they are even like others, as the apostle saith, Rom. xi. 32. *God hath concluded them all under unbelief, that he might have mercy on all.* All the elect as well as others,

thers, are concluded under sin and wrath, that the way of obtaining any spiritual good, might be by mercy and free-grace alone.

2. How are men freed from this sinful and miserable condition? *Answer*, 1. In general before the quarrel can be taken away, and their peace can be made, there must be satisfaction, which is implied in these words, *The chastisement of our peace was upon him*; which supposes the necessity of a satisfaction made or to be made, in respect of God's decree and commination, who said, *The day thou sinnest, thou shalt die, and cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the law to do them.* 2. And more particularly, there must be a satisfaction; because there is 1st, The justice of God that hath a claim by a standing-law. 2^{dly}, The holiness of God that must be vindicated. And 3^{dly}, The faithfulness of God that must be performed and come to pass what it hath pledged itself for, as well in reference to the threatening as to the promise; for those words, *Hath he said, and will he not do it?* relate to the one as well as the other; there is a great mistake in many, while they leap immediately to mercy, without minding the necessity of a satisfaction to provoked justice, and on this ground that God is merciful; which, if it were an argument good enough, it would say, that all, even the reprobate may get mercy; but we should consider the way that God hath laid down for sinners coming to mercy, and how that before peace can be made, he will needs have satisfaction to his justice.

3. Who maketh the satisfaction? The text says, it is *he* and *him*; *he* was wounded for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace was on *him*; and who is this *he* and *him*? It is in general the Messiah, who was then to come, he who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered and was crucified, who died and was buried, and rose the third day; even he, who having the nature of
God

God and our nature united in one person, *He his ownself bare our sins in his body on the tree*, as is said, 1 Pet. ii. 24. *and he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; as it is, 2 Cor. v. ult. even he of whom the apostle hath been speaking here, while he says, *We, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God*: And when we say it is Christ that is meant, we are to understand it as well negatively and exclusively, excluding all others, as positively including him; when we make him to be the only Saviour, we exclude all that men can do, with their penance, prayers, good works, and all that angels can do; neither man nor angel could satisfy divine justice, and make our peace with God; and therefore it is said, Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus*, where it is clear that all others are excluded, as it is, Psal. xl. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not*, &c. neither penance, performances, nor any other thing will do it; but it is said, *Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book, it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God*. Take this then as another ground of saving knowledge, that it is our blessed Lord Jesus that satisfies justice, even he who being God, was content to become man, and is God and man in one person; he, and he only undertaking the debt, satisfies justice.

4. How does he satisfy justice? *Answer. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was on him, and by his stripes we are healed*: In which words observe these three things, 1. In Christ's satisfaction for us there is an actual undertaking, he becomes surety, and enters himself in our room; when all other things are rejected, angels, men with their sacrifices, thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oyl, and the fruit

fruit of the body, then our Lord Jesus comes in and undertakes, Psal. xl. 7. *Lo, I come*, he satisfies for our transgressions; which supposes that justice could not have demanded our debt of him if he had not undertaken it; - therefore Heb. vii. 24. he is called the *surety of a better testament*; for he comes in our room and place, and undertakes to pay our debt; even as if a man under debt were going to prison, and another able, rich man should undertake to pay the debt, although the debt should lie by for a while unpaid, yet the creditor will get a decree on the surety for payment of the debt when he pleases to sue him; so Jesus Christ enters as bondsman for our debt, and becomes liable to the payment of it. 2. Christ's performance and payment of the debt according to his undertaking, implies a covenant and transaction on which the application is founded, which we shewed was also implied in the foregoing words, verse 4. *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, are the party wronged by sin. Jesus Christ considered personally and as Mediator, is the party undertaking: The terms are, That he shall suffer, and satisfy justice for us, and that we shall go free, that his paying shall be our freedom, that the debt which he pays for us shall not be exacted of us in person, 2 Cor. v. ult. *He who knew no sin, was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; and here, *the chastisement of our peace was on him*; it was transferred from us to him, *that by his stripes we might be healed*; by his stripes and wounds health was procured to us. 3. Our Lord Jesus in fulfilling the bargain, and satisfying justice, payed a dear price; it was at a very dear rate that he bought our freedom; he was wounded, bruised, suffered stripes and punishment: So that ye may take the answer to the question in sum to be this, our Lord Jesus performed and satisfied for all that was due by us, by undertaking our debt, and paying a

dear price for sinners, according to the covenant of redemption; he came under the law, and the law struck at him as surety, and he answered its demands, and fully and condignly satisfied the justice of God for us.

As for that question, Whether Christ might not by one drop of his blood have satisfied? and such like, we think them very needless, too curious, and little or not at all edifying; but if it be asked, Why Christ paid so much? we answer, 1. It behoved Christ to pay a condign satisfaction to justice. 2. It was meet that he should pay all that he paid. *First*, We say, it behoved to be a condign satisfaction: For *1st*, It behoved to be a price equivalent to all that the elect should have suffered, had not he interposed. *2^{dly}*, It behoved to be proportionable to the justice of God; for God having laid down such a way of shewing mercy, that his justice should be salved, there behoved to be "condign satisfaction for the vindication of justice; which was done by Christ's suffering to the full undoubtedly; if we consider, 1. The excellency of the person that suffered, God and man in one person. 2. If we consider the nature of his sufferings, that they were exceeding great, heavy, and pressing. And 3. If withal we consider the manner of his sufferings, that it was with much readiness and chearfulness of obedience to the Father's will: That such and so excellent a person should suffer, and suffer so much, and suffer in such a way; this sure makes condign satisfaction, and so justice is thereby fully satisfied, and made as glorious as if all the elect had suffered eternally: Therefore we say, that his sufferings were a condign and proportionable satisfaction to justice for them whose debt he payed, by this justice is completely and gloriously satisfied. *Secondly*, We said that it was meet that he should pay all that he payed, and so it is, if we consider, 1. The excellency of immortal souls, a little price (as all that men or angels could

could have payed would have been the finest gold, silver, or precious stones) could not have done it, *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever*, to wit, amongst all the creatures, *Psal. xlii. 8.* 2. The severity of justice on the just account of sin, called for such a price. 3. God's end, which was to make both his grace and justice glorious, required, and made it meet that our Lord should suffer condignly, and in his sufferings suffer much, even all that he did suffer; and in this ye have an answer to this question, why Christ suffered so much as the loss (to speak so) of his declarative glory for a time, outward sufferings and inward sufferings, even the bruising and squeezing that his soul was under, which made him to say, that *it was heavy unto death, and exceeding sorrowful*. Let not sinners then think it a little or a light thing to get a soul saved, the redemption whereof ceaseth for ever as to us or any creature: Behold herein the glory of grace eminently shineth forth, when there is such a price payed for that which in some respect is of so little worth; and also the glory of justice, when so great a price is demanded and payed down for its satisfaction, by so worthy and excellent a person; and let none think little of sin, the guilt whereof could not be otherways expiated, the chastisement of our peace behoved to be on him.

5. What are the benefits that come by these sufferings? *Answer.* 1. The benefits are such, that if he had not suffered for us, we should have suffered all that he suffered, ourselves. 2. More particularly, we have *first*, peace and pardon of sin. *Secondly*. Healing by his sufferings; so that if it be asked, What procured pardon of sin and peace with God? We answer, It is Christ's sufferings: Or if it be asked, What is the cause of God's justifying sinners? We answer, It is Christ's satisfaction or suffering; and it is (by the way) much to be regretted, that such is the ignorance of some, that if a question be proposed in di-

vers words and expressions ; as if it should be asked, Wherefore are we pardoned ? Wherefore are we justified ? which is one and the same, they know not how to answer ; but here ye are called to remember, that Christ being wounded, and his bearing the chastisement due to you, is the cause of your pardon and justification. 2. Healing looks to sanctification, as we hinted in the exposition ; so that if it be asked, How comes it to pass that a sinner is made holy ? we have it here answered, That tho' efficiently it comes by the Spirit, and be his work, yet meritoriously it comes by Christ's sufferings he bought it, *by his stripes we are healed* : And under these two words, *peace* and *healing*, we take in all things needful or pertaining to life and godliness ; for by *peace* the enmity is taken away, and we are reconciled to God, as Eph. ii. 14. *he is said to be our peace*, and he who came to *speake peace to all that are afar off and near*, and also by *peace* we understand all the effects of peace : 1. Pardon of sin, justification, adoption, communion with God here and hereafter, peace with our own conscience and with the creatures, eternal peace and glory, and all those good things purchased by Christ's death : For the Hebrews under *peace* comprehended all good things : And under *healing* we take in sanctification (as distinguished, tho' not divided from those other things mentioned) dying to sin, and living to righteousness, with the several degrees of their advance and progress, and the making of us to be without spot and wrinkle, or any such thing, so that we have much advantage by Christ's purchase, and much prejudice through the want of it. By his death we are kept out of hell, and admitted to peace with God and every thing that is good ; we have liberty to pray for all that is good ; and are brought in his own way and time to the possession of it ; it is by the blood of sprinkling that we have a new and living way made
patent

patent to us unto the most holy, and holiness, in the way whereof we enter in thither.

6. To whom hath Christ procured all these good things? The text saith, its *our* and *we*, the chastisement of *our* peace was on him, and by his stripes *we* are healed, to wit, the elect. Whence observe, 1. That the benefits of Christ's purchase redound only to the elect, there is a certain select number to whom they are applyed, and not to all indifferently, it is only of as many as are healed, whose chastisement he hath born: It is only they whom the Father hath given him, to whom he gives eternal life, and they shall never perish, John x. 28. They are effectually called, justified and sanctified. 2. *Observe* that what Christ Jesus hath purchased, and the benefits of his purchase, redound, and are extended to them that are guilty of hainous sins; to them that are under transgressions and iniquities, that are at enmity with God; and under many pollutions, and most loathsome spiritual diseases; to them who contemned and despised Christ, and judged him smitten and plagued of God, as is clear from the foregoing words; and to them which have gone straying like lost sheep, as is clear from the words following.

This points at these two or three very useful things. 1. That the elect are by nature, and before Christ do them good, no better than others. 2. It shews the freedom of the grace of God that comes over that, and freely gives pardon, peace and healing to them. And 3^{ly}, it serves to strengthen a sinner's faith, who is sensible of his enmity and sinfulness, and to be a ground of encouragement to him, to step to, and lay hold on Christ's purchase, because it was for such that he died; he may humbly, yet confidently say, Christ died even for such as me, for them that wounded and pierced him by their transgressions and iniquities; for them that were at enmity with God, &c. And alas I am such, and will therefore on the call of the gospel
come

come to him, and on his own terms endeavour to cast myself on him.

7. How are these benefits, this justification, pardon of sin, peace and healing, and all that is comprehended under them, derived from Christ to the sinner that by faith fleeth unto him for refuge? *Answer*, These two generals will clear it. 1. They are derived to us justly and in a legal way; Christ steps in our room, that we may come in his room. 2. They are derived to us freely, he was wounded and bruised that we might go free; he endured stripes that we might be healed; he got the buffets and bare the burden, and we get the benefits; there is not a grain-weight of it laid on us as it is satisfactory to divine justice. To clear this a little more about the deriving the benefits of Christ's purchase to us, there must be a respect had, 1. To the covenant of redemption, the ground of his suffering for us. 2. To the covenant of grace and reconciliation wherein the offer of these sufferings, and the benefits purchased by them to us, and the term of both is made.

1. I say, that respect must be had to the covenant of redemption, wherein it was acted in the council of the God-head, that the Son of God should become man, and suffer, and condignly satisfy divine justice by paying the price due by the elect, and that that price being laid down, it should be made forthcoming to them for whom he paid it, and be reckoned theirs, and they set actually at liberty, when having recourse thereto by faith; and here there is a legal ground for transferring Christ's purchase to and upon us; the bondsman satisfying, we the debtors are on that account absolved in his own order and method, and have a right to seek the application of the price, and the benefits purchased by that price; Christ stands in our room at the bar, and sentence passed on him to pay our debt; he satisfied according to his undertaking for us: And upon the other hand, we are brought in,

in, and the sentence of justification passed on us on that account : *He*, saith the apostle, who knew no sin, is made sin for us, that in him we may be accounted righteous, and may be declared free (as we are) by virtue of his satisfaction.

But it may be objected here, What ! Are we then absolved from the very time of Christ's death and forward ? For answer, we would distinguish betwixt a right *to* the thing and a right *in* the thing (as we use to speak ;) betwixt *jus ad rem* and *jus in re* ; the elect from Christ's death forward, and before too, have a right to the thing, but not in the thing, as to the application of it to themselves ; an elect person by virtue of Christ's satisfaction hath a legal right to his purchase before believing, but when he comes to believe, the obstruction is taken away that hindred his application, and then he hath a new right not only *to*, but *in* Christ's purchase ; even as a person that is *minor* or mad, may have a right to a great possession, but by the law he is secluded from the use of it till he come to *majority*, and have the use of reason ; and this distinction we have as one of the clauses of the covenant, John vi. 39, 40. where first in the 39th ver. Christ says, *This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day* : It is the Father's will that eternal life be given to as many as are given to Christ on his satisfaction, and Christ hath purchased it to them by his satisfaction absolutely as to the event ; and therefore they have an accessibleness to it, a right to it, and cannot but partake of it ; yet not simply, but in the way that he hath laid down : And therefore 2dly. In the 40th ver. he saith, *This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have eternal life* ; by believing they come to the application of that to themselves which they had a legal right to before by Christ's death.

2. Respect must be had to the covenant of grace, which is not quite another thing than the covenant of redemption, but the making offer of it, and the benefits contained in it in the preached gospel, when Christ sends out his ambassadors to woo and invite sinners to Christ, and to bring them to the application of his purchase; and it is by closing with, and receiving of Christ's offer that the actual cure comes, and that by Christ's stripes our sores are healed: Even as when a child that was *minor* becomes *major*, he comes to have a right to possess the same lands or sums of money by the same law that gave him a legal or simple right to them before; or he comes to have a right *in* that, which before he had a right *to*: So elect souls that have a right to Christ's purchase before believing, while they are mad in nature, are under the curse and wrath threatened in the word of God for not believing; but when they come to believe, they come to get an extract from the same word of their right *in* Christ's purchase; because the words says, *He that believes, is past from death to life, and shall not come into condemnation*; and so the same word that did condemn before believing, doth now absolve upon a sinner's believing; and we come at this absolution by receiving Christ's offer in the covenant of grace: And if it be asked, How comes it that the receiving of Christ's free offer in the covenant of grace, gives a right to Christ's purchase? We answer, It is by virtue of the covenant of redemption, wherein it is so transacted betwixt God and the Mediator; so that there is the offer of the covenant received, and the covenant itself that concur for making over and deriving a complete right to wretched sinners in Christ's purchase.

Let the 1st use of this be for our instruction and information, which is the end why we have chosen in this way by this short view to give you in a very short sum, the marrow of the gospel; and if ye remember

member these few questions, ye may be in a capacity not only to answer us, but through grace to exercise faith on Christ; and we think ye will all readily grant, that those who cannot at all answer them, should not go to the Lord's supper: And therefore that ye may retain them, we shall shortly resume them. 1. What

condition is man in by nature? *Ans^w.* Under sin and misery, even under the curse of God; or thus, every man is a sinner, and hath a sinful nature, or, he is under transgressions and iniquities, is naturally loathsome, wants peace with God, and hath need of healing; let this in the first place sink in your hearts. 2.

How is man freed from this sinfulness and misery?

Ans^w. He cannot be free from it, till there be a condign satisfaction made to divine justice, wounding and bruising must be to procure healing, and chastisement must be to bring about our peace. That word, *Exod. xxxiv. Who will by no means acquit the guilty,* should always be remembered, and faith should look to a Saviour for satisfaction. 3. Who can satisfy?

Ans^w. Neither man nor angel can do it, no penances, no prayers nor performances of any mere creature will do it, but *he* only that was wounded and bruised, he who by nature is the Son of God, the express image of the Father's person, and who, in respect of his human nature, was born of the virgin Mary, like to us in all things except sin; it is he that satisfies justice, and it is by no other way that we get pardon and peace with God, and holiness. 4. What way doth Christ

satisfy justice, and make peace betwixt God and sinners? *Ans^w.* He entered himself in our room, and as surety undertook our debt, suffered the condign punishment that was due for our sins, and paid the price that we should have paid; he in a manner left heaven and became man, led a mean life in the world, drank the cup of his Father's wrath, was wounded, bruised, chastised, and died a cursed death, whereof his hanging on the cross was but a sign. 5. What benefits

come to us by his sufferings? *Answo.* Pardon of sin, peace with God and healing; the conscience by his blood is sprinkled from dead works, the person absolved, reconciled to God, made whole, and made at last to be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and this is not as Papists blasphemously speak, a putative effect, but a most real one. 6. Who are made partakers of this pardon, peace and healing? *Answo.* The elect have right to it, and by believing they make the application; therefore it is said here, *our* and *we*. And we may look upon the prophet speaking in the name of all the elect, or in the name of the believing elect, who on believing are actually healed. The elect then are healed, and the way how is by faith making application of Jesus Christ. 7. How in justice can he be condemned that was free of sin, and how can we be absolved that were guilty? *Answo.* He in justice was condemned, because as our surety he came in our room, and undertook to pay our debt; and on the same ground we wretched sinners, may in his way make application of his purchase; because it was on these terms that he undertook the debt, that we might be set free; and it is on these terms that it is offered in the gospel; that seeing he hath paid for elect sinners, they may upon the hearing of the offer, close with it. But how may the sinner apply it? *Answo.* Not only because it is free, and freely offered, but by cleaving to it by faith, as the prophet doth here; it is not only to apply it simply, but to step in and rest upon it in the terms it is offered; so that as on the one part Jesus Christ became really liable to suffering, and satisfied for our sins, when he said, *Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will*; so upon the other part, the believing sinner comes to apply the price paid, by embracing the price, and acquiescing in the satisfaction, and laying hold of it as his own, and by his being brought to say in faith, Let his wounding be my pardon, let his chastisement be

be my peace, and let his stripes be my healing: By this means as the law had a right to Christ for his paying the elect's debt, so they by believing get a right to the promise of pardon and healing; for if the bargain was sure on the one side to procure wounding to Christ, as if he had been the sinner himself; so on the other side, the bargain is as sure; the believer is set free, and may be as really comforted, as if he had a righteousness of his own, or never had sinned.

Use 2. Therefore there is here wonderful matter of consolation to believers, that what was justice to Christ is grace and mercy to us, that which was pain to him, is pleasure to us; his sorrow our comfort, his wounding our pardon, his stripes our healing, &c.

Use 3. As ye would not prejudge yourselves of these benefits which Christ hath purchased, make your peace with God through Christ. If your pardon and peace be not obtained this way, ye will never get it, but ye shall be made to pay your own debt, and be liable to wrath eternally, because of inability to pay your debt to the full; Therefore step to, and make the offer welcome, how sinful and undone soever ye be; the more sensible ye be, ye are the more welcome; this is the particular use of the doctrine. O! let these things sink in your hearts, that ye are sinners, great sinners, under wrath, and at enmity with God; that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of lost sinners, and that there is no way to pardon and peace but by closing with him, and laying hold on his satisfaction; that ye may be drawn to cast yourselves on this everlasting covenant, for obtaining the benefits that Christ hath purchased. And himself bless what hath been spoken for this end and use.

S E R M O N XXIII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 5.

Verse 5. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

IT were no small progress in Christianity, to know and believe the truths that are implied and contained in this same verse; the Lord by the prophet is giving a little compend of the work of redemption by his saving of sinners from death, through, and by the wounding of the Mediator. We did a little open the meaning of the words, and gave a sum of the doctrines contained in them, at least of some of them which do contribute to this scope.

The prophet is here speaking of Christ's sufferings, with respect to the cause of them, and the effect that followed them, and shews how this was indeed the mistake and blasphemous imputation that we had of, and were ready to put on him, even to judge him smitten and plagued of God for his own sins; whereas God hath another design; he was altogether without sin, but he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; *we* were at enmity with God, and he took on him the chastisement of *our* peace; and this is the effect, to procure healing to *us*.

We shall now speak a word to three *doctrines* further besides what we spoke to the last day, which are these, 1. That there was an eternal design, plot, and transaction betwixt God and the Mediator, as to Christ's suffering for the redeeming of elect sinners before

fore he actually suffered. This the prophet speaks of as a thing concluded ; for the cause of his sufferings was condescended on, and the end and fruit of them was determined, which implies an *antecedent* transaction betwixt the Father and him for putting him in the room of sinners ; and by this transaction justice hath access to exact the payment of this price ; he interposed, and the Father exacts of him the payment of their debt, and seeks satisfaction from him for all that he bargained for. 2. That this transaction or design concerning the redemption of elect sinners, is in respect of Christ's suffering and satisfying of justice, fully and actually performed, he undertook to be wounded and bruised, and he was accordingly actually wounded and bruised. The transaction, as to the engagement in it, and efficacy of it, took place in Isaiah's time, and before his time ; but as to the actual performance of what the Mediator engaged himself to suffer, it is spoken of prophetically by him as a thing done, because to be done ; and now it is done, and indeed long ago. 3. That the satisfying of justice by the Mediator's sufferings according to his engagement, proves as effectual to absolve, justify and heal those, even the grossest sinners, that come under this bargain and transaction, as if they had actually suffered, and paid and satisfied their own debt themselves ; Their sins are pardoned through his sufferings ; their deadly wounds are healed by his stripes, as if they had never had a wound ; their count is struck and crossed as clean out, as if they had never had any debt ; they are acquitted and set free as if they had never been guilty.

These three *doctrines* lie very near the life of the gospel, and the prophet in this chapter, and particularly in this verse, often mentions them. Our purpose is only shortly to explain them to you, as a short sum and compend of the tract of the covenant of redemption : The *first* of them shews the rise of the
work

work of redemption: The *second* shews the means by which it is executed. The *third* holds out the effect and consequence, and the end of all.

For the *first* then, There was (we say) an eternal transaction betwixt God and Jesus Christ the Mediator, concerning the redemption of sinners. His actual redeeming, by being wounded and bruised, supposeth this; for the Son is no more liable to suffering (not to speak of his suitableness) than any other of the persons of the blessed Godhead, had there not been an antecedent transaction; there was no obligation nor tie on him to be wounded, and to enter into the room of sinners as their surety, for payment of their debt, if there had not been a prior engagement; neither could his wounding and bruising have proved useful, or have brought healing to us, if this prior engagement had not been. And this is it which we call the *covenant of redemption*, which we would not extend so as in all things to stretch it to the properties of those covenants and bargains which are amongst men, it being in some respect an expression used to make grace more discernable to us that can conceive so little of grace's way. This transaction or covenant of redemption is sometimes called *the Father's will and his law*; as Psal. xl. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart*; and John vi. 38. It is called so, *I came from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*; so also John xvii. 14. it is called the Father's work in one respect, and the Son's work in another. *I have finished the work thou gavest me to do*, which is the prosecution of the same contrivance usually called a *covenant*; because as to the essentials, it hath the nature of a *covenant*, to wit, two parties agreeing, and terms whereupon they agree; and is well ordered in all things for prosecuting and carrying on the design of saving lost sinners; called, Acts ii. 23. the *determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*; there was a plot and design in God's counsel

counsel concerning Christ's sufferings, whereof his sufferings were the execution.

To clear it a little, we should consider these five things in it. 1. The parties. 2. The matter about which it is. 3. The rise and occasion of it. 4. The terms wherein the form of it stands, or the means whereupon it is undertaken. 5. Some properties of this covenant.

1. For the parties, upon the one side is God essentially considered, or all the three Persons of the glorious God-head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are all concurring in this covenant, it being the act of the determinate counsel of God; and in this respect God is the party to whom the satisfaction for lost sinners is made, and he is also the party condescending to accept of the satisfaction. And upon the other side, the party engaging to make satisfaction, is Jesus Christ, the second Person of the blessed, dreadful, and adorable Trinity, personally considered, now becoming the Head of the elect, that he may have them all with himself to be one mystical body. In the first respect, all the three Persons, that same one blessed God gives the command, or requires a satisfaction of God, and concur as the infinitely wise orderer of the decree; and in the second respect, Jesus Christ as Mediator, undertakes to make satisfaction, *Psal. xl. 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire:* God as it were making the offer, what can, or shall be given to me for the redemption of sinners? sacrifice and offerings will not please, nor are accepted by me: Then follows the Mediator's part, *Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God;* for though in the first respect, all the persons in the Trinity be on the one side, being of one will; yet in the other respect, Christ Jesus as Mediator comes in on the other side to do his will.

2. As to the matter about which this covenant is, it is about the satisfying of justice, and making of
peace

peace between God and lost sinners; it is that we might be pardoned, justified, have peace made with God, and be healed. It is true, there is an end above and beyond this, even the glory of God's rich grace, and condescending love, that stoops so low to save sinners; but sinners pardon, and peace with God, and their healing, is the immediate end: Or if we come nearer, the matter about which it is, is the redeeming of the elect, for these words in the text, *we* and *us*, are of equal extent with them that are justified and reconciled, and whom he actually healeth by his wounds and stripes, so that whoever they be who are never justified and healed, they are not comprehended in this bargain.

3. The rise and occasion of this covenant may be gathered from these three. 1. There is the supposing of man's sin and fall; for whatever election doth, redemption doth most certainly suppose man to be lost and under sin. 2. There is God's decree, not to pardon sin without a satisfaction. 3. There is God's election preceding, or his purpose to save some for the glory of his grace, which are the elect, who are said to be *given to Christ*. These three are the rise and occasion of the covenant of redemption: Man hath sinned, the threatening must be executed, and justice satisfied; and yet God hath for the glory of his grace, elected a certain number to life, and that must needs stand firm. And these three seeming to thwart one with another, gives the occasion and rise to the excellent and admirable contrivance of this way; how the lost sinner shall be saved, yet so as justice shall be satisfied, and not wronged in the least, and justice so satisfied, that yet the decree of election by grace shall stand.

4. As for the terms (wherein the form of the covenant stands,) and the means by which these ends may be brought about; to wit, how the redemption of lost sinners may be attained, justice may be satisfied, and
the

the glory of grace made to shine; and how any thing that makes these seem to juggle and thwart, might be guarded against; and that was it which (to speak so with reverence) put God to the consultation about it; which shews the excellency of the covenant of redemption, and the deep draughts that are about it, for otherways and properly God needs not consult or advise: They are shortly these, 1. God's offer to redeem man, if his justice may be satisfied; and if any responsible person will become surety and undertake to pay the elects debt. 2. The Son's accepting of the offer, and undertaking or engaging to pay their debt, upon condition that his payment and satisfaction shall be accounted the elects, and accepted for them. 3. The Father's acceptation of this engagement and undertaking according to his offer; and the Mediator's accepting of it, and acquiescing in it, he holds the bargain, to speak so, and so it is a sealed covenant. The first is comprehended in these words, *Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not desire*, Psal. xl. insinuating that God did desire something: The second in these words, *Mine ears thou hast opened, then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will*, which implies the Father's acceptation as well as Christ's undertaking; and it also points at the way how the satisfaction is made effectual; especially if we compare these words of the Psalm with Heb. x. 5, 6. we will find that they relate to Christ's humiliation in general, for it is in the Psalm, *Mine ear hast thou opened*: But in Heb. x. 5. it is, *A body hast thou prepared me*: And where it is said in the Psalm, *I delight to do thy will*, the apostle says, *By the which will we are sanctified*. The Father makes the offer on the terms of a satisfaction to justice; the Son as Mediator accepts the offer, and undertakes for the elect; here am I, to do thy will on the same terms that the offer is made; and the Father accepts of the Son's engagement, according to that word, Matth. iii. *This is my*

beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; he offers himself surety for sinners, and the Father is content to accept of him as their surety: In the one respect it is called the *Father's pleasure*, ver. 10. of this chapter, *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him*, &c. because the terms were so proposed; and in the other respect, it is called the *Mediator's pleasure*, or *satisfaction*, ver. 11. because the condition proposed is satisfying to him, *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*: He undertakes to pay, and God accepts of his undertaking, and obliges himself to absolve the believer: And the words following, *He shall see his seed, and the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*; and by his knowledge *shall my righteous Servant justify many*: are promises made to him on supposition of his making satisfaction: 2 Cor. v. ult. The first part of the transaction is, *He hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin*; and the other part of it is, *That we might be made the righteousness of God through him*: He accepting of the bargain, obtains a right to a justifying and absolving sentence by virtue of his suffering, for which cause these words are added, *in him*, or *through him*: This shews the clearness of God's justice in proceeding with the Mediator, the ground of sinners justification through him, and gives sinners a warrant to make use of Christ's satisfaction as theirs, because it was so agreed upon in the council of the God-head.

5. We come now to speak a little to some properties of this covenant, and shall content ourselves with three or four of them that make for the scope, as, 1. The justice and equity of it. 2. The faithfulness of it. 3. The freeness of it. And 4. The wisdom that shines in this bargain; and so pass by the rest.

1. *The justice and equity* of this transaction may appear in these respects. 1. That the Father should be satisfied, and that he that was wronged should have his honour restored; that the threatening given out in his law should take effect, that the soul that sins should
in

in his own, or in the surety's person die; and that a suitable recompence should be made to justice before the sinner should be absolved. 2. Justice appears in this respect, that when the Son of God, the Mediator, offers to become man, and to endure and suffer all that the elect should have suffered, his sufferings should be accepted as a satisfaction; because the justice of God, yea, the holiness, power, and greatness of God, are as gloriously manifested in Christ's satisfaction, as if man had suffered; nay, there would not have been such an amends and satisfaction made to justice, even if all creatures had suffered: Justice by this means hath more satisfaction than it could have had otherways; and hereby the holiness of God, and the severity of his justice, as well as the condescending love of God, is the more manifested, that he himself should condescend to satisfy; therefore Rom. iii. 26. it is said, *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus*: God is just, in that he will not only have satisfaction, but an equivalent satisfaction for the restoring of his justice to its declarative glory, wherein it suffered by man's fall. 3. Justice appears in this respect, that the Mediator satisfying justice, those for whom he suffered should be acquitted, and have the sentence of absolution past in their favours; which the rather we should take notice of, that we may know the redemption purchased and bestowed by the Mediator, is by an exact satisfying of justice, and not by removing of our sins, as he did our diseases, nor by pardoning of them by an authority committed to him; but, as I said, by a real and actual satisfying of the justice of God for them; therefore Luke xxiv. it is said, *He behoved to suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory*, there was a necessity of it, because of the justice of this covenant, for the Son, not only to become man, and be in a low condition, but to become a curse, and to die the cursed death of the cross.

A second property is *faithfulness* on all sides : Faithfulness on the Father's side in his word and promise to the Son, *All that are given of the Father are made to come to him, and there is nothing lost*, John vi. 37, 44, 45. faithfulness on the Son's side, performing all according to his undertaking, *fulfilling all righteousness* : Therefore when in the one word he says, *Deliver me from this hour* : In the next word he says, *But for this cause came I unto this hour* : It was my errand into the world, and now I am to go about it by and by. *And I lay down my life for my sheep myself, no man taketh my life from me, but I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again* : His faithfulness also appears in keeping all that are committed to his trust, *None of them shall perish, but he shall raise them up at the last day* ; therefore he is called the good or faithful Shepherd.

3. It is a *free* covenant. It is *just*, as betwixt God and the Mediator ; but as to the elect, it is most *free* : By his wounds we have pardon, and by his stripes we have healing ; *The chastisement of our peace was on him* : There is not one grain weight or worth to be satisfied by us : *He was made sin for us* ; he was made the curse, even the wrath-pacifying-sacrifice and offering, *that we might be made the righteousness of God* ; not through ought in ourselves, but *through him*, 2 Cor. v. ult.

4. It is a most wise contrivance. For if the Son had not become man and Mediator, how could justice have been satisfied, or the elect pardoned and healed ? They could not satisfy for themselves, and no creature could satisfy for them ; therefore the only wise God finds out a wise means for such an end, as is the saving of the elect, in a way wherein justice and mercy, or free grace, sweetly kiss each other, and wherein they both shine forth conspicuously and radiantly.

That which we would say in short concerning this covenant, is this : That Jesus Christ hath undertaken

to pay the elect's debt, and hath stepped into their room; and God hath imputed unto him their sin, and accepted of a satisfaction from him for them. And all this in a legal and just way, so as there is access before the throne of God, for them to plead for the application of his righteousness by virtue of this covenant; that as really and faithfully as Christ performed his undertaking to God, and his satisfaction was accepted for them, they may as really and on good ground expect the application of it to them; for tho' all be of grace to us, yet it is a bargain on just and legal terms betwixt God and the Mediator: Therefore there is a title and right in justice for the elect when they come to Christ, that his satisfaction shall stand for them, as being members of his body, and in whose room and place he is satisfied: Hence it is said, 1 John ii. 1. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*: And whereon is this righteousness founded? The next words tell us, *He is the propitiation for our sins*: He hath payed the price that was due by us; and we may seek the application of it to us according to the transaction past betwixt the Father and him, now performed; which is the next point.

The 2d doctrine is, That this transaction and design concerning the redemption of sinners, is not only undertaken, but fully performed, as is clear, Acts ii. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel of God; ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*: The eternal purpose concerning this is now executed: As to the efficacy of his sufferings, *He is indeed the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world*; because neither the Son's undertaking was questioned by the Father, nor the Father's promise questioned by the Son: To speak so with reverence of such a mystery, the Father before his coming trusts him upon his engagement with the salvation of so many elect souls as he had given him: And the Son con-

sidered

sidered as Mediator, trusts the Father with the justifying of them, according to the promise made to him in the 11th verse of this chapter: But the actual performance of the undertaking was not till Christ suffered. This actual performance of the covenant comprehends these things shortly. 1. That as this plot and design of redemption was laid down, so it hath the performance by all the parties covenanting: It is actually performed according to the terms of it. 2. That it hath the real effects covenanted for, actually and really brought about. It hath some things real and effectual following it, to speak so, whereof Christ's actual suffering was a part, and a main part.

I say it is performed by all parties according to the terms, and hath its real effect in these respects, 1. Christ Jesus hath according to this covenant, sisted himself before the bar of justice, and undertaken our debt. 2. Justice hath pursued Christ for our debt, and hath exacted payment of it from him: The cup that belonged to us was put in his hand, and he was made to drink it, in which respect it is said, *He was made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. The sword of divine justice awaked against him, and did smite him. 3. Jesus Christ according to his undertaking, doth accept of the claim, undergoes the debt, and satisfies justice. Therefore when he stands in our room, as if he had been the guilty person, he opens not his mouth to justify himself; he says not, these are not my sins, but is as dumb, as the sheep is before the shearer, because he was our surety: The everlasting covenant, to say so, stood registred over his head, and he is made to count for all that was due by, and to us. 4. It is performed in this respect, that the Father pursues not the elect on this account to be satisfied of them, who as soon as they accept of the covenant, are actually justified and absolved; indeed while they are in nature the sentence still stands; cursed is he that sinneth and believeth not: Yet by virtue of his performance
of

of the transaction they have a legal right to justification, and the promise to him stands good, that the elect by his knowledge shall be justified, and it hath an actual performance in all them that believe; they are really made free as he was made the sinner. 5. In respect of the manner, 1. It is performed exactly according to the covenant, even as it was agreed upon, that for so many he should suffer and procure eternal life, and so it is; eternal life is given to so many according to the condition of this covenant and bargain. 2. As it was a bargain wherein justice was to be satisfied; so it was exactly satisfied, Christ Jesus gets nothing down, not one farthing is remitted, but satisfies all, pays down the full price, he drinks out all the wrath contained in the cup, till it come to that sweet word, uttered by him amongst his last words on the cross, *It is finished.*

The 3d doctrine is, That though elect sinners be as well sinners by nature, and as gross sinners as others, yet by virtue of this covenant, and upon condition of their accepting of it, they may obtain, and do actually obtain peace with God, pardon and healing, as if they had never sinned, or as if they had satisfied the justice of God themselves: This is the very end of this transaction, *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed:* His wounds, bruises and stripes effectually procured justification and healing to us. And this is the ground of that which we call *imputed righteousness*, and shews how it comes to pass, that we are made righteous by the righteousness of another, scornfully called *putative righteousness* by Papists: But considering what is in the former doctrines, and in this, we will find it to be a clear truth on which our justification, and the whole weight of our salvation hangs; that the believing sinner closing with Christ's satisfaction is as effectually absolved from sin, as if he had never sinned;
Christ's

Christ's satisfaction becomes as really his, as if he had payed the debt himself: And if we consider these three. 1. The great design of the covenant of redemption betwixt God and the Mediator, 2. The faithfulness of God in this covenant, in performing his part on the terms on which the Mediator laid down a price for the elect. 3. The excellency and efficacy of the price payed with respect to the covenant: We will find that there is clear access in law, or according to the decree of God manifested (the decree is called a *law*, *Thy law is within my heart*) for the grossest sinners that come under this bargain and close with this covenant, their obtaining peace, pardon, justification and healing, is as if they had never sinned, or had satisfied themselves, and that they may confidently expect it on this ground.

1. I say, if we consider the great end and design of the covenant betwixt God and the Mediator, we will find it to be the justification of the elect: Christ suffered not for any sin that was inherently in himself; he had no sin, there was no guile found in his mouth; no quarrel betwixt God and him on his own account, but he was wounded for *our* transgressions, the chastisement of *our* peace was on him; to make peace betwixt God and us by his wounding, was the great design of the covenant of redemption: And can that design hold, if his satisfaction come not in the room of ours, and stand not for our satisfaction and payment? In man's law the surety paying the debt, proves valid for the principal debtor; and when this is the design of God in the covenant of redemption, how to get the debt of bankrupt sinners payed, and themselves set at liberty, and when this is found out as the means; *A body hast thou prepared for me*; the covenant must be as real on the one side as it is on the other: That is, as real and effectual to make the believer in Christ just, as it was real and effectual to make Christ to be accounted the sinner, and to be dealt with as such.

We

We may clear it further in these two. 1. By looking to Christ typified in the offerings under the law: When the sinner came with his offering, he laid his hand on the head of the beast, especially of the *scape-goat*, to shew that Jesus Christ who was to come to be both Priest and Sacrifice, was to bear the sins of the elect, as they were to be set free: That he was to lay his neck down to the knife of justice that the stroke might be kept off our throat. 2. We are so justified by Christ as Christ was made sin for us, now our sins became really Christ's, not that he was made the sinner inherently, that were blasphemous to be thought or spoken of; but he was reckoned the sinner, and was substituted in the room of sinners, as if he had been the sinner, and was made to satisfy for original sin, and for actual sin; as if he had been guilty of them by committing them: Therefore, 2 Cor. v. ult. he is said to be *made sin for us*, and Gal. iii. To be *made a curse for us*; and 1 Pet. ii. 24. *To bear our sins in his own body on the tree*: And if he suffered for us, and if we partake of his righteousness, as he did of our sins; then our justification really follows, and we are absolved and made righteous through his satisfaction closed with by faith, as if we had never sinned: The parallel is clear, 2 Cor. v. ult. *He was made sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; so that Christ was made sin, in the same manner as we are made righteous: That as legally as he who had no debt, was made liable to our debt, so as legally we partake of his righteousness, and are declared free: Even as the debtor is legally freed from the debt which his surety hath paid, and cannot be liable to it; so the believer, by Christ's satisfaction is freed from the debt of sin, and absolved and declared righteous. And though this may seem strange and a wonder, to be a sinner, and yet in some respect free from sin, under guilt, and yet absolved; yet Christ's satisfaction is as real and effectual as to the

believer, as if he had satisfied himself, because his surety hath satisfied for him.

2. If we consider God's faithfulness in this covenant in performing his part, according to the terms of it, the matter is clear; for as the Mediator hath performed his part according to his engagement; so it is impossible but God must perform his, and must accept of the satisfaction in the name of the elect, and upon their believing justify them; for as it was the Father's will, that he should lay down his life for his sheep, so it was the will of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that believers in him should through his satisfaction have eternal life, John vi. 39, 40. when he had said before, 'I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;' he subjoins, 'This is the Father's will which sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day;' where the satisfaction that Christ should make is implied, and it is a great one. And what satisfaction shall he have for that? even the salvation of the elect, 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' And verse 10th of this chapter, it is clear that he shall not want satisfaction; for *he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*; and what is the satisfaction? *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*; he shall be the cause of the justifying of many, and they shall be actually absolved in due time. And what is the ground of it? *For he shall bear their iniquities*; and therefore as God is faithful, he shall get that which he merited and purchased for them, applied unto them.

3. If we consider the excellent and equivalent price that Jesus Christ hath paid, and that with respect to the covenant, we have a clear ground why the believer may expect and be confident to be absolved and declared

clared free; it is no mean price, gold, silver, or precious stones, but the blood of him that was and is God; which we say should be considered not simply, but with respect to the covenant, and to the end wherefore he suffered and shed his blood; for though it be no comfort to a sinner simply that Christ suffered, yet when he considers that it was for this end, to wit, that justice might be satisfied, and that those for whom he satisfied might be justified, and made free; the believing sinner may hence reason, if there was a reality in justice pursuing of him as my surety, and a reality and efficacy in his satisfaction; and if it was full and complete, so as justice was fully satisfied with it, then there was a reality of mercy, pardon, justification, and peace with God, and of healing to and for me, they being made good to me upon the condition of believing: And in this respect, though it be grace to pardon sin as to us, yet it is justice in God to give Christ the satisfaction for the travail of his soul, as well as he gave God satisfaction to his justice. And the equivalent of that which the elect should have paid, being paid to justice by Christ their surety, the Lord cannot, nor will shun or shift the pardoning of a believing sinner according to the covenant.

The *uses* are five, 1. Of instruction, whereby we may have a map of God's way of saving sinners, and of the way of sinners coming to get salvation through Jesus Christ.

2. To stir us up to admire the love of God contriving such a design for the salvation of lost sinners, and the love of God that gave his Son, and likewise the love of the Son that engaged to come, and hath come and paid the debt.

3. It gives a notable warrant to the faith of a sinner to take hold of, and close with Christ, and to rest upon his satisfaction for justification and healing; because he hath God and the Mediator covenanting for this very end, the Mediator engaging to satisfy, and

God engaging to receive the satisfaction, and to justify all those who shall accept of it, and rest upon it.

4. It is therefore a notable ground of encouragement, and of exhortation to take hold of Jesus Christ, and of his satisfaction. People should not be scared at him, but trust their salvation to him, and be sure the bargain will not fail; as it is sure that the Mediator hath satisfied, it is as sure that his satisfaction shall be made good to believers in him.

5. To reprove the neglecters and despisers of Jesus Christ, and of this offered salvation through him; when he hath taken the threatening and curse of the law on himself to make out the promise to them, it must be a great aggravation of mens guilt to slight him. It serves also to comfort a poor sinner that hath many sins and challenges, and knows not how to be rid of them. The covenant says, our sins are transferred on the Mediator, that we might be set free; Christ Jesus covenanted on the terms of justice to make way for us, to covenant on the terms of mercy, God covenanted with him to pursue our sin in him, and he covenanted to impute that satisfaction freely to us. Hence is that never enough noted saying, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*: It is justice on his part, he satisfied for pardon of sin, and peace to them; but on the elect's part it is grace, God is reconciled to them, not imputing their sin to them, but it is for Christ's satisfaction that he freely forgives them their sin; so that what cost him dear comes most freely to us; and this is no small ground of comfort to a conscience pressed with sin. God fix these things in your hearts!

S E R M O N XXIV.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 5.

Verse 5. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

IF there were more deep conviction amongst us of our natural deadness in sin, and of that fearful condition that naturally we lie under by our liableness to the wrath and curse of God, all men and women having by nature God's curse, as the sentence of the law registered against them; the reading of such a text, wherein a way of remedy is holden forth, would be more welcome to us; and we are persuaded that such a thorough conviction would not only make the word more lovely and delightful to us, but more plain and easy to be understood by us, and one sermon would thus be more profitable and effectual than many are to you while in a secure condition; when people are not under the deep and due conviction of their sin and misery, they have no serious thoughts, that the preaching of the gospel concerns them in particular, and that their souls in need of that which is spoken to them therein.

Ye may remember we spoke somewhat from these words for clearing the way of making peace betwixt God and sinners, and for holding forth the way that God in his infinite wisdom hath laid down for setting of poor sinners that are lying under the curse, free; for this end there was an eternal transaction and covenant entered into by the Father and the Son; the
Father

Father demanding, and the Son accepting, and satisfying as Mediator and the sinners surety what was due to justice for the sins of the elect, as was determined in the council of God; from which blessed bargain all our salvation flows as from the fountain, and runs down as a river to us.

That which now we are to speak a little to, is some profitable *uses* which are the scope of all, and tend to lead you to the knowledge of the use of such doctrine, and not only to know it, but to engage you to make suitable practical improvement of it.

There are several sorts of *uses* that flow from this verse whence the preceeding doctrines have been drawn.

The 1st sort is for information, which ye who are more ignorant, who have not so much light in you as to discover the way to heaven, should especially take heed to, tho' they be useful to all: And 1st, Ye should know and be informed in this, that all men and women, without exception, are lying under transgression and iniquities, and liable to be smitten and cursed of God till these be taken away; but this having been spoke of before we need not insist on it now: But the truth is, neither law nor gospel hath gained thus much ground on the great part of you, as to bring you really to know, that naturally ye are dead in sins and trespasses, and till this be received and digested, other truths cannot to any purpose profit you.

2^{dly}, Ye should know and consider the necessity of a satisfaction to the justice of God before sinners can be freed from sin, and from the curse and wrath of God that they are under and liable to, by reason of their original corruption and actual transgressions. Do ye think that Jesus Christ did needlessly enter into the covenant of redemption, and engage to satisfy, and actually and really did suffer and satisfy justice? if men might come so easily to heaven as many suppose, it had been needless. Would God, think ye,
have

have wounded the Surety, his own dear Son, if those who lie under sin and wrath might have by another way satisfied justice and restored him his honour? Nay, ere their peace could be made this behoved to be; and yet I much doubt, if any do think that there is any such distance betwixt God and them, which a word of prayer, or confession, or some penance cannot remove. This is, alas! the woful ignorance of many that live under the gospel; but ye should know that a satisfaction behoved to be, and such a satisfaction as was equivalent to the wrong done, and suitable and satisfying to him that was wronged by sin, and that among all the creatures it could not be found: Yea, ye may read from this, the dreadful effects of sin, and what a horrible thing it is to have your transgressions to account for with God yourselves. If sin brought such heavy things on the Surety, what will it bring on the sinner, who hath all his days stood upon terms with God, to speak so, and would not make peace with him when he was earnestly invited to it? Yea, we may from this know, what is that most horrible, dreadful, and confounding sentence which is abiding all of you that stand it out, and do not make your peace with God through this satisfaction of our blessed Lord Jesus, when he shall be made eternally to bear the wrath that sin deserves, which yet is intollerable.

3dly, Ye should hence know, and study to be clear and distinct in your knowledge of this precious truth, how a sinner that by nature is under sin and wrath, and hath ground every day to look for it, may be freed from that curse and wrath. To prevent which, the Lord hath made a covenant with the Son, who is appointed Mediator for making peace betwixt God and sinners, by satisfying his justice for them, and by paying the same debt that was due by them; so that this wrath is prevented, and their peace is made by virtue of this covenant of redemption; wherein these

two clauses are agreed and concluded upon betwixt these two infinitely responsal parties. 1. That Christ shall become the sinner, and be handled as a sinner; though there was no sin in him. 2. That the elect sinner that by nature was the child of wrath even as well as others, shall be freed from the wrath to come by virtue of his satisfaction. These are the two pillars that our salvation is built upon, and that our peace and reconciliation with God flow from; by his wounding and bruising we are pardoned, *The chastisement of our peace was on him, and by his stripes we are healed.*

To clear this a little; this covenant should be considered, 1. As it looks to the parties and their several actions. 2. As it looks to the execution thereof in all the steps of it.

For the *first*, There are three parties that concur in their own place. 1st, God is the party offended, and he is here bruising and wounding the Mediator: he is the judge, and stands ready to execute the sentence that stands in his law against sinners, if he get not an equivalent satisfaction. 2^{dly}, Jesus Christ the Mediator is the party wounded and bruised; the Mediator's part is to satisfy justice, to pay the price and perform the satisfaction resolved upon in the council of God, of suitable and sufficient value for the redemption of the elect, according to his engagement; and he is actually wounded and bruised: God determined what shall satisfy, Christ Jesus accepts of the determination, engages to satisfy, and does actually satisfy for elect sinners. A 3^d party is, We poor sinners. He was wounded for our transgressions, &c. It is the elect sinner, or the sinner, who being made in due time sensible of sin, and afraid of wrath, and who being kindly touched with the apprehension of it, and cleared as to the firmness and freeness of the covenant, and as to the fulness of Christ's satisfaction, doth by faith flee unto Jesus Christ and submit to his satisfaction, and betakes himself to that only for righteousness,

ness. Christ lays down the price, and the believing sinner pleads for interest in it, and for the benefit of it, and by faith gets title to an absolver from his debt and guilt. If it then be asked, What is the thing whereby a sinner is pardoned and justified, reconciled to God, and delivered from wrath, and healed? I answer, It is by believing in Jesus Christ. If it be again asked, What is the ground or reason, why the believing sinner obtains that favour? I answer, Because our Lord Jesus hath sufficiently satisfied for, and fully paid the debt of so many as are brought to believe on him. If it be 3dly asked, How comes it that Christ's satisfaction becomes a ransom, and is accepted for such and such a believer? I answer, It is by virtue of the eternal covenant of redemption, or transaction made betwixt the Father and Son, wherein it was agreed, that his suffering and satisfying justice, should be accepted for believing sinners, as if themselves had satisfied, according to that of, John vi. 39, 40. *This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing; and this is the will of him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.* So our believing is the first immediate step, whereby we come to obtain pardon of sin and peace with God: Christ's righteousness or satisfaction, is that whereon our believing founds itself; yet so as it hath a respect to the eternal covenant of redemption, whence both Christ's satisfaction and our believing do flow, and without which we could have no warrant to expect righteousness through a Mediator; for unless we know that Christ hath satisfied justice for elect sinners that shall believe on him, we cannot rest on him for righteousness; and unless we have an eye to the covenant of redemption, we cannot expect that his satisfaction will be accepted for us. And therefore, if we will trace these steps back again, the first rise of our salvation is in the council of God; the prosecution of it is in

Christ's satisfaction; and the application of his satisfaction is by our fleeing to it, and accepting of it by faith; and therefore we should learn in our looking and stepping up to heaven, to look to these three in this order; we should first begin at faith, and in believing we should consider Christ's satisfaction, and from that we should ascend to the rise of it, to wit, the covenant of redemption, and the terms of it; all which put together, give a very clear ground of expecting righteousness through Jesus Christ. I shall illustrate it by a scripture-similitude, wherein I shall shew you how all the three concur, yet so as there is a difference in their concurrence. Ye know that under the law there were *cities of refuge* appointed, which were types of Jesus Christ, in whom we find a shelter; in these cities of refuge, consider these three that concurred for saving the person that had committed manslaughter: 1. God's determination appointing such a thing, that the man-slayer being within such a city, should be safe from the avenger of blood; and this gave the rise to the other two that follow. 2. The city itself as a shelter or refuge to the man-slayer. 3. The persons fleeing or running to hide themselves in it. Now the safety of the person of the man-slayer did flow from all the three. 1st, The law appointing such a city, was the ground. 2^{dly}, The city was the shelter. 3^{dly}, The person's actual running to the city, gave him a claim and title to the privilege of the city; for though the former two had been, yet if he had not fled to the city, he had not obtained the benefit of safety: Even so, the believer that would be saved, is to consider these *three*, 1. God's determining such a way of salvation to elect sinners by a Mediator. 2. The Mediator privileged as the city of refuge for this end. And, 3. The sinner's fleeing to him, which is his believing on him, and his seeking and pleading for the benefit of Christ's satisfaction according to the terms of the covenant. Now, suppose a person

person to flee to the city of refuge, he is preserved in it, justice cannot follow him further than the gates, because he hath the benefit by God's determination and appointment of the city for such an end; for he must flee into it ere he can plead for the benefit of the city. So, suppose a sinner to be fled to Jesus Christ by faith, he may plead for exemption from wrath, by God's determining and appointing a Mediator for such an end; and the Mediator Jesus Christ hath this privilege conferred on him, that he that thus flees unto him shall be safe; yet it is also supposed that such a sinner hath fled to him, else he could not expect safety through him, notwithstanding God's determining the Mediator for safety. Thus we would have these three put together; and yet, as we said, they differ; for God's determination is the efficient cause and fountain of all; Christ's satisfaction is the meritorious cause; and our believing is the ground on which we have right to plead for the benefit of his satisfaction; even as the man that fled to the city of refuge, his safety was not by any virtue in his running, but by God's determination, yet his running to the city was requisite as the means; and except he run or fled to it, he could not plead for the benefit of the city; so our believing gives us ground to plead a right and title to Christ, and his satisfaction, without which we could not have that right.

But *2dly*, Because one will conceive this under one notion, and another under another: To clear it therefore a little further, we shall again consider in the covenant these three steps. 1. The determination of it, as it is enacted in the council of the God-head, which in sum is this, that such and such persons shall be satisfied for by the Mediator, and his satisfaction accepted for them. 2. The execution of this covenant, where we take in all our Lord's sufferings; all the strokes and wounds that justice pursued him with, as surety for the elect; and God's accepting and justifying

tifying of him, and declaring his accepting of him and being well satisfied with what he did and suffered by his raising him from the dead. 3. The application of his purchase by his accepted satisfaction, which consists in these. 1. That those that were given to Christ on this condition, that his satisfaction should stand good for them, should be justified and saved, that is, that in due time application of his satisfaction should be made to the persons given him to be saved by him; which takes in Christ's making intercession, that renewing grace, faith, &c. may be given to such persons. 2. That the work of the Spirit, who as the sanctifier, begets faith, and persuades to embrace Jesus Christ, shall be given them. Then 3. Follows the believer's actual coming to Christ, being sweetly and powerfully drawn to rest on him and his satisfaction; whereupon follows the application of the sentence of justification and absolution that results from the former: So that whereas it was before, *Cursed is he that continues not in all things written in the law*: Now it is, *He that believeth on Jesus Christ hath eternal life, and shall never come into condemnation*: All these go and agree well together. The covenant as the ground, Christ's satisfaction as the meritorious cause, and the application of his satisfaction by faith, which entitles and gives the believer a right to it.

The reason we have so much insisted on this, is, That we may teach you to join, (with respect to the covenant of redemption,) Christ's suffering, and your believing together; it will not be faith that will justify, that is, without respect to the covenant; neither will the covenant and Christ's satisfaction justify without faith; yet ye should so put them together, as the glory of salvation through grace may not lie on faith, but on God's everlasting love, and on Christ's satisfaction. And indeed it is no little practice for a soul sensible of sin, in the exercise of faith, so to lay the weight of its salvation on Christ and the covenant,

as it neglects not running to Christ by faith; and so to lay hold on Christ by faith, as it lays not the weight on faith, but on Christ and the covenant. As in the comparison before used, suppose a man that had killed another unawares, had been taken before he ran to the city of refuge; God's determination was not the cause of that, but his not running, or his not coming at the city; so it may be, that some are apprehended by the justice of that God that are less sinful than others; yet the reason or cause is not in God's covenant, nor in Christ's want of worth, but in the persons not running, or not fleeing to Christ as to the city of refuge, and therefore they are not heard to plead for immunity by virtue of that satisfaction before the bar of God.

A 2d, Sort of *uses* are for exhorting and encouraging sinners to come to Christ: There is here then, 1. A clear ground to our faith, and a plain way opened to heaven, and a mighty encouragement to persuade sinners to lay hold on Christ, and to take this way for obtaining of life: This text opens, as it were, the gates of the city of refuge, and points out the way how to eschew the wrath which is to come: There is a way here laid down in the wisdom, justice, goodness and grace of God, which is made offer in the gospel; and since it is so, we beseech you that ye would not receive this grace in vain, but seeing there is a covenant well ordered and sure, a Mediator and a ransom provided, and a way laid down how to come to Christ by faith, let all of you who come under the conviction of sin and apprehension of wrath, step to and close with him, and plead for pardon by virtue of his wounds, and for healing through his stripes with respect to the covenant.

There are these *four* things here that will serve to give ground for this application, if we consider, 1. The great ground of faith that is here. 2. The great reason we have to make use of this ground. 3. The great

great encouragement we have so to do. And 4thly, The great necessity we have to make this application. A little to each of these: But we shall premit one word to all, and it is this, that as there is a possibility of God's being reconciled, though for the present ye live at a distance from him, the use will by way of exhortation reach you? or if ye be brought to greater nearness under the sin of sense, and have some seriousness in seeking after God, it will reach you for consolation: In a word, we would exhort all; and it may convince some, and comfort others: But to the first thing we proposed, we declare and proclaim this as a true and faithful saying, that there is here an everlasting covenant, wherein the salvation of the elect is concluded through Christ's satisfaction to justice for them, and a way laid down for making peace betwixt God and all them that will thoroughly renounce their own righteousness, and lay hold on this satisfaction, even such a way as procures justification and healing to them: And for your confirmation consider in general, if it be possible that this covenant of redemption, the sufferings of the Mediator, and the promises made to believing, can be for nought; did the Father pursue the Surety so hotly for nothing? Or did the Surety pay such a ransom for nothing? No certainly, if it had not been to communicate pardon and peace, with healing by his wounds and stripes to them who were liable to condemnation, and under the dominion of sin, neither of these would have been: And therefore for grounds of your faith more particularly, see here, 1. A full satisfaction. God hath made way to sinners peace with himself, by satisfying himself fully in Christ the Mediator for the sins of elect believers, so that a sinner that in the sense of sin betakes himself to him, needs not to fear any after reckoning, because whatever might make for our peace, was fully laid on him, so that we may with holy and humble boldness say, *That we are not come to the mount that*
might

*might not be touched, nor to blackness, and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet; but we are come unto mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling: Our invitation therefore to you, is not to bid you come and count for your own debt yourselves, but to come and accept of Christ's payment of it, and of his satisfaction, whereby justice is completely satisfied. 2. See here as another ground of faith, the justice of God, not with respect to us, but to the bargain betwixt the Father and the Son, who are the principal parties, and we, to speak so, but parties accidentally in this covenant, the covenant being primarily and mainly betwixt God and the Mediator. The justice of it appears in this, that it hath respect to a covenant which is fulfilled on all sides, and therefore the elects believing and taking hold of the Mediator's satisfaction, cannot but be accepted as if he had payed the debt himself. The Father, to speak so, had the disposing of the bargain, and what satisfaction his justice was to receive, to his own mind; and as it was justice on the Son's side to satisfy according to his undertaking, so it is justice on the Father's side to pardon and be at peace with the sinner that by faith flees unto Jesus Christ. 3. See in this bargain not only justice, but mercy. As it is just, so it is a graciously free bargain; which is wonderful, and may seem somewhat strange, if not paradoxal, yet it is nothing inconsistent with the way of grace; it is just that the Surety should pay the debt, and yet that debt is most freely and frankly pardoned as to us: It is justice in the height as to the Mediator, but free grace as to us in the height; we come to it freely and without price, though it cost him dear: And that is one of the Mediator's undertakings that it should be free to his seed, John vi. 40. *This is the will of him that sent me, that he who seeth the Son and believeth on him should have eternal life.* 4. Consider the reality*

reality and sureness of the bargain. It is such as cannot fail, having such pillars to lean on, the faithfulness of God engaged on just and equal terms, and the glory of God as the end; and having a most necessary and certain effect, to wit, healing to all to whom the sovereign medicine is applied: This stability and sureness of the covenant flows from God's engaging to the Mediator, and the Mediator's engaging to God; from the Mediator's satisfying, and the Father's accepting of his satisfaction, which being confirmed by the blood of the testator, it becomes a testament which cannot be annulled altered or changed. And if all this be so, let me put the question, is there not good ground here to exhort the hearers of the gospel to believe in Christ, and on believing to look for life through him; and a most solid ground laid down whereupon to build the hopes of eternal life? And therefore seeing this is the upshot of all, that life is to be gotten freely by faith in Jesus Christ, improve this way of salvation for making your peace, under no less certification than this, even as ye should eschew reckoning with divine justice in your own persons for the least farthing of your debt.

If it be *objected* here by any, 1. We are at enmity with God, and cannot satisfy: I *answer*, This text tells you that satisfaction is not sought from you, but from the Mediator who hath already given it, and the Father hath accepted it for all such as shall by faith plead the benefit of it. 2. If ye shall say, we know not how to come to God, we are such as cannot step one foot forward, and so very sinful and miserable, that we know no such transgressors and wretches as we are: I *answer*, Was it not for such that the Mediator transacted, even for such as we, transgressors, rebels, despisers of him, and such as judged him to be smitten and plagued of God? If he had been surety only for righteous people, there had been some reason for such an objection; but it is for sinners, for most heinous

nous sinners: Nay, this way of reasoning and pleading says on the matter, that Christ needed not have laid down his life. 3. If it be said, we are so sinful and backsliding, so filthy and polluted, that we think we are not within the reach of healing: *I answer*, this reasoning, if it were true, would be in effect to say, that ye are not within the reach of God's grace, and of Christ's satisfaction, which is not only injurious, but even blasphemous to the grace of God, and to the satisfaction of the Mediator; if your sin be ugly and horrible, he suffered horrible wrath; he was wounded, bruised, chastised, &c. 4. If it be said further, we can do nothing for ourselves, we cannot come to Christ, we know not what it is to believe, or if we can do any thing, alas, all our goodness is as the morning cloud and early dew that soon passeth away. *I answer*, The covenant is not transacted betwixt God and you, but betwixt God and the Mediator, and the ground of your peace, as to the procuring cause, depends on the Mediator's performing his part of the covenant in your name: and further, as for your believing, it is a piece of the Father's engagement to the Mediator, and must certainly be made as effectual as the Father must keep his word to the Son, according to those promises of the covenant, *I will put my law in their hearts, and write it in their minds, they shall all know me; and they shall be all taught of God: And thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, and the like: All these promises were in the covenant betwixt the Father and the Son; and the application of them is but their execution as to us; and therefore seeing such a city of refuge is cast open to man-slayers and transgressors, step humbly and boldly forward and run into it. There is yet a fifth *objection*, which some possibly will stick at, and it is this, we know not whether we shall believe or not, for we know not if we be in the covenant or not: *I answer*, would ye have thought that he who had com-

mitted man-slaughter would have reasoned well if he had reasoned thus ; I know not if that city of refuge was appointed or built for me, and when the gates of it were cast open should Ikar to enter in it on this account ? When it was told him that it was appointed for such : Just so it is here : And suppose one should say, I cannot believe, it is as if such a man should say, I cannot, I will not run to the city ; nay, rather tho' he had been feeble, yet would he have creeped or not go to it as he could ? even so here. In a word, a man should not dispute whose name is in the covenant, but should step forward to the shelter and refuge ; as it is, Heb. vi. 18, 19. where the apostle borroweth the same similitude, and says, ' God hath confirmed ' his promise by an oath, that by two immutable ' things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, ' we might have strong consolation who have fled for ' refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.' Men in their natural condition are compared to the man-slayer, lying under the stroke of the law, or under the hazard of being pursued by the avenger of blood ; Christ is compared to the city of refuge, and the heir of promise being pursued, what shall he do ? Will his election simply save him ? No, but he must flee unto Jesus Christ as to his city of refuge : And therefore, by all means run and flee to him, as having this fear, least the avenger of blood pursue and overtake you ; and if ye cannot run so fast as you would, yet run as ye can ; and ye have this advantage, that the city of refuge is not far off, it is near you, even at your door, as the apostle speaks, Rom. x. *The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thine heart* : The lamest amongst you has Christ in your offer, that ye may enter into him, as into a city of refuge, and that he may come in and sup with you ; so that though ye cannot lift your feet so nimbly in running to him, if ye can but in good earnest roll yourselves upon him, ye shall be safe : Seeing then that this way of salvation is so full,

so free, so equal and effectual, take heed least ye pre-judge yourselves of it.

2dly, To press this yet a little further, consider what good reason ye have to run. Receive but this one word, ye are sinners lying under the curse and wrath of God, and have ye any other way of obtaining pardon, or of making your peace? And if ye believe that ye are sinners and under the curse, is there not need that ye should run to a shelter from it? If we were preaching to angels that had never sinned, there might be some reason for their flighting or laying little weight upon such a word of exhortation; but seeing ye are sinners, and liable to God's curse, why do ye slight a Saviour, having so much need of him?

3dly, Consider yet further, that ye have encouragement to run, and nothing to discourage you. What prejudice is in believing? There is no prejudice at all in this way, but many advantages; doubtless salvation will not fail them that believe. Yea, we may add from the words of the text, for encouraging to this, that the man or woman that is sensible of sin, and afraid of wrath, hath the covenant to look to, for begetting and carrying on the work of faith in them with power; for if it be true that all the means are in the covenant, as well as the end; and if we may lay stress on the covenant for the effect, to wit, the pardon of sin, and healing, then we may also lay hold on the covenant for furthering us to that effect. I speak not this as if people could of themselves act faith on the covenant, before faith be given them; but I speak it to encourage young beginners, that think they have no faith at all, that they may act what they have, and may look more and more to the covenant, to be enlightened, quickened, and strengthened, and that they may say with the poor man in the gospel, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief*; and with the spouse, Cant. i. *Draw me, and we will run after thee.*

4thly, And finally, for pressing of this, consider

the absolute necessity that ye are under of making use of this way of salvation, of getting your peace made by Christ's satisfaction, and your wounds healed by his stripes; there is no other way, but either you must venture on a reckoning with God on your own score, or accept of his satisfaction. There were never any covenants made by God with man but these two, a covenant of works for perfectly righteous people, by which covenant no sinner was ever able to come to life; and a covenant of grace wherein Christ is made sin for us; and as many as flee by faith unto him, are made the righteousness of God through him; and therefore either betake yourselves to this way, or resolve to account with God yourselves without a Mediator and Surety; or if you think it a fearful thing to account thus with God; and if it be certain, that many have been condemned for taking the way of works; let me earnestly intreat you to welcome and make more use of Christ's righteousness, for obtaining pardon of sin, and peace with God: This way will do, when the other will quite fail you; but as for them who take this way, I will adventure to say in his name, that as certainly as Christ was smitten, as certainly shall pardon and healing come to them, even to as many as fly to him, and by believing lay hold on him. And on the other side, I say in the same name to all of you who take not this way of salvation, that ye shall most certainly be brought to reckon with God yourselves without a Mediator, and to undergo his curse according to the tenour of the covenant of works. Thus this text sets before you life and death, God's blessing and God's curse; life and God's blessing, if ye betake yourselves to Christ, as to your alone city of refuge; and death and God's fearful curse, if ye do it not. God himself make you wise to make the right choice!

S E R M O N XXV.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 6.

Verse 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

YE have in the former verses somewhat of our Lord's suffering, and of his suffering for sinners, that he was wounded and bruised, &c. In this verse the prophet proceeds to clear how this came to pass; that Christ Jesus was made to suffer for the elect, the seed that God had given him; which he doth by laying down the occasion and fountain-cause whence it proceeded. 1. The occasion of it in these words, *All we like sheep have gone astray*; all the elect, as well as others, have wandered, and *every one of us has turned to our own way*; we had stripped ourselves of all right and title to eternal life, and had made ourselves liable to God's wrath and curse through our sinning. 2. The fountain-cause is, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*; when we had all strayed, Jehovah took our Lord Jesus, as the sacrifices under the law were taken, and put him in our room, and laid on him the punishment due to us for our sins, and actually pursued him for our debt.

So the words are an answer to that question, How comes it to pass that our Lord Jesus suffered thus for sinners? it is answered, The elect had made themselves liable to the wrath and curse of God, through their straying; and to keep them from that wrath, God designed and provided his Son Jesus Christ to be the Redeemer,

Redeemer, and according to the covenant of redemption laid on him the punishment due to them for their iniquities; in a word, their sin, and God's appointing him to be Surety, made him liable to satisfy for all their debt.

The first part of the word holds forth our natural disease. The second part holds forth God's gracious cure and remedy.

In the *first* part we have these three, 1. The natural state and condition of all men and women, even of the elect themselves (who are mainly to be looked on here) *all we have gone astray*. 2. This is illustrated by a similitude, *We have gone astray like sheep*. 3. It is amplified, *Every one of us hath turned to his own way*. Several words being put together to set forth the desperate sinful condition, whereinto the elect as well as others had brought themselves.

1. Our natural state and condition is set down in this word, *straying*. To *stray*, is to wander out of the way, to go wrong, to be bewildered; for God hath set a rule to men to walk by in the way to life, the rule and way of holiness; and whoever walk not in that way, do go astray, and wander out of the right way.

2. This is as I said, illustrated by the similitude of sheep. The comparing of the elect to sheep here is not at all to extenuate the sinfulness of their straying; tho' sometimes the innocency of that creature in some other comparisons is insinuated; but it is to hold forth the ignorance, spiritual blindness, and brutishness of their straying; the scripture usually pointing out that beast to be disposed and given to wandering; and both nature and experience tells us, that in a wilderness where there is greatest hazard, they are readiest to run into danger, such is their ignorant and foolish inclination; just so are the elect by nature.

3. It is amplified by this, *That every one hath turned to his own way*. Before, it was collectively set down

down, *All we have gone astray*; but now lest any should extol himself, it is distributively set down, *Every one*, even Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others such, not one excepted. This *turning to our own way* holds forth two things, 1st, It is called our own way, to distinguish it from God's way, as it is, Psal. lxxxi. 11. *He gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels*; that is, in their own inventions, or according to their own will, humour, and inclination. 2^{dly}, While it is said, that *every one* turns to his own way, it is to shew us, that beside the common way that all sinners have to turn away from God, distinguished from God's way, every sinner hath his own particular and peculiar way, whereby in his way he is distinguished from another sinner. There is but one way to heaven, but many ways to hell, and every one hath his different way; some have one predominant lust, some another, but they all meet here, that every one takes a wrong way of his own.

Considering the scope, we shall shortly and passingly hint at two general *observations*, whereof the 1st is this, that it contributes much for peoples conceiving and considering of Christ's sufferings aright; people ought to conceive and consider of Christ's sufferings aright, and be well acquainted with their own sinful nature and disposition. Men will never look rightly on Christ's sufferings, nor suitably esteem him, nor make him, and the doctrine that holds him and his sufferings forth cordially welcome, except they have some sense of their sinful nature and disposition. Hence it was that many of the Pharisees and hypocrites of that time, wherein the Lord exercised his ministry amongst the Jews, never made him welcome, nor prized his sufferings; whereas among the publicans and sinners many were brought to believe in him.

Not to insist on the *use* of this, only in a word, see here a main reason why Jesus Christ is so meanly thought of, and the report of his suffering is so little entertained

entertained and esteemed, even because so few walk under the due sense of this, that like lost sheep they have gone astray.

The 2d general *observation* from the scope, putting both parts of the verse together is this, that we should never look on Christ's sufferings but with respect to the covenant of redemption, and God's transacting with him as our surety; therefore the last part comes in, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*; for albeit we know that Christ hath suffered much; yet if there be not an eye to, and some acquaintance with the covenant, the rise of his sufferings, and God's hand and end in his sufferings, it will be to no purpose; therefore when Peter is to speak of his sufferings, Acts ii. 23. He premits these words, *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*, and then subjoins his being crucified: Looking on Christ's sufferings with respect to the covenant.

1. It lets us know that Christ's sufferings came not by guess but by the eternal counsel of God, and by virtue of that transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, and this takes away the scandal off them, which the prophet sets himself here to remove. 2. It gives faith access to make use of his sufferings when we look to him as purposely designed for this end. 3. It holds out the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, towards elect sinners, That whosoever God looked angry like on the Mediator, as personating them, and sustaining their room; yet that Jehovah had the devising and designing of these sufferings, and that he sent his Son to suffer thus, it holds forth wonderful love.

3. And more particularly, from the first part of the words, which is the main thing to be marked, *Observe*, That all men, even the elect themselves not excepted, are naturally in a most sinful and desperate state and condition; so that if ye would know what they are by nature, this is a description of their state,

All

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and every one hath turned to his own way ; and when it is called *our own way*, there needs no other epithet to set forth the desperateness of it. That which I mean is this, that all men are naturally under these two, 1st, They are under guilt before God, Eph. ii. 1, 2. *Dead in sins and trespasses, children of wrath, and heirs of condemnation,* liable to the curse of God by virtue of the covenant which Adam broke. 2^{dly}, Which is mostly aimed at here, there is in every one a sinful nature, a sinfulness or sinning sin, and inclination to sin, every one hath a straying humour ; so that although the similitude of sheep agree not to them in that sense, for sheep are innocent creatures, yet it agrees to them in this sense, that they are silly foolish creatures ; and in this respect it is said, Gen. vi. 5. *That all the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart in man are only evil continually ;* and Eph. ii. 1. They are said to be *dead in sin*, not only in respect of their being obnoxious to God's curse, but in respect of the natural deadness of their sinful nature, and want of spiritual life. So Rom. iii. 9, 10. and forwards, the apostle describes the sinfulness of man's nature at large, not only in respect of its guilt, but of its inclination to sin, and says that *their throat is an open sepulchre ;* insinuating thereby, that men naturally are like to a tomb, and that the corpse within the tomb is death and sin, and that all that comes from them favours of that ; *their feet are swift to shed blood, with their tongues they use deceit, &c.* Every member and part of the body, and every faculty of the soul is bent to that which is evil. These three may further confirm it. 1. If we look in general to what the scripture speaks of men by nature, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. Rom. iii. and v. they being, as it is, Isa. lvii. penult, *as the raging sea that casts out dirt and mire continually ;* it is always moving and working one way or another, and more especially in a storm ; so that though at one tide ye should sweep the shore

never so clean, it will be as foul and dirty the next tide that cometh; so are these hearts of ours, (as Peter speaks, 2 Epist. ii. and Jude ver. 23.) *foaming out their own shame*. And James saith, chap. iv. 5. *The spirit that dwells in us lusteth to envy*; it hath as great eagerness after, and as great delight in sin, as a drunkard hath after drinking. 2. Experience also confirms it, if you consider all the men and women that ever were in the world (our blessed Lord Jesus being excepted, as not descending from Adam by the ordinary way of generation) and that will be found true which the apostle hath, Rom. iii. *There is none that doeth good, no not one*; And that which is spoken, Gen. vi. *All flesh hath corrupted their way*. And what is the spring of all the abominations that are in the world, and the rise of these particular evils that are in believers and saints mentioned in scripture, as in David, Peter, and others; but this same corrupt nature, this body of death, as it is called, Rom. vii. 14? All which strongly prove a fire to be within, when there is such a smoke without. 3. We may confirm it from well-grounded reason; for it cannot be otherwise; if the root be of such a nature, can the branches be otherwise? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? No, not one, Job xiv. 4. when Adam fell, the root was corrupted, and the branches cannot be fresh; the fountain was defiled, and the stream cannot be clean and clear. Hence when Adam begot Seth, an elect in whom the church was continued, it is said, that *he begot a son after his own likeness*, Gen. v. He himself was created after God's image, but begat children after his own image.

Though this be a commonly received doctrine, yet it is not without good reason insisted on so much here and in other scriptures; we shall therefore speak a little to these four *uses* of it.

The 1st use of it serves for information; and we may make it a looking-glass wherein we may see clearly

ly our own most sinful state and condition. Would ye know what ye are by nature? This text tells you, that not only all men have strayed, but that each of us, or *every one of us hath turned to his own way*; but knowing how ready we are to shift the challenge, we should be persuaded that we are by nature liable to God's curse for Adam's sin, dead in sin, and inclined to all evil, sheep are not readier to go the wrong way, and will not more readily stray if they want a shepherd, than we are inclined to do. There is a common word in many of your mouths, that we are all sinners by nature; but when it is searched into, we find that there is much ignorance among you of what it means; many count themselves to be sinners, only because of their being guilty of the first sin, and so put no difference betwixt the first sin and original sin, which is an effect that flows from, and follows upon the first sin: The first sin was Adam's deed, and is legally ours, being imputed to us; as it is, Rom. v. *Death reigned over all, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; because Adam in his standing and falling stood in our room, representing all mankind that was to come of him: But original sin is inherent in us, and cleaveth close to us, and is that which we are born in, and grows up with us; and therefore ye should distinguish these things, that ye may know that ye are not only guilty of Adam's first sinful deed, but that ye have a present sinful and corrupt nature, though it be not always alike exercising and acting itself. Others again look only upon their nature as inclined to evil, and look not on it as that which makes them liable to wrath, by reason of the first sin; but ye should put them both together, and know that your sinfulness doth not consist only in an inclination to evil, but your sinfulness lies mainly in the bias that is in you, and so naturally leads you out of the way; and it is not only our actual straying and going wrong

that ye should take notice of, but also and mainly of our sinful nature that inclines, disposes, and sets us on work to go wrong; it is our filthy corrupt nature, the body of death, the smell and savour whereof, to say so, is the appearance of some actual sin. We may clear it in a similitude or two; we are by this original sin as young serpents before they can sting actually; or like ravenous birds before they come out of the nest, yet we call these serpents and ravenous birds, because they are come of such a kind. In our swaddling-clothes we have the venomous and ravenous nature, to wit, original sin in us; and in our actual sinning we are like serpents when they come to sting actually, or like ravenous birds when they come to catch the prey; and our actual sin is a fruit of original sin; Or take it in the similitude in the text, there are many sheep that never actually strayed; yet they are called straying senseless creatures, because they are inclined to stray, and ready to stray; or take it in this similitude, there are some diseases that follow such a house and family, some are inclined to a consumption, some to the stone, some to one disease, some to another, which is from some defect of the body; even so it is here, that from a defect of our nature, infected by original sin, all actual sins flow.

The 2d use is for conviction and reproof; and indeed we cannot well tell where we shall begin here; However, the first thing that it reproves, is our natural pride; though this be the sinfulness of our very infancy, yet we are ready to look upon ourselves as something. It is a true saying, though much misapplied, that Job hath, chap. xi. 12. *Vain man would be wise, though man be born as a wild ass's colt*; a colt, he hath a wild humour, and is the most witless of creatures; and this same is it that is implied in that saying of James iv. 5. *Do ye think the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that is in us lusteth to envy*; which saith this much, that the most part never think that they have such

such a spirit in them that is inclined to all evil, bent to hate God and every thing that is good. 2. It reproves the great security that is amongst the most part. If this be a truth, that men and women are thus born under the curse of God, and inclined to every thing that is evil, born enemies to God, and enclined to aggravate and heighten the quarrel; how comes it then to pass, that the greatest part of men sleep as soundly and securely as if they were in no hazard? If ye were all posed and put to it, how many of you can give a solid proof that ye are reconciled, that your peace is made, that ye are changed and your nature renewed, and the quarrel betwixt God and you taken away? and yet if we look up and down, ye are generally as secure and quiet as if ye were born friends with God. There are but few taken with a conviction, but many are saying within themselves, Is yonder doctrine true of me? as if the scripture had spoken in vain whatever it speaks of original sin. Ah! shall never this be amended? Will you never lay your sinfulness to heart? Will ye still think nothing of that which gave the occasional rise to the covenant of redemption, and to Christ's satisfaction? All the preaching that ye hear daily, if it be not now laid to heart, it shall be most terrible and dreadful to you one day; and the peace that ye now have shall end in red war and great bitterness. 3. It reproves peoples exceeding great unwatchfulness, and their trusting to their own nature, and following their own counsel. The wise man saith, Prov. xxviii. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.* Is it not reproof worthy, for a man to be as brutish as the very beast that perisheth; as it is, Psal. xlix. and yet to be as little watchful, and trust as much to a man's own guiding, as if nothing of a misguiding humour and disposition were in him? We may more than allude to those words of our Saviour here, *If the blind lead the blind, shall not both fall into the ditch?* Many of you think that ye are instructed

instructed as scribes in the way to heaven ; and will be ready to say, God forbid we should be ignorant of that, and what have we been doing all our days, if we be yet to learn that lesson ? But we must tell you what ye have been doing, ye have been like senseless sheep straying all your days : And we would the rather speak to this, because it is so necessary to be known and believed, and yet so little credited ; for, 1. Ye will never be rightly humbled, nor make use of Jesus Christ, nor walk watchfully and soberly ; in a word, ye will never believe and repent, till ye know, be convinced of, and believe this to be your natural inclination, and the sinfulness of your nature. And yet, 2. Tho' this be so necessary that the want of it mars the fruit of the word in you, and sermons do but harden you ; how many are there that are as little sensible of it as the very stones of the wall that are before us, or the boards that they lean upon ? As to your own particular state and condition, I would but ask you, Is it possible that ye could live so securely, and satisfied with your own case, if ye believed indeed that ye had such a sinful nature, and that ye were liable to God's wrath and curse ? Or would ye give such way to your natural sinful humours and inclinations, and so contentedly slight Jesus Christ, and the offers of the gospel, as many of you do ? And yet we see amongst them with whom we converse men and women not only as secure, as if they had no such natures, but are even belching and foaming out their out their own shame. We would have you therefore to be convinced and know, that not only ye are sinners in the general, but that every one of you is such in particular.

To make it the more clear, I shall give you two or three qualifications that are requisite to a suitable conviction of your sinfulness. 1. Be particular. 2. Ye should be sensible, and not only in words acknowledge that ye are sinners, but ye should see and be convinced,

ced, that in this and this ye have sinned, and ye should be kindly affected with it. 3. It should be distinct, not a guesling, but a thing that from the seeing and feeling of it ye should be clear in. 4. It should have such influence on the moving of your affections, and such an inward working on your hearts, as that ye may loath your nature, and yourself because of it. We may see all these in Paul, Rom. vii. 10. and forward, who tho' he was greatly renewed, yet saith he, *I see a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind*: He feels and is very sensible of that which leads him into captivity, and he cries out, *Who shall deliver me?* &c. his affections are mightily stirred with it, *What I do, I allow not*, &c. *O miserable man that I am*, &c. If ye believe this to be a truth, and that Paul lived in the faith and feeling of it; then judge if there be not just ground to expostulate with most part of you, as being yet without the faith and feeling of that which so much concerns you.

The 3d. use of it serves wonderfully to set forth the glory of the free and rich grace of God, that all this design is founded, and this transaction entered into; so that Christ comes to satisfy, and doth actually satisfy justice for a number of such wretches that had gone astray like lost sheep. This comes in as the scope; we have strayed and done the wrong, but he hath paid the debt, and satisfied for the wrong done: And from comparing this verse with the foregoing, we may take these five considerations that serve to heighten the glory of God's grace and free-love, and to shame believers, that are so little wondring at it. 1. Who is he that is smitten? His own Son; we sinned, and he was smitten, even he who was and is the Father's fellow, the sword awakes against him, and we go free. 2. What did our Lord suffer? *He was wounded and bruised, the chastisement of our peace was on him, he laid on him the iniquity of us all*. Christ's sufferings were not in shew or pretence; for he was arraigned

arraigned before the tribunal of justice, and did really pay our debt, and satisfy justice for our sins. 3. Who exacted this satisfaction? Who did smite him? It is the Lord Jehovah, it is the Father, which makes the glory of grace shine the more; it is God the Father whose heart was tender to the Son of his love that exacts the full price of him; so that as he said of Abraham, *By this I know that thou lovedst me, because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son Isaac from me*; we may say, By this we know God's love to the elect, when he hath not withheld, nor spared his own Son from them, but hath laid on him the iniquities of them all. 4. For whom did he smite him? It was for sinners, for straying sheep, for covenant-breakers, for such as had gone a-whoring from God, and were bent to sin against him, I mean the elect. 5. When was it that he suffered for them? Even when they were straying, rejecting, despising, and nodding the head at him, spitting in his face, and saying, Away with him, even then he is praying and dying for them: Now put all these together, that such a price shall be exacted of such a surety, and for such sinners, and at such a time; behold and see therein how God commends his love to us, as the apostle speaks, Rom. v. 8. *In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*; when we were in our sin, not praying to him, nor in a capacity to pray or give him thanks for any thing that he did or suffered, he then died for us: Is there any thing here but freedom of grace? And does not this exceeding highly commend the love of God, that he exacts the debt due by us of his Son, and the powerful love of the Mediator and Surety, that at such a time and for such transgressions he should pay such a price?

Use 4. Seeing this was our state that we were sinners, and yet herein was the love of God commended, that he laid on his Son the iniquity of us all, is there not

not then good ground to take with the sin, and to make use of the remedy, to take with sin and to close with Christ? We might take occasion here to exhort,

1. To watchfulness, and to walk soberly and humbly, from this consideration, that we have such a nature.
2. To exhort every one to repentance, because by nature ye are all in such a sinful state and condition; it may be ground of exercising repentance, even long after your justification, and peace made with God who are justified, with whom it should be as we see it was with David. But 3dly, Seeing by nature ye are under God's wrath and curse, and in a state of enmity with him, it mainly serves to exhort you to flee unto Jesus Christ, and not to rest till ye get the quarrel taken away; it might be in reason thought that people would be soon and easily induced to this, even to run unto Jesus Christ, and to welcome the gospel with good will, for preventing the curse and wrath due to them for sin, and for subduing of this sinful nature and inclination to stray from God and his way: Therefore seeing there is a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness, since there is a satisfaction given to justice for removing the guilt of sin, and since the Spirit is purchased for mortifying of sin, and for making you holy; let as many as think that they have gone astray, and have turned to their own way, as they would not be found still at this distance with God, make use of Christ for making their friendship with God; it is the word that Peter useth, 1 Pet. ii. ult. *All we like sheep have gone astray, but we are now turned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls*; hold, O hold you near this Shepherd, and make use of his righteousness for making your peace: If we could rightly understand the words, we would see in them, 1. A motive to put us on believing in Christ, and can there be a greater motive than *necessity*? We have sinned and gone astray, he is the only Saviour, there is no other name given un-

der heaven whereby finners can be saved. 2. There is also in them an encouragement to believing: It was for sinners, such as we are, that Jesus Christ suffered all that he suffered, which may be ground of hope and encouragement to step forward, and if neither our need, nor Christ's being a Saviour, and willing to make sinners welcome will prevail, we know not what will do it: It will turn to this, and ye will be put to the question, are ye sinners? and if sinners, is it not a desperate thing to lie under sin and wrath? If ye be not sinners, we have no warrant to propose this doctrine to you, to invite or make you welcome to a Saviour; but if ye grant that ye are sinners, will ye contentedly lie under sin? will ye be able to bear it out against God? or think ye that ye will be well enough for all that; and if ye dare not resolve to lie under sin, I would ask, what way will ye avoid it? Think ye it easy to win from under it? must not the justice of God be satisfied? Some of you think that ye can pray yourselves out of sin; but if so, what need was there of Christ's sufferings, if a satisfaction might have been made another way? And if none but Christ can satisfy its demands, I exhort you, that by all means ye would make use of him, else ye will most certainly drown and die in your sins: And this is the thing that we would commend to you, that under the sense of sin, and in the faith of God's condescending love, ye would flee to Jesus Christ, and give him employment for making your peace with God, and taking away your sin and sanctifying of your nature: O but this be suitable to sinners; and if ye think yourselves sinners, prejudge not yourselves of the benefit of a Saviour.

S E R M O N XXVI.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 6.

Verse 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

EVERY expression that the prophet useth to set forth the grace of God in Jesus Christ to sinners, is more wonderful than another, because indeed every thing that he expresseth is more wonderful than another: And there is so much grace and infinite love in the way of the gospel, that it is hard to know where there is most of it; whether in its rise, or its execution; whether in the decree of God, or in Christ's satisfaction; whether in the benefits that we enjoy, or in the way by which we are brought to enjoy them: Sure all together make a wonder surpassingly great, yea, a most wonderful wonder, even a world of wonders: It is a wonder (as it is in the 5th verse) that he should *be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*; that *the chastisement of our peace should be on him*, and that *by his stripes we should be healed*: And when he comes here to explain this, and to shew how it came to pass that Jesus Christ suffered so much, he holds forth another new wonder: *All we like sheep have gone astray, &c.* As if he had said, would ye know how it comes to pass that the Mediator behaved to suffer, and suffer so much? The answer is clear: All we, the elect people of God had gone astray like so many wandering sheep, as well as others, not one excepted; and there was no other way to recover and

H h h 2

reclaim

reclaim us but this, *The Lord Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all*: To recover us when we were lost, Jesus Christ was substituted in our room by the eternal decree of God, and the iniquities of us all who are his elect people, as to their punishment, were laid upon him. This then is the scope to shew the rise of Christ's sufferings, and how it came to pass that our Lord suffered, and suffered so much, the occasion of it was the elects sin, and the fountain cause, the Father's laying of their sin on him by an eternal decree, and making him to answer for it according to that decree, for his undertaking, which was the covenant of redemption, whereof Christ's suffering was the execution. Thus we have the fountain whence our Lord's sufferings flowed: He is in the covenant of redemption substituted and judicially enacted the elects Surety, and takes on him their debt; and being substituted in their room, justice pursues the claim, and sentence passes against him and makes him answerable and liable to the debt of their sins; which sets forth, as it were, a judge on the throne, Jehovah, and two parties at the bar, *us* and *him*; us the principal debtors, and him the Surety, Jesus Christ in our room and place; the law by which the judge proceeds is the covenant of redemption; and we the principal debtors not being able to pay, he is made liable to the debt, and on this ground the sentence passes against him for satisfying what we were owing; and hereupon followed his sufferings: So then the rise of his sufferings is, that it was so transacted by the wise, just, and gracious God: And thus this verse comes well in to explain and further to clear what he asserted in the former verse. Though the words be few, yet they are the compend and sum of the gospel: How therefore to speak of them, so as to unfold them aright, is not easy: And because the devil who seeks by all means to mar the beauty of the gospel, doth most fiercely assault where most of its beauty shines, and
hath

hath therefore stirred up several sorts of enemies to wrest these words, and to obscure the beauty of grace that may be clearly seen in them; we shall a little open the few words that are in this last part of the verse, *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*; having spoken to the former part of it last day.

In these few words then, we have, 1. Something spoken of iniquity, which three parties have some acts about, to wit, 1. The elect, *us all*. 2. *Him*, to wit, the Mediator. 3. The *Lord*, to wit, Jehovah: Then we have the express act of the Lord, to wit, his laying on him the Mediator, the iniquity of us all. 1. As for this word *iniquity*, by it is meant sometimes, 1. Sin formally taken as it hath a disconformity to the law of God, and supposeth a spot and defect, and so it is commonly taken when we pray for pardon of sin; as when David says, Psal. li. *My sin is ever before me*; And Psal. xxxviii. *My iniquity is gone over my head*: And so it is the transgression of the law of God. 2. It is sometimes taken for the effect that sin procureth, and so it is in effect the punishment of sin, as Lev. vii. the 18th and 20th verses being compared together: verse 18. it is said, *He shall bear his iniquity*, which verse 20. is, *He shall be cut off*, and so it is clearly meant of the punishment of iniquity; for *to bear his iniquity*, and *to be cut off*, are the same thing there. And that word of Cain, Gen. iv. 14. *My iniquity or punishment is greater than I can bear*, hath a manifest respect to God's curse inflicted on him for his sin, and is, as if he had said, I shall not be able to live under the punishment that is inflicted upon me, for every one that finds me will slay me; and sometimes it is translated *punishment*, as in that of Gen. iv. 13. The question then is this, which of these two is understood here in this text, whether iniquity or sin formally taken, or iniquity taken for the punishment thereof? Those who are called Antinomians plead, that it is to be understood of sin formally taken: But though it
be

be absurd so much as to mention this, it being so blasphemous-like to assert, that our blessed Lord Jesus should be formally a sinner, and have the spots and defilement of sin on him, which we wonder that any Christian should dare to assert or presume to maintain; yet because this scripture is alledged for it, we shall clear, that iniquity is not here to be taken for sin formally, but for sin in the punishment of it. And the *first* reason that we give, shall be drawn from the plain scope of the words. The prophet having in the 5th verse said, *That he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities*; the scope of this verse is to shew how it came to pass that Christ suffered, and suffered so much; which he doth by declaring that it could not be otherwise, because the punishment of all the sins of the elect was laid upon him; and that which was called *wounding* and *bruising* in the former verse is here called *a bearing of their iniquities*, (for if they were laid on him, he did certainly bear them) the sins of all the elect met on him as to their Punishment: And this shews how that Christ behoved to suffer all that he suffered: So in the 8th verse it is said, *He was cut off out of the land of the living and for the transgressions of my people was he stricken*: That which is here called the *bearing of iniquity*, is there called *being cut off* and *stricken for the transgressions of his people*: And this may serve for the second reason of the exposition, as we have given it; because when iniquities are spoken of, they are not called Christ's, as inherent in him, but they are called his peoples iniquities, they being formally theirs, but his judicially and legally only: Even as the debt is formally the bankrupt's, but legally the surety's. A third reason is drawn from comparing this text with other parallel places of scripture. That which is called bearing of iniquity here, is called, Gal. iii. 13. *His being made a curse for us*, so that his bearing of our iniquity, is his being made a curse for our iniquity

quity, and his bearing the wrath of God due to us for our sin. I shall illustrate it by a comparison, whence the fourth reason will clearly result, our iniquities became Christ's as his righteousness becomes ours; for these two are parallel, 2 Cor. v. ult. *He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God, in, or through him;* where, 1. It is clear, that Jesus Christ is so the sinner in our room, as we are righteous in his room; and contrarily we are righteous in his room, as he was the sinner in our room. 2. That righteousness is not so derived to us that it is formally made ours, and to be inherently in us, but it is ours only by imputation, itself or the virtue of it being imputed to us: And it is upon this ground that Rom. iv. *imputed righteousness* is often mentioned, that is, when God accounteth a man to be righteous, though he be yet a sinner in himself; even so our sin is imputed to Christ and reckoned his, because he became our Surety: And tho' Antinomiâns have a vain notion to evade this, yet the scripture is very clear, as holding forth a legal procedure; the debt is accounted his, because of his obligation to be answerable for it, and in justice and law he is liable to it. And there is no other way that we can rationally imagine, how our blessed Lord can bear our iniquities; for, 1. It cannot stand with his absolute purity to have any spot of sin, or to be formally the sinner; neither, 2. Is it necessary that he should be the sinner, but only that he should pay the penalty due by us, it being the nature of contracts among men, that where the principal debtor fails, the surety comes in his room, so is it here. Yea, 3. If Jesus Christ were the sinner formally, it would incapacitate him to be our surety, to pay the penalty, or to satisfy justice for the debt of our sins: We would not have spoken so much to this, were it not that this same place is pressed in a most strenuous manner by the abusers of the grace of God to maintain their error.

ror. So then we take this in short to be the meaning of this part of the verse, that Jesus Christ did bear the punishment due to us for our sins.

2dly, The three parties that have some acts about iniquity, are, 1. *Us all*. 2. *Him*. 3. *The Lord Jehovah*. 1. *Us all*, and here we meet with the Arminians, another party that abuse and pervert this place, as if it were to be extended to all men and women that ever sinned or went astray; For, say they, it is the iniquity of all them that sinned that is laid on Christ, and that is the iniquity of all men and women in the world: But, as we shewed before, the scope of the words is not so much to shew the universality of all men and womens sinning, as to shew that all the elect as well as others, have gone astray, and turned every one of them to their own way, therefore it is restricted, *All we*; and the word *all* is no broader than the word *we*, now the *we* that is here meant, is the *we*, who in the former words are *healed by his stripes*; and that sure is not all men and women that sin, but the elect only: And verse 11. it is they *that by his knowledge*, that is, by faith in him, *are justified*; it is these *all* whose iniquities he bare, and no more: So that in short, *us all* is not all men simply considered, but *us all*, that are elect. And thus it is necessarily to be restricted to the prophet's scope.

The meaning of both parts of the verse together then is, that *we all*, even the elect as well as others, *have gone astray, and turned every one of us to his own sinful way*, and the Lord Jehovah made him to bear the punishment of all our sins, and it could not but be a mighty great punishment, and a most huge and horrible suffering, when the Lord made the iniquities of *us all*, his elect to meet upon Christ.

There is not much debate about the other two parties, the first whereof is *him*, that is the Mediator Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of*

of his person, who being God, became man, to perform and bring about the work of our redemption according to his undertaking.

The other party is the Lord Jehovah, the Judge and the party offended; as we are the party offending, and Jesus Christ the Satisfier. And the Lord is here considered essentially as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, having one common essence and justice, and who being all three one God, are to be satisfied, he is Jehovah.

But how is this punishment of our iniquities laid on Jesus Christ? And here Socinians make as great a bustle and stir; the devil intending (if he could effect it) to blow up the very foundation of the gospel, bends all his forces against such places as do hold it forth most lively; but the words are clear, and most significant as they are rendered according to the Hebrew in the margin, thus, *The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him*; the iniquities of the elect are so many brooks and rivulets of water, any one of which is hard and difficult for them to pass over. But O! when Christ comes to satisfy for them, they are brought and gathered into a great lake, or rather into a vast sea or ocean together; they are all collected and combined to meet on him, and he did meet with them in a mighty shock, and sure they could not but be great sufferings that he endured when he had such a sea to pass through; or the sins of the elect were like so many companies or regiments of men, any one whereof they could never have overcome, but when Christ came to satisfy divine justice for them, all the companies and regiments of sins, so to speak, rendezvoused, and were brought into one formidable army together to meet on Christ: The word is well rendered here, *were laid on him*, being the same word in the root that Saul used when he commanded Doeg to fall upon the Lord's priests, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. the word is, *Lay upon them*, or *lay at them*; as when one is an-

gry with another, he will cry, *Fall upon him*; and this shews the exceeding greatness of Christ's sufferings, when all the sins of all the elect met together as a huge and heavy host to fall and do terrible execution upon our blessed Lord Jesus. This then being the meaning of the words, the question is, Whether the Lord Jehovah did lay this punishment really upon Christ; or whether, as Socinians fondly imagine, he only interceded for them? But for *answer*, 1. What sort of meaning of the words would that be, I pray? The Lord made the iniquities of us all to intercede on him, when the text says plainly, that *they were laid on him*, and on the matter that he bare them, and expressly so, ver. 11. *For he shall bear their iniquities*. Yea, 2. Consider the scope, and it comes in as a reason why Christ suffered so much. And would that, can any think, be a good reason for so great and grievous sufferings undergone by Christ, that God made him to intercede for all the sins of the elect? But if you look upon the words in their true meaning, they are a clear reason why he was wounded, and exceedingly bruised and chastened, and why he endured so many stripes, even because all the sins of all his elect met on him, because he was made to bear the punishment of them all; also the words following clear it, *He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken*; and Gal. iii. *He was made a curse for us*. He suffered, *the just for the unjust*; he actually and really suffered that which we should have suffered. If it be asked, What is this, *to lay iniquity on Christ*? Or how is it said, that the iniquity of the elect *was laid on him*? Or in what respect? I answer, 1. In respect of God's eternal covenant; the punishment due for our sins was laid upon him by an eternal deliberate counsel or consultation of the persons of the Godhead; wherein, as we shewed before, Christ enters Surety for us, accepts of, and engages to pay our debt. 2. In respect of God's actual pursuing Christ,

Christ, having thus engaged himself, and so putting in his hand the cup, and making him drink, and the bill of our account, and making him accountable.

3. In respect of God's acceptation of that satisfaction which Christ performed and payed down for them.

This being the meaning of the words, we come to hint at some things from them; and the very opening of them may give us some information in the way of the gospel, and of a notable ground of footing to our faith. If we could rightly apprehend God making this transaction with the Mediator, we might not only have a ground to our faith, but a great encouragement to come to Christ, and to rest on him who hath thus put himself in our room before the tribunal of Divine Justice, and it should awaken and warm our faith and love towards him.

But observe here more particularly, 1. That all the elect people of God are lying under iniquity even as others. This we spoke to the last day, and shall not repeat what was said then: It is with respect to iniquity in the elect, that all the business of redemption is transacted, and from hence as the occasion, it hath its rise, even from God's being offended, and from the necessity of a Mediator; for this doth presuppose our debt, and a sentence standing against us, till Christ interposed for the removing of it.

2. From its being said before, that *every one hath turned to his own way*; and here, that, *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*. Observe, that every one of the elect beside the common state of sin wherein all are, hath his own particular guilt that is *in his own way*; this is clearly holden forth here, while it is said, that not only *like sheep we have gone astray*, but that *every one hath turned to his own way*; which as it holds forth a way in them all different from God's way, so also a way in every one of them somewhat different from another's way; and this is called a *walking in the counsel of our own heart*, Psal. lxxxi. and

a man's *own* *fore*, 2 Chron. vi. 29. and a man's *own* *iniquity*, Psal. xviii. 23. because it is in a special manner his. To clear it a little, consider that sin is peculiar to a believer, or may be called his *own way* in these respects; 1st, In respect of his being more addicted to one sin than another, which is usually called a man's predominant. Two men may both be covetous and passionate, but the one of them may be called a covetous man, because he is especially given to that sin of covetousness; and the other may be called a passionate man, because he is especially given to passion. 2^{dly}, In respect of some peculiar aggravating circumstances; though we dare not particularly determine as to persons, yet if we look through all men and women, it will be readily found that there is some sin, which in respect of some or several aggravations, is in some a greater sin than it is in others; and hereby God hath given ground of humiliation to all. There is not a man, as we just now hinted, but usually he hath an evil which is at a greater height in him than in another; as for instance, one may be given more to the sin of drunkenness, another more to hypocrisy, another more to uncleanness, &c. I do not speak so much here of the divers kinds of sin, as of the several aggravations of this or that sin that they are given to; such and such a man may have aggravations that will argue such a predominant evil in him far beyond what it is in others; And it is from this ground that a believer not in a complimenting way, but most really and sincerely doth call and account himself the *chief of sinners*; because there are some aggravations that heighten his sin above the sin of others, or above that same sin in others; as a weak believer may have one good thing in him more commendable than is in a stronger believer; so the stronger believer may have one sin, that in respect of its aggravations, may give him ground to look on himself as beyond others in sin.

Use 1. It serves much for our humiliation, in as far as this adds to our sinfulness; there are none of us, but beside the common way of sinning incident to all, we have something that is peculiar to ourselves, we have *our own way*, wherewith we are chargeable above and beyond others; we will all readily grant that we are sinners, but who of us will own our particular and peculiar guilt that doth more easily beset us? Who amongst you are as doves of the valleys every one mourning for *his own iniquity*, for his own plague and sore, that by several circumstances may be aggravated as to its sinfulness beyond the sin of others.

Use 2. The second use which is the scope, serves to shew the exceeding greatness of Christ's sufferings. O! What a shock, he endured, when he had not only all the common sins of the elect to satisfy for, but when all their peculiar sins with their respective aggravations, rendezvoused and met on him? It serves likewise to exalt the free grace of God, and the condescendency of our blessed Lord Jesus who took in all together in his making satisfaction for them when there were several sorts of them, as if every one of the elect had been set to invent a new sin; what great and sore-suffering was here, when he condescended to drink the cup that had the direful effects of all the sins of the elect, wrung into it? When not only in general he takes on him the sins of the elect, but this and that man's particular sins, which were all reckoned and summed up in Christ's account, and for which he was made to satisfy; and wherein justice proceeded equally and equipollently; this notably confirmed the reality of Christ's satisfaction, by suffering what all the elect should have suffered eternally, or the equivalent of it; for if there had not been a proportional satisfaction in his sufferings, wherefore serves such an enumeration of his sufferings?

Use 3. The third use serves to inform us how much we are in Christ's debt; and what a great encouragement

ment we have to believe; and withal, what notable ground of consolation believers have. I say, 1. It shews how much we are in Christ's debt. When we take a view of all our sins, and consider that there was a particular view taken of them in the covenant of redemption, not only all our common sins, but even all the particular and peculiar sins of believers were reckoned unto Christ the surety, and put on his account, and he engaged to satisfy for all, and pay the whole reckoning; doth it not lay a great obligation on us to him who counted for the least farthing of our debt? We, like a number of bankrupts, did contract the debt, and the accompt was put in his hand, not only (as I just now said) of all our common sins, but of this and that particular sin with all their several aggravations, and the sinful circumstances that did heighten them; and he satisfied for them all: And of this we should take special notice; for it may readily deceive us to look upon the covenant of redemption as a bargain in general; because there is a particularness in it, to shew not only the sovereignty, but the exactness of justice, and also the riches of God's grace, and of the great condescendency of Christ's love to elect sinners. 2. It is a great encouragement to believe. For even those sins that would frighten serious and exercised souls from coming forward to Christ, were all counted for and put on Christ's score, and were all satisfied for by him. 3. It is a notable ground of consolation to believers when they are ready to think that their particular sins are unpardonable. They think that reckoning might be made for all their common evils; but as for this most sinful and shameful unthankfulness, this despising of his grace, this woful unbelief, &c. It stares them in the face, and they know not well how that will be done away. But believers in Christ who are sorrowfully and sadly perplexed on this account, Is that *your own way*? It is transacted on Christ's score with
the

the rest : *Every one of us hath turned to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ; O ! impregnable ground of strong consolation ! which is as good news from a far country, a non-such cordial to a fainting soul.*

3. *Observe* here, That an elect believer, will not only be sensible of sin in the general, but of his own particular and peculiar sinful way ; or thus, it is a good token when people look not only on sin in common, but on their own peculiar sinful way ; or thus, that men should consider their sinfulness, not only in common, but in particular with its several aggravations. The scriptures which we cited before do confirm this, as Psal. xviii. 22. *I kept myself from mine iniquity ;* and 2 Chron. vi. 29. where saith Solomon, *When every one shall know his own sore and his own grief ;* or as it is, 1 Kings viii. 38. *The plague of his own heart.* This implies these two things, 1st, A distinct searching for sin ; when a man not only looks on himself as a sinner, but looks on his sin by reason of several aggravating circumstances as being above and beyond the sin of others, and abhorreth and loatheth himself as the chief of sinners ; as David doth when he saith, Psal li. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned ;* he is not their extenuating his sin, as if it were done only against God, but aggravating his sin, as the words following shew, and *I have done this evil in thy sight ;* as if he had said, Thy concern in the matter doth most affect and afflict me, *Thou lovest truth, or sincerity, in the inward parts ;* but I have been (alas) all this time juggling and greatly playing the hypocrite, which makes it to be a wonderful great evil ; and Psal. lxxv 3. *Iniquities prevail against me ;* and as Paul doth, who calls himself *the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. 2^{dly}, That believers before conversion, yea, and in respect of their natural inclination even after their conversion, are woefully inclined each of them to a sinful way of their own,

own, called Ecclef. xi. *The way of a man's own heart :* And of this believers should be sensible not only of their sinfulness in general, and of their particular acts of sin, but of their peculiar sinful acts, and that for these ends or uses.

1. It serves deeply to humble people, and to press them forward to repentance. When we consider our own way to be sinful beyond others, and that such a man hath sinned, but his sin hath not such aggravations as mine, this makes the soul to blush, and to say, as it is, Psal. xl. 12. *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me ;* he wonders at himself how a man can be so given to sin, and every day to add one new sinful step to another, and never to weary and give over ; this makes him to blush and to be ashamed, as it is, Ezek. xvi. 63. the remembering of common sins, and of this or that particular act of sin, will not so effect this ; but when a sinner remembers, that such a sin hath been *his own way*, that humbles and stops his mouth exceedingly.

2. This adds a peculiarity to the grace of God in the believer's esteem, and maketh it so much the more amiable and admirable to him ; as it is with Paul when he saith, 1 Tim. i. 13. *&c. I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, nevertheless I obtained mercy, and the grace of God was exceeding abundant towards me. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief ; howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me he might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him.* I was, as if he had said, singular in sinning, but grace was eminent and singular in shewing mercy, and hath cast a copy thereof in me that is singularly eminent. The peculiarness of believers sin, as it makes

makes them know the aggravations of it beyond others, so it makes them exalt grace the more.

3. It serves someway to discriminate a sound believer from a hypocrite, and a right sight of sin from that which is not so. It is not so much to know that we are sinners, for the light of a natural conscience will tell men that, especially when their lives are so bad; but it is more to know, and rightly to take in the peculiarness that is in our way of sinning, to discover the many windings and turnings of the deceitful heart in following of such a sin that it is addicted to. This makes a believer think that there is no body's heart like his. We see ordinarily that but very few, if any, that are natural men, will own freely the peculiarness of their way of sinning; and even when they will own this, that they are sinners in general, yet they shun to own that they are given to such a sinful way of their own, and the particular turnings and windings of their own hearts to that way; but few will grant that they are given to despising or slighting of Christ, or to hypocrisy, self-seeking, lying, &c. I will not be peremptory here, to say that every body must know what is this one peculiar sinful way; for some see so many predominant sins in themselves, that they hardly can pitch upon one more than another; nor upon the other side will I positively say, that they are all gracious that see one sin more than another to carry sway in them; but this I say, that it contributes much for the humbling of the sinner, and for exalting of free grace; and that believers will see many windings and turnings in and to their own way, that others who are not believers will not see, and will see one predominant after another; whereas a natural man, though he complimentingly call himself *the chief of sinners*, yet he doth not really think himself to be such, but rather, if he be given to drunkenness, to filthiness, or the like, he will readily fix upon David and Lot, or some others of the saints to excuse or extenuate it;

but the believer can get none to compare himself in the point of sinfulness. *Iniquities prevail over me*, saith David, in the singular number; but when he speaks of the pardoning and purging away sin, he speaks in the plural, associating others with himself, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away*, Psal. lxxv. 3.

4. Consider your sinful way as it is the occasion of this transaction, and of the laying of our iniquities upon Christ, as the result of it, and we have this sweet observation, that the elect are considered in the covenant of redemption as foully and vilely sinful, and with all the aggravations of their sins and sinful ways; so that they cannot be fouler and more vile in time, than they were considered to be when they were given to Christ to be satisfied for by him: How were they then considered? The text tells us even as *straying sheep*: But that is not all, they are considered as such who have had their own peculiar way of straying from God, and have *turned* aside to, and run on in their *own* sinful way: Thus the Lord considered the elect in the covenant of redemption; thus Jesus Christ considered them in the undertaking for them, even with all the several aggravations of their sinfulness; so that they are not, nor can be worse in time, than they were considered to be before time: This is so ordered by the Lord for these ends. 1. That justice might be distinctly, exactly, and fully satisfied. And that it might be known that it is so, he would needs be restored to his honour, to his declarative, or manifested honour and glory, which suffered by man's fall, and by the many great and variously aggravated sins of the elect, and would have his justice, as I said, fully satisfied: And therefore as there is a volume of a book, wherein all the elect are written, for whom Christ should satisfy, so there is a volume of what, and for what he should satisfy, that there may be a proportionable satisfaction and price told down to justice. 2. That believers may have a more full view

of

of the way of grace, and of Christ's undertaking for them. When Jesus Christ undertook our debt, he had a full view of the sum he was to pay, he knew what he had to pay to the last farthing, and what his peoples sins would cost him, and yet he was not unwilling to engage to satisfy, but did satisfy according to his engagement to the full. 3. It is also ordered so for this end, even to confirm the believer's faith, when he cometh to take hold of Christ, and of the covenant; and when this objection mutters within him, dare such a sinful wretch as I take hold of Christ, who have been thus and thus polluted with sin? Yes, saith the text, for these sins so and so aggravated; for they were not unknown to the Father, nor to the Mediator when thou wast bargained about: Nay, these sins with their aggravations were expressly considered in the covenant of redemption, and there is no sin already committed, or to be committed by thee in time, that was not considered before time: What was your posture, believers, when God *passed by, and cast the skirt of his love over you?* Were you not *cast out in the open field, wallowing in your own blood, with your navels uncut, having no eye to pity you, &c.* as it is, Ezek. xvi. And wherefore I pray is this set down? But for all to let you know that ye are no worse in time than ye were considered to be before ye had a being; also, to argue the love and grace of God in Christ, and to draw you in to him, that since God and Christ the Mediator in the transaction about your redemption, stood not on your sinfulness, ye may not stand on it when seriously sensible of it, but may submit to his righteousness, and say, Be it so, Lord, I am content to take what thou freely offerest. And the more sinful and lost ye be in yourselves, when suitably affected therewith, the more wonderful is the grace of God in the plot of your redemption, the more strong is your consolation, and the greater ground of believing have ye; your sins do not sur-

prize God, nor the Mediator; the bargain was made before your sins were committed, and therefore the price must reach them, even when they are all summed up together: He was content to accept of them so as to satisfy for them; and blessed be he for evermore that accepted of the bargain, and paid the price according to his undertaking!



S E R M O N XXVII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 6.

Verse 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

IN the former verse the prophet hath asserted most wonderful truths, and very concerning to the people of God, and yet such truths as will not be easily digested by natural reason. 1. That our Lord Jesus was put to sore and sad sufferings, *He was wounded and bruised, &c.* 2. That these sad sufferings were for us the elect; it was for our sins, and what was due to the elect, he was made to bear them, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.* 3. The end of these sufferings, or the effect that followed on them to us, was pardon of sin, peace with God, and healing: *The chastisement of our peace was on him, and by his stripes we are healed.*

And each of these being more wonderful than another, therefore the prophet goes on to clear their rise, which

which is no less wonderful; how it came to pass that he suffered, and suffered so much, and that we have such benefit by his sufferings: It could not, as if he had said, be otherways, for it behoved our Lord Jesus to suffer, and to suffer so much, and for us; neither was it unreasonable that it should be for our benefit, *For we had all like lost sheep gone astray, and every one of us had turned to his own way*: And there was no way of relief for us, but by Christ's stepping into our room, and interposing for us, and engaging to pay our debt; and by virtue of that interposition and bargain, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*: and therefore, 1. Would ye have the reason of Christ's so great sufferings? here it is, the elect had many sins, and he interposing for them, their account was crost out, and they were reckoned on his score. 2. If the cause and reason be asked, how it came to pass that Christ suffered so much for us? here it is answered, He undertook to satisfy for our iniquities, and God imputed them to him; even as if a debtor were pursued, and one should step in and be surety for him, and being enacted surety, should take it upon him, to become liable for the debt; the exacting it of him is the laying it on him: But 3. If it be asked, how it comes to pass that his suffering becomes our healing, and brings peace to us? It is answered, it was so transacted and agreed upon; he was content to pay all our debt, and the Father accepted of his payment for ours; our blessed Lord Jesus engaging and satisfying, the elect are set free, and justice be-taketh itself to him as the responsal party. This is the scope of the words, though they are but few, yet exceeding full and significant, as holding forth the fountain and fundamental grounds of the gospel: We shall consider them in these three respects, 1. As they imply a covenant and transaction, whereby the elects sin are transferred on Christ, and his righteousness is made applicable to them; Christ undertaking to pay
their

their debt, and Jehovah accepting thereof, and promising that his satisfaction made on the behalf of the elect, shall be applied to them. 2. In respect of the effects, which are two-fold, which though they seem contrary the one to the other, yet they are well consistent together, and subordinate the one to the other: The 1st is, Justice on Christ's part; he satisfies for the debt due by the elect. The 2^d is, Mercy and grace to the elect, which is also implied; but comparing these words with the former, it is very clear; he is wounded and bruised, and they are healed, the chastisement of their peace was on him, the imputing of their debt to him is the cause that it is not imputed to them. 3^{dly}, In respect of the influence that the eternal covenant hath on these effects, it lays down the way how these may be justly brought about, which is the scope of all, even to shew how Jesus Christ being the innocent Son of God, and without sin, was made liable to the debt of the elects sin; he became Surety for them, and is made liable on that account to satisfy for them. It is clear to us also, how his sufferings stood for theirs; which may seem to be unreasonable and unjust among men, that the sufferings of an innocent party should stand for the guilty; it was so articulated in the covenant of redemption, that the Son, as Mediator, interposing and undertaking to pay the elects debt, the Lord Jehovah, the Creditor, should not reckon it on their score, but on the Mediator's, and that he should count for it. The prophet in this verse all along is touching on the sweet and pleasant string of this notable plot and contrivance of God concerning the redemption of elect sinners, called the *covenant of redemption*; which, if these words be considered with respect to their scope, they do in all the parts of it clearly hold forth; and therefore the clearing of it, being the clearing of a main ground of our faith in reference to Christ's sufferings, and to the way how they are made good to us, and as to the benefits that

that come by them to us, we cannot speak too much nor too often of it, if we speak of it suitably to the surpassing excellency of the matter.

The *first doctrine* supposed here, is, that there is an eternal covenant and transaction betwixt the Lord Jehovah and the Mediator, wherein the method concerning the redemption and salvation of the elect is contrived: There is an eternal covenant past betwixt God and the Mediator, wherein all that is executed, or will be, concerning the elect (till the day of judgment) was contrived: There is nothing relating to the elects salvation, but it was in this transaction exactly contrived and laid down, even as it is in time executed: And it is called a *covenant* in scripture, and we call it so, not strictly and properly, as if all things in covenants among men were in it, but because materially and substantially it is so, and the resemblance will hold for the most part; the Lord having laid down in it the plot of man's salvation in a legal way, so as his grace and mercy may be glorified, and his justice satisfied, hath put it in this form, so as it may bear the name of a covenant: Wherein we have 1. Mutual parties, *the Lord Jehovah*, the party offended on the one side, and *the Lord Mediator*, the party engaging to satisfy on the other side; which shows the freeness of the redemption of the elect as to them, and also the certainty of their salvation: And likewise, the immutability of God's purpose, for the parties are not mutable creatures, for on the one side is Jehovah, and on the other side the Mediator, who is considered as incarnate and the head of the elect. This whole scheme was contrived there, to wit, in the council of the God-head, for promoting of that great end, the glorifying of the grace and justice of God in the elects salvation. 2. What is it about? Even about this, how to get the elect saved from the curse, to which on their foreseen fall and sinning, they were made liable; redemption, necessarily presupposing
man's

man's fall and the covenant of works to which the certification and threatening was added, *The soul that sins shall surely die*, and the elect pre-posed as fallen as well as others, are certainly liable to the curse, except a satisfaction for them do intervene; so that the elect are considered as having sinned, and as being in themselves lost. And what is the Lord Jehovah and the Mediator doing, what are they about in this covenant? It is how to get the punishment due to the elect for their sins removed from them: And these persons *us all* in the text, are all the elect, wherein there is implied a particular consideration of them that are designed to life and salvation, and a particular consideration of all their sins, and of their several aggravations, that there may be a proportion betwixt the price paid, and the wrong that God hath sustained by their sinning against him. 3. The occasion of this covenant, and the reason why it behoved to be, is held forth in the first words, *All we like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one of us unto his own way*: The elect as well as others had made themselves, through their sinning, liable to God's wrath and curse, and they were incapable of life and salvation till the curse was removed: So that there is a let and obstruction in the way of the execution of the decree of election (which must stand for the glorification of God's grace and mercy, primarily intended in all this work) and till this let be removed, the glorification of God's grace is and will be obstructed; for the removal of which obstruction there is a necessity of a Redeemer, for the elect are not able to pay their own debt themselves: Now that there may be a Redeemer, and that a price of redemption may be laid down, there is also a necessity of a covenant, otherwise redemption cannot be, if a transaction do not precede, on which the Redeemer's interposing is founded. 4. What is the price, what is the stipulation, or that which the Mediator is engaged to, and that

that which provoked justice requireth? It is even satisfaction for all the wrongs that the sins of the elect did, or were to do the majesty of God: Their sins deserved wounding and smiting, and the capitulation runs thus, that justice shall get that of the Mediator, that the elect may be spared. And comparing this verse with the former, upon the one side, our Lord Jesus gives his back to bear their burden, and engages to satisfy for their debt, and to undergo the punishment due to them: And upon the other side, Jehovah accepts of this offer and engagement, and lays the burden of their debt on him; and as the Mediator puts himself in their room for payment of their debt; so he lays it on him, and accepts of it. 5. The end of this great transaction, to wit, of the undertaking on the Mediator's part, and of the acceptation on the Father's part, is, that the elect may have pardon and peace, and that by his stripes they may be healed: That justice may spare them and pursue him, and that the discharge of the debt purchased by him, may be made as good to them, as if they had payed the debt themselves, or had never owed any thing to justice.

Hence *deductions* may be made holding forth several points of truth, as, 1. Concerning the exactness of the number of the elect. 2. Concerning the virtue and efficacy of the price which the Mediator hath payed, and the fulness of his satisfaction. 3. Concerning his imputed righteousness, which is, or may be called the laying of his righteousness on us, as our iniquity was laid on him; he is counted the sinner by undertaking the elects debt, and the elect by receiving the offered righteousness in the gospel, are accounted righteous by virtue of his satisfying for their debt. 4. Concerning the ground and matter of that wonderful soul-satisfaction and ravishment that is here; that God should be thus minding the salvation of the elect, and thus contriving and ordering the work of their redemption, that their debt shall be payed, and yet nothing, to speak so, come out of their purse;

and that by so excellent a means as the intervention of the Mediator, and that this shall, notwithstanding the dear price payed by him, be made good to the elect freely.

Use 1. O! look not on the salvation of sinners, and the bringing of a sinner to heaven, as a little or light thing, it being the greatest work and most wonderful that ever was heard of; yea it is in effect the end of all things which God hath made, and of his preserving and guiding the world in the order wherein it is governed, even that he may have a church therein for the praise of the glory of his grace. We are exceedingly culpable in this, that we value not the work of redemption as we ought, and that we endeavour not to pry into, and consider the admirable and deep wisdom of God, that goes along with and shines brightly in this whole contexture. Who could ever have found out this way? When the elect were lying under God's wrath and curse, that then the Son of God should undertake to satisfy for them, and that the majesty of God should be so far from all partiality and respect of persons, that he will pursue his own dear Son for the elects debt when he undertakes it: This is the rise of our salvation, and the channel wherein it runs; O! rare and ravishing, O! admirable and amiable, O! beautiful and beneficial contrivance! blessed, eternally blessed be the contriver.

Use 2. The second use serves to stir us up to know more of the way of salvation under this notion of God's covenanting with the Mediator; not thereby to oblige God to man's law and forms, but for helping us to the better and more easy understanding of these great things; and that we may see that the salvation of the elect is sure; forasmuch as it is laid down by way of bargain, transaction or covenant betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator, whom the Lord will no more fail in performing the promise made to him, than he hath failed in giving the satisfaction required.

This

This should help both to clear and confirm the faith of believers, and strengthen the hope of all who are fled for refuge to take hold of him, in the certain expectation of those things engaged for in the covenant, seeing there is as much reason to think, that Jehovah will make good his promises to the Mediator, as there is to think that he hath performed all that he engaged himself for.

The 2d thing here is, the native effect or fruit of the covenant, and that which the prophet aims at, even to shew how it came to pass that Christ suffered so much, because it was so covenanted, stated and ordained, because he was by a prior contrivance and contract substituted with his own hearty consent in the room of the elect, who had many and great sins to count for; whence *observe*, That by virtue of this eternal covenant that past betwixt God and the Mediator, the complete punishment that was due to all the elect for their sins in the greatest aggravations was laid upon Jesus Christ: *Jehovah laid upon him the iniquities of us all*: This is frequently mentioned in this chapter, as particularly in the words going before, *He carried our sorrows, he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, &c.* And it is sufficiently confirmed in the New Testament, as 2 Cor. v. *He who knew no sin, was made sin for us*: He had no sin in himself, but by virtue of this covenant, he was made the sacrifice for our sins, and made to bear the punishment thereof: And Gal. iii. 13. *He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, he himself being made a curse for us.*

There are two words which we shall a little clear in this doctrine; and secondly, give some reasons of it; and then thirdly, we shall speak to some uses from it.

1. For the two words or things in the doctrine to be cleared, they are these, *First*, What we mean by this, when we say, iniquity is laid upon Christ. The *second* is, How is it laid upon him? as to the first,

when we say, iniquity is laid upon Christ, we mean these things briefly, 1st, That our Lord Jesus is really made accountable, and liable to justice for those iniquities, as if they had been his own, by virtue of this covenant; he having engaged to God's justice to pay the elects debt, his engagement makes him liable to it. 2^{dly}, We mean that not only our Lord Jesus is made liable to our debt, but really he is made to satisfy for it. In short, we have done the wrong, but he makes the amends, as if he had done the wrong himself, *The just satisfies for the unjust; he in whose mouth there was no guile*, was made to satisfy for guilty sinners as if he had been the guilty person himself. By the sins of the elect God's declarative holiness suffered; creatures malapertly brake his command, and his justice was injured. The creature contended for the victory, and that even after the curse was pronounced, and they had believed the devil more than God: But our Lord Jesus comes in and makes the amends, and the holiness of God is vindicated by his obedience, and his justice vindicated by his suffering. The elect have deserved wounding; but says the Mediator, let the wounds which they deserved come on me, let them be mine; and thus he makes reparation of the wrong done; and though the elect be spared, yet hereby the Lord is known to be as really and as much a hater of sin, and as just in fulfilling his threatenings, as if the elect had been smitten in their own persons; because he punished sin in his own Son; yea, by this means he is seen so much the more to be holy, severe, pure and spotless, that the Son of God sweetly submits to his becoming man, and to these terrible sufferings for satisfying divine justice. Here, O! here the spotlessness and severity of the justice of God, as also the greatness of the glory of free grace and love shine forth conspicuously. 3^{dly}, It implies this, that really there was a converting and turning of that wrath, and of those sufferings proportionably
on

on Jesus Christ, which justice was to have inflicted on the elect eternally, if he had not interposed for them; and taken that full cup that was given to him, and put in his hand, which would have been an eternal hell to elect sinners; but they are made to meet on him in one great sea; he had it to drink, even the dregs of it; in which respect, Gal. iii. 13. he is said to be *made a curse for us*. The Lord will not pass from one farthing of what was due to him, and will be satisfied with no less than proportionable satisfaction to that which was due to justice by the elect themselves, though the Surety was his own only Son. Therefore it behoved Christ to come under the curse, in which sense he is said to *be made a curse for us*, which supposeth that he endured the same curse and punishment due to the elects sins in all the essentials of it. He behoved to die, and to have his soul separate from his body for a time, and for a season to want in a great measure the comfortable manifestations of God's favour and presence, and to have wrath pursuing him, and horror seizing upon him, but our blessed Lord being spotless and without sin, and having a good conscience, was not capable of these, in some sense, accidental circumstances, of unbelief, sinful anxiety and desperation, that sinful finite creatures are liable to when they come under wrath.

The second word or thing to be cleared in the doctrine is, How are iniquities laid upon Christ Jesus? They are laid upon him in three respects: 1. In respect of the eternal transaction betwixt Jehovah, and him as Mediator sustaining the persons of the elect; even as one man hath another's debt laid on him, when by a law-sentence he is made liable to it; so is Christ made liable to the elects iniquity, when their account is blotted out, and the debt as it were written down in his account to be satisfied for. 2. In respect of justice pursuing him for it; when he becometh surety and full debtor for the elect, he is put to
pay

pay their debt to the least farthing ; the Lord musters up against him his terrors, and commands *his sword to awake, and to smite the man that is his fellow.* But 3dly and mainly, In respect of his actual undergoing the curse and suffering which the elect should have suffered ; for it is not the work of a court to pass a sentence only, but also to see to the execution of the sentence ; not only are orders given to the sword to awake and smite, but the sword falls on and smites him actually ; and tho' from the apprehension of the anger of God, as man, and without the sensible and comforting manifestation of his Father's love, and his seemingly forsaking him for a time, he prayed, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ;* but it could not be, therefore he submits most sweetly to it ; and not only is the cup put in his hand, but the dregs of wrath are, as it were, wrung out into it, and he must needs drink it up all ; which manifestly appears in his *agony* in the garden, when he is made to *sweat blood* ; and in his complaint (if we may so call it) *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, and what shall I say ?* and in those strange words uttered by him on the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* All which tells us plainly, that not only was he enacted surety, and had the sentence pass on him, but that really he satisfied and had the sentence executed on him ; that in his soul he was really pierced and wounded, and that with far deeper wounds than those were which the soldiers by the spear and nails made in his body, before the elects discharge of their debt could be procured and obtained. More of his particular sufferings the following words hold forth : But it is clear, that he suffered really, and suffered much ; that not only he undertook to pay, but that he was actually pursued, and made to lay down the least farthing whatever was due to justice by the elect. And this is the cause, why these words are brought in as the reason why he suffered so much, even because

cause so many and so great sins, with all their aggravations were laid upon him; and if his sufferings were not great, and undergone for this end, to satisfy for the elects debt, that they might be set free, the prophet's scope would not be reached, neither would there be a suitable connexion betwixt the latter and the foregoing words.

As for the *second*, to wit some *reasons* of the doctrine, we shall briefly give you these *three*, why the elects sins are laid on Christ, and put on his account, and why he was made to lie under the compleat punishment of them, by virtue of the covenant of redemption. *1st*, Because it did much contribute to the glory of God; for he had designed in his eternal council, that his grace should be glorified in the salvation of the elect; and that his justice should also be glorified in punishing of sin, either in themselves, or in their surety; and as free grace and mercy must be glorious in saving the elect, and justice in being satisfied for their sins; so it is to that end, that since the elect cannot pay their own debt, their surety must pay it, and pay it fully, that the Lord in exacting satisfaction from him in their name, may be known to be just. *2dly*, This way makes much for the confirmation of their faith who are believers; for what can justice demand that it hath not gotten? It is fully satisfied. And then for their consolation; seeing the Father put his own Son to suffer, and to so great sufferings for them, what is it that they may not confidently expect from such a fountain? *3dly*, This serves to hold forth the wonderful great obligation of the elect to God, and to the Mediator; for the greater their sin was, the more he suffered; the greater their debt was, the more he paid; and their obligation is the greater to him; and they ought the more to love him, and their duty for his sake; as it is said of the woman, Luke vii. *She loved much, for much was forgiven her*: So this way of paying the elects debt,

debt, calls and strongly pleads; and also makes way for much warm and tender love in them to Jesus Christ.

In the 3^d place, We come to the *uses* of the doctrine: To which I shall premise this word of advice to you, That ye would not look on these things as tasteless and unsavory; for had we not had these precious truths to open to you, we should have had no preaching to this purpose, no ground to speak of life to you, nor the least hope or expectation of life. And indeed it may be sadly regretted, and that amongst a multitude of professing people, that these substantial truths of the gospel are so tasteless, and and little relishing to the most part of men, which too evidently appears in the unconcernedness, wearied, and gazing posture of some, and in the slumbering and sleeping of others in our publick assemblies. If our hearts were in a right frame, half a word, if we may so speak, to this purpose, would be awakening and alarming to us. However, this is a great privilege in itself: Heathens may, and do know something of moral duties; but it is a privilege which we have and they want, that the fundamental truths of the gospel are amongst us and not amongst them.

The first *use* serves to let us see the brightness of the glory of grace and truth, of mercy and justice shining clearly here. Can there be any greater mercy, and more pure than this, that the Lord should be gracious to sinners, and to great sinners, *that had turned every one of them to their own way*, in providing a Mediator, and such a Mediator, in providing such a help for them, and *laying that help upon one that is mighty*, and that he should have done this of his own accord (to speak with reverence) when the elect were in their sins, and when there was nothing to be the impulsive or meritorious cause of it. And that the Father should have laid this weight of punishment on Christ; the Son of his love, and pursued him at this rate

rate of holy severity for sinners debt? O! what grace and mercy shines here? and 2. The spotless justice of God doth also here wonderfully manifest itself; O! how exact is justice, when it will not quit a farthing even to the second Person of the Godhead, when he became man, and man's surety? But since he hath put himself in the room of sinners, *The Lord maketh all their iniquities to meet on him*; this is matter of admiration to men and angels, to consider how justice and mercy run in one channel, and shine in one covenant, the one of them not encroaching upon the other.

Use 2. We may gather from this, some knowledge and clearness in the very great sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ; for these things are here put together, 1. That he suffered for all the elect, *us all*. 2. For all the sins of the elect, and for all the sins of the elect in their highest and most aggravating circumstances, the particular reckoning of them all, as it were, being cast up, they are all put in one score. 3. All these met together upon him at one time, like the ocean, from all parts, or even like so many regiments, or rather armies of men, all meeting together, and marshalled to fall upon him. One sin were enough to condemn, the many sins of one is more, but all the sins of all the elect are much more; they deserved to have lain in hell eternally; but he coming in their room, all their sins met as the violent force of waters on him. What then must his sufferings be, when he was so put to it for all the sins of all the elect, and that at once?

Use 3. We may gather hence a just account of the truth of Christ's satisfaction, and a ground of refutation of the Socinian error, a blasphemy which is most abominable to be once mentioned, as if our Lord had suffered all this, only to give us an example, or as if there had not been a proportionable satisfaction in his sufferings to our debt, nor an intention to satisfy jus-

tice thereby: Every verse almost, not to say every word in this chapter refutes this; if he had not satisfied for our sins, why is he said to be here on the matter put in our room? And if his sufferings had not been very great, what needed the prophet to shew the reason of his great sufferings, in all the sins of the elect their meeting on him? There was sure a particular respect had to this, even to shew, that the meeting of all these sins of all the elect together upon Christ, did cause and procure great and extreme sufferings to him; he suffered the more that they had so many sins, seeing their many sins are given for the cause of his so much suffering.

Use 4. Here is great ground of consolation to believing sinners. *Out of this eater comes meat, and out of this strong comes sweetness.* The more and sharper and bitter these sufferings were to Christ, the report of them is in some respect the more savoury and sweet to the believer, whose effectual calling discovers his election. And indeed I cannot tell how many grounds of consolation believers have from this doctrine. But *1st*, If they have sinned, there is here a Saviour provided for them. *2dly*, This Saviour hath undertaken their debt. *3dly*, He hath undertaken it with the Father's approbation. *4thly*, As he hath undertaken it, so the Father hath laid on him all their iniquity. *5thly*, All the elect come in here together in one roll, and there is but one covenant, and one Mediator for them all. The sin of the poorest, of the weakest and meanest, is transacted on him, as well as the sin of Abraham, the great friend of God, and father of the faithful, and the salvation of the one is as sure as the salvation of the other. All believers from the strongest to the weakest have but one right or charter to heaven, but one and the same security of the inheritance. *6thly*, The Lord hath laid on him all the iniquities of all the elect with a particular respect to all their aggravations, and to all the several ways that they have
turned

turned to sin; their original sin, and their actual transgressions, with their particular predominants, as to their punishment; and there is reason for it, because the elect could not satisfy for the least sin. And it is necessary for the glorifying of grace, that the glory of the work of their salvation comes all on the Mediator's account, and none of it on theirs. *7thly*, All this is really done and performed by the Mediator, without any suit or request of the elect, or of the believer, at least as the procuring cause thereof. He buys and purchases what is needful for them, and pays for their discharge; and they have no more to do, but to call for an extract, and to take a sealed remission by his blood. As to the application thereof, the *uses* that follow will give occasion to speak to it.

Use 5. Since it is so, then none would think little of sin; which checks the great presumption that is amongst men and women, who think little and light of sin, and that it is an easy matter to come by the pardon of it. They think there is no more to do, but barely and in a counterfeit manner to confess, they have sinned, and to say, God is merciful, and hence they conclude, that God will not reckon with them: But did he reckon with the Mediator, and that so holily, rigidly and severely too, and will he, think ye, spare you? If he 'dealt so with the green 'tree, what shall become of the dry?' Be not deceived, God will not be mocked.

And therefore *6thly* as the close of all, see here the absolute necessity of sharing in Christ's satisfaction, and of having an interest therein by this covenant derived unto you, else know that ye must count for your own sins; and if so, woe eternally to you. Therefore either betake yourselves to the Mediator, that by his eye-salve ye may see, that by his gold ye may be enriched, and by his garments ye may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness do not appear: And that ye may, by being justified by his

M m m 2

knowledge,

knowledge, be free from the wrath to come, or otherways ye must and shall lie under it for ever.

Thus ye have the fulness of God's covenant on the one side, and the weightiness and terribleness of God's wrath on the other side laid before you: If ye knew what a fearful thing his wrath were, ye would be glad at your hearts to hear of a Saviour, and every one would run and make haste to be found in him, and to share of his satisfaction, and to be sure of a discharge by virtue of his payment of the debt, and they would give all diligence to make sure their calling and election, for that end. The Lord himself powerfully persuade you to do so.



S E R M O N XXVIII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 7.

Verse 7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

THOUGH the news of a suffering Mediator seem to be a sad subject, yet it hath been, is, and will be, the great subject of the gospel, and of the gláddest tidings that ever sinners heard; this being the great thing that they ought in a special manner to know, even *Jesus Christ and him crucified*. The prophet here takes a special delight to insist on it, and
in

in one verse after another hath something new of his sufferings.

Having in the former verse spoken to the occasion, ground, and rise of his sufferings, to wit, the elects straying like sheep, their wandring and turning every one to his own way, and the Lord's laying on him the iniquity of them all; the elect that were given to Christ, being naturally at an enmity with God, and having run on in the course of their sinful nature to the provoking of God; and their being no way for them to escape the wrath which by their sins they had deserved, till the Lord found out this means, to wit, the second Person's interposing as their Mediator and surety, and engaging to pay their debt; on which followed the making over all their iniquities to him, according to the transaction made about them; which transaction being laid down, as we have heard, the prophet proceeds to shew Christ's executing and performing of the transaction; and because it might be thought that it was so great a matter, as should have much grievous suffering following upon it, to take on all our iniquities; he answers, That notwithstanding all that, yet he took them on, and that very willingly and chearfully; or because it might be thought, that the former words look as if God had laid the punishment of our iniquities on him, and that he had not taken it on himself, the prophet tells us, that it is not so, but that there was a mutual covenant betwixt God and the Mediator; and that the Mediator was as well content to bear the iniquity of the elect as the Father was content to lay it on him; and that though he was oppressed, afflicted, and suffered many and grievous strokes, yet he repented not the bargain, but went out resolutely in paying the ransom of the elect as singly, as ever a sheep went to the slaughter, or as it is, *dumb before the shearer, so he opened not his mouth to speak against it.*

There are *three* things asserted here that serve to
make

make up the scope, supposing the transaction to have gone before, 1. The Father's exacting the elects debt of the Mediator. 2. The Mediator's yielding and satisfying. 3. The manner how he did it, and that was willingly, readily, and chearfully. We shall first open the words a little, and then speak to some doctrines from them, reserving the *uses* to the conclusion of all.

1. Where it is said, *He was oppressed*, the words signify to *exact*; and we find it three ways applied in scripture, 1. To the exacting of tribute, 2 Kings xxiii. 33. Where it is said, *That Pharaoh-Necho put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold*; it is the same word that is here. 2. Sometimes it is applied to the *exacting of debts*; as when a man is seized by an officer that has a writ out against him, and imprisonment follows upon it; so Deut. xv. 2. When the Lord tells his people, *The creditor shall not exact of his neighbour, nor of his brother, in the year of release*. 3. It is applied to the *exacting of labour*, as Isa. lviii. 3. *Ye exact all your labour*; and Exod. i. 11. The word *task-masters* comes from the same root. This being the ordinary signification of the word, it is turned here *oppressing* figuratively; because such exactors and task-masters in their rigorous usage of those whom they exact upon, are often oppressive; and their being no noun prefixed to the words in the original, they may stand as well thus, *It was exacted of him*; that which he was engaged to pay, he was fully exacted upon for it, to the least farthing; or take the words as they stand here, *He was oppressed*, that is, (as we use to speak) *stressed or distressed* for our debt; he was not only engaged, but according to his engagement he was put hard to it to satisfy. 2. It is said, *He was afflicted*, which is sometimes rendered *to answer*: And these two agree very well together; he was exacted upon, and he answered the debt; as when a bill of exchange for

for such a sum is drawn upon a man, and he answers it. And this exposition runs well and smoothly with the words following, *Yet he opened not his mouth*, he used no defence to exclude or shift the debt: He said not that it was not his, but he answered it indeed, and in a word said nothing to the contrary; or taking the words as they stand here translated, *He was afflicted*; they signify the effect that follows on his being exacted upon: Tho' it brake him not, yet it brought him very low, even to an afflicted condition. The 3. Thing is, that tho' he was brought thus low, and tho' it was not for his own, but for other peoples debts (which usually troubles men most) *Yet he opened not his mouth*; to shew his wonderful condescendency, and the great love from which it flows. He paid the elects debt with as good will, and as pleasantly, as if it had been his own proper and personal debt. Tho' he was the Son of God, and God equal with the Father, and might have brought legions of angels to destroy his enemies; yet *as the lamb brought to the slaughter, and as the sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*. And it may be that there is not only here relation or respect had to the sheep as it is an innocent, harmless, simple, easy creature, and untoward and refractory, as a bull or ox useth to be, but also respect had to it as it was made use of in the sacrifices. And so the meaning is; he yielded his life willingly when none could take it from him, for performing the indenture, if we may so say, and for satisfying the transaction past betwixt Jehovah and him.

So, having shewn you how it comes to pass, that Christ suffered, and suffered so much, and was brought so low under his suffering: And having told you, that he engaged to pay the elects debt, and that the Father had laid their iniquities on him; lest any might think, that the Father would have spared his own Son, no, saith the prophet, *He was oppressed*, and
not

not only so, but *afflicted* and humbled; and lest it should have been thought that the Lord Jehovah had better will to the bargain than the Mediator had: It is added, that he did satisfy the debt as willingly as the Father laid it on him, as these similitudes made use of plainly hold forth.

Take these observations from the words, 1. That our Lord Jesus having entered himself Surety for sinners, was really put hard to it, and justice exacted the debt of him which he had undertaken and engaged to pay: read the whole story of the gospel, and it will make out this; it is said by himself, Luke 24. *It behoved the Son of man to suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory*; he must needs go to Jerusalem and suffer; and when the cup is in his hand, and his holy human nature, having a sinless fear at it, makes him pray, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, yet seeing here was a necessity, that either he should drink it, or that the elect should perish, in the very next words, he sweetly subjoins, *Not my will, but thy will be done*. And so hotly and hardly was he pursued by justice, that he must needs come to the cursed death of the cross, and actually die: As if death had gotten a piece of dominion over the Lord of life, he is laid in the grave: So Zech. xiii. the Lord saith, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, smite the shepherd*; where we see, that when the good Shepherd and great Bishop of souls, hath undertaken for the elects debt, justice gives a commission as it were to its own holy revenge, to pursue the man that is God's fellow for that debt: That which we design to confirm in the doctrine, is not only, that our Lord Jesus suffered, but that his suffering was by justice its exacting of him the debt of the elects sin, according to the engagement that he came under to the Father; for the scope is to shew, not only that he suffered so great things, as oppressed and brought him very low; but also

also that he was put by justice in these sad sufferings, to pay the debt that he had taken on him. For confirming and clearing of this, ye may consider, 1. The titles which he has in scripture, he is called the *Surety of the better testament*, or covenant, Heb. vii. 22. and by that title he is shewn to have stood in our room, and answered for our debt: And he is called the Lamb that takes away the debt of sin *by the sacrifice of himself*: He stepped into our place, and kept off the stroke of the sword of justice that would have lighted on us, had he not interposed. 2. Consider the titles which his sufferings and death have, Heb. ix. 12. he is said to *purchase* (to wit by it) *eternal redemption for us*. And Rom. iii. 24. we are said to be *justified through the redemption that is in Jesus*: We were slaves to the devil, subject to the curse, and adjudged to suffer for the wrongs that we had done to justice: And his suffering is called *redemption*, because as the man that redeems the captive, gives a ransom for him, so he interposed and payed a ransom for us; it is also called a *propitiation*, 1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins*, to wit, pleasing to God, and accepted of him in the room of all the elect: And this word *propitiation*, as it supposeth God's being displeased with the elect before Christ's satisfaction, so it plainly holds forth his being well pleased with them on the account of his satisfaction. 3. Consider those scriptures that speak not only of Christ's sufferings, but of their end and scope, even the drawing of him down, to speak so, into the elects room, as verse 5th of this chapter, *He was wounded for our transgressions*, &c. he had the stroke, and we have the cure, 2 Cor. v. 21. *He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him*. We are sinners, and Christ is ready to purchase righteousness to us: And the way how he doth it, is by stepping into our room, and becoming our surety, and he engaging as such, the law reaches him on that ground; so Gal. iii.

He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us : We were under the curse, and liable to be pursued by it, and our Lord Jesus becomes a curse to deliver us from it. Considering then the end of God's covenant, which is to glorify his justice and grace, that sinners may know it is an evil thing to sin and depart from God, and that grace is a very costly thing, whereunto he hath made access through the vail, which is his flesh ; and considering Christ's undertaking, without which they could not be set free, it could not be otherwise. This is a truth that hath in it much of the marrow of the gospel, and tends much to humble us, and is also very much for our comfort : what was justice seeking of Christ when he suffered and was in an agony ? If thou be a believer or an elect sinner, it was even exacting thy debt of him : and would it not affect an ingenuous debtor to see his surety dragged, haled, and hurried to prison for his debt ? Even so, if we could look on Christ's sufferings as so many summons arresting him for our debt, it could not but affect us with much sorrow for our sins, that brought him to this, and with much love to him, who was content to be so dealt with for them ; and no doubt this is one of the reasons why *he will have his death remembered till he come again*, even that we may see our obligation to him, and be suitably affected with it.

2dly, Observe, That the debt of the elects sins was with a holy severity exacted of Christ to the very full worth or value : This proceeding was, as to Christ, by way of justice. If we look to the purchase that he made, to wit, the elects souls, he laid down as good in their room, or if we look to the transaction or bargain going before, whatever was in the stipulation, he payed and satisfied to the full, nothing was remitted or given him back ; or if we look to the curse due to the elect, that was inflicted on him, and he himself was made a curse for us, looking on the curse simply

as penal, and what was bitter in it, this certainly shews his condescendency in his sufferings so much the more.

3dly, *Observe*, That our Lord Jesus was brought exceeding low while the debt of the elect was exacted of him: He was put to exceeding sore affliction, much straitned and stressed by the justice of God exacting of him the debt due by elect sinners. We spoke to some words before, which is an evidence of this, as *he was wounded, bruised, chastised, &c.* And now we see here the effect when justice puts him to it: After he hath taken on the debt, he is tried, stripped naked, pinched and distressed ere he get it payed: If we consider our Lord Jesus as God, he is utterly incapable of any such thing; but if we look on him as Mediator, God-man, God did much withdraw from him the influence of his comforting presence, while he had the cup of wrath in his hand, so he is brought exceeding low, and sadly afflicted. And these four considerations (under which we may see him paying our debt) may clear it, 1. That he laid aside the glory for a time that he had with the Father before the world was, which therefore that it may be restored to him again, he prayeth *John xvii. 5.* it having been as to the manifestation thereof in his person eclipsed, interrupted, and darkened for a season: Hence the apostle says, *Philip. ii.* that *he emptied himself, and became of no reputation*; as if his glory had not been discernable for a time; he that is judge of quick and dead, is himself judged; he that created heaven and earth, hath not whereon to lay his head: Though all the kings of the earth hold their treasures of him, yet he was so poor that he lived upon the alms of others; for *women ministred unto him.* 2. Not only hath he a being that is mean and low, but he is exceedingly afflicted, he suffered hunger; he is pursued, as if he had been a thief or a robber; a band of men come and apprehend him in the night, as if he had been a

malefactor or evil-doer, and drag him away to the civil judge; his back is smitten, his face is spit on, his head torn and pricked with thorns, sentence is passed upon him, he is condemned and scourged; and when he cannot bear his own cross, (his body, being a true human body, is so faint and infeebled,) it is accounted a favour that he gets one Simon to help him to bear it, or to bear it after him; which is not marked, to shew that they did him any kindness or courtesy beyond others, but to hold forth the low and weak condition he was brought into, that he was not able to bear it himself; and not only so, but he must come to death, and to the shameful and cursed death of the cross; he dies very quickly, further to point forth his lowness, which was such that death overcame him sooner than the others, because he had no other things to wrestle with. 3. In his name he suffered, he was reproached, nodded at with the head, reviled, mocked, sent about as a spectacle from Pilate to Herod, back again from Herod to Pilate: He had a scarlet robe put on him in derision; the high-priests also derided him; the Jews wag the head at him, and count him not at all worthy to live, and therefore prefer a robber and murderer to him. 4. Consider his inward sufferings, O! these were far more piercing; justice laid claim to his soul, *the sorrows of hell compassed him; his soul is heavy unto the death; he sweats blood, and cries, If it be possible that that wrathful cup might pass from him;* and on the cross with a pitiful voice, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Which, by the way, is not an expression of any quarrelling complaint or discouragement, but of sinless nature, when he is arraigned and made to stand before the tribunal of God, affected with the horror of divine wrath, and cannot easily endure, that there should be a cloud betwixt God and him: But these soul-sufferings of his, will fall in to be spoken to more particularly afterwards, only we see here, that he was afflicted, and in
his

his sufferings was greatly humbled and brought very low. And indeed considering that all the elects sins were laid upon him, and that justice was exacting all their debt of him, he could not be otherways but behoved to be exceedingly afflicted and sore distressed.

4thly, *Observe*, That as much as our Lord suffered, yet he did most willingly and chearfully undergo it all. He thwarted not with it, he repented not, he grudged not, flinched not, nor drew back; or, which is to the same purpose, our Lord Jesus in his lowest humiliation and affliction, and all along in his deepest suffering shewed exceeding great willingness, desirousness and heartfomeness: That word was always true of him, *I delight to do thy will, O my God*: And the prophet holds forth this as a great wonder, that though he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. We shall for clearing of this, propose these considerations, 1. In his undertaking of the engagement, his willingness appears. When burnt offerings and sacrifices would not do it, and when there was no obligation on him to do what he did, then comes in his free offer and consent, and that with delight, Psal. xl. *Then said I, Lo I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God*: Where we see there was no extorting of a consent from the Mediator against his will, but a delightful offering of it; and that word of his, Prov. viii. is very remarkable to this purpose, *Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delight was with the sons of men*: The contemplation and fore-sight of his incarnation and suffering for the elect, was (to speak so) refreshing to him, and made him leap as it were for joy, ere the world was made, and before they had a being. 2. Consider the great things that he undertook. Not only to be man, but a poor mean man: It had been much for him to have humbled himself to be monarch of the whole world, as his vain and prophane pretended Vicar the Pope of Rome

Rome claims to be; yet he not only will not be so, but *emptied himself*, and became a *worm* in a manner, and *no man, an out-cast of the people*: O! such a proof of his love! And when he took the cup, that bitter cup, and said, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, least it should seem a thwarting with the work of redemption, and with his Father's will therein, he says, let it come, Father, *not my will, but thine be done*. 3. Consider the manner of his suffering, and we shall see a further proof of his willingness. How little pains takes he to escape them? yea, when Peter labours to dissuade him, Matt. xvi. from suffering, he disdains and rejects the suggestion with a severe check, *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but of men*: And when his disciples said to him, (resolving to go up again to Judea) John xi. 8. *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and wilt thou go thither again?* he will needs go up notwithstanding; and when they were going up to Jerusalem, Mark x. 32. *He went before all the rest, to wit, at a swift pace*; and Luke xii. 50. he says, *I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished?* Never did men long so much for their marriage day, and for the day of their triumph, as our Lord Jesus did to get the elects debt payed, and their discharge extracted and drawn out. 4. Consider his easiness and willingness to be taken. *He goes forth*, John xviii. to meet the band of soldiers that came with the traitor to apprehend him, and asks them again and again, *whom seek ye?* And says as often, *I am he*: He will not suffer his disciples to draw a sword in his defence, Matt. xxvi. but when Peter drew his sword, he bid him *put it up again*, for he could have *commanded more than twelve legions of angels*: but it behoved him now to suffer, he came for another end than to oppose his sufferings: And hence he says, John x. *No man takes my life from me,*

me, but I lay it down of myself, and have power to take it up again : It was neither Judas nor Pilate that took his life against his will, but he willingly laid it down ; for either the elect behoved to die, or he himself : And since it is so, as if he had said, then behold here is my life, take it, and I will lay it down, that they, poor creatures, may go free ; *and therefore does my Father love me, says he, because I lay down my life for my sheep ;* not because it is taken from me against my will, but because I willingly and of myself lay it down ; and when he is brought before Pilate and Herod, and they lay many things to his charge, Matt. xxvi. 6. and Mark xv. *He held his peace,* so that it is said, that Pilate *marvelled,* Matt. xv. he thought that he could not but have much to say for himself, as all men in such a case use to have, but he answered nothing ; or as it is in the text, *Yet he opened not his mouth ;* the reason was, because he could not divert the course of justice, nor mar the Lord's design in the work of the elects redemption through his death and sufferings. He came not into the world, to accuse Pilate or the Jews, and to justify himself, though now and then, for the conviction of enemies, and for his own necessary vindication, he dropt a word, but being engaged for the elect, he will needs perform all that justice called for ; and in this willingness he hath a respect to two things, 1. To the Father's satisfaction ; for his willing suffering is that which makes it a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to him. 2. To the elects consolation, that they may know they had a willing Saviour that had no necessity laid on him to satisfy, but satisfied willingly. And from these two arises a third, even the glory of the Mediator's satisfaction, for herein his love to the elect shines brightly ; *I lay down my life for my sheep ;* this is the heart-alluring commendation of his sufferings, that with delight and pleasure he underwent them, as if he had been purchasing a kingdom to himself.

Now,

Now, to come to the use of all these doctrines; when they with the things contained in them are compared, we profess we cannot tell you what excellent uses they yield. Would to God! we were all in such a frame as the eunuch was in, when he read this scripture (as the divine historian gives us an account, Acts viii. 32. and forward) who when Philip had begun to preach to him on this excellent subject, was so taken, that before the sermon or discourse was at an end, being holily impatient at any longer delay, he says to Philip, *Here is water, what binds me to be baptized?* I say again, would to God, we were all in such a frame, and that this were the fruit of such a doctrine as this to many of you, nay, to all of you!

Use 1. Wonder, believers, at the exactness and infiniteness of the grace of God, and at the heart-affecting, and soul-ravishing love of the Mediator! At grace in God that spared the debtor, and exacted payment from the Surety, the Son of his love. Exercise your love on the Mediator that paid so much, and so willingly and chearfully for you. If any subject be pertinent for our thoughts, while we are about to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper, certainly this is pertinent; concerning a crucified Christ instating himself in our room, to pay our debt, and doing this of his own accord, without the solicitation or interposing of any creature, and doing it withal so freely and chearfully. Was ever the like of this love heard of, for one, and more especially for such a one, to suffer so much and so chearfully, unrequired? We would have you confirmed in the faith of this great and sweet truth, that he had never better will, nay, never so good will to eat, as he had to suffer, and satisfy justice for you, though at a dear rate. He says, John iv. *It was his meat to do the Father's will that sent him, and to finish his work.* Have ye suitable thoughts of his love when ye read the gospel? Have ye seen him in the word standing before Pilate in your room,

not

not answering when he is accused, and Pilate marvelling at his silence? And did Pilate marvel, knowing, and being convinced of his innocency? And have ye never marvelled, or marvelled but a very little? Sure, your little marvelling at his silence, is the more sadly marvellous, that the cause of his silence, when he was charged with your iniquities, with such and such a piece of your miscarriage, with such a vain and roving heart, with such a wanton look, with such a profane or idle word of yours, with the horrid sin of your having so abused, slighted, and neglected him, &c. that the cause, I say, of his silence at such a terrible accusation and charge, and not vindicating himself, or saying, These faults, miscarriages, and transgressions are not mine, as he might have done, was pure love to you. O! Is not this strange, and yet most true? Then wonder more at it.

Use 2. Here is strong consolation to believers, and wonderful wisdom in the rise and conveyance of it, in uniting, justice and love; out of which the consolation springs; justice exacting upon, and distressing the Son of God, and he satisfying justice so fully, that tho' all the elect had satisfied eternally in hell, it had not been made to shine so splendidly and gloriously; justice also on the Mediator's part in yielding and giving satisfaction, tho' it should oppress and break soul and body: And yet love, both on the Father's and Mediator's side; on the Father's side there is love, in finding out this way of satisfaction to his own justice, when there was no cure, but by the wounding of his own Son; and yet he was content rather to wound him, than that the elect should suffer, and be wounded eternally; and love on the Mediator's side, who willingly yields, and undertakes their debt, and will not hide his face from shame and spitting. What may not the believer expect from God, when he spared not his own Son for him? And what may he expect from Christ, who spared not

himself for his sake? Who is that good Shepherd, that laid down his life for the sheep, and held his tongue, and quarrelled not with those that smote him? Will he quarrel then with a poor sinner coming to him, and pleading for the benefit of his satisfaction? No certainly; but as the word is, Zeph. iii. 17. *He will rest in his love*, or as the word signifies, *He will be dumb or silent in his love*; he will not upbraid thee, nor throw up thy former miscarriages; he will not say reproachfully to thee, Where wast thou so long playing the prodigal? He is better content with thy recovery, than ever he was discontent, or ill pleased with all the wrong thou didst unto him.

Use 3. This word of doctrine lays down the ground whereupon a sinner sensible of sin, may build his expectation of peace with God. The transaction concluded and agreed upon, is the ground of his coming, and the exacting of the price according to the transaction, is the ground of his expectation of the benefits of Christ's purchase. And there is justice for it, as the apostle intimates, Rom. viii. 34, 35. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, &c.* And upon this follows the believing soul's triumph. O! But there is much need to be thoroughly acquainted with the mutual relations that are betwixt Christ and the believing sinner, with the ground of their approaching to him, and with the good they are to expect through him.

Use 4. This word is made use of, 1 Pet. ii. 21. to give us a notable and non-such pattern of patience. *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps*; he did bear all wrongs patiently, and put them up quietly, and opened not his mouth; he could have told Pilate and Caiaphas what they were, but he spoke not a word but one to the high-priest, notwithstanding all his provoking carriage,

riage, and a very meek one too, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, and if well, why, smitest thou me?* Among other copies that Christ hath given, take this for one, make him a copy and pattern for patience. It is to be regretted, that people are so unlike to Christ in this respect; they think it a disdainful thing to put up an affront, but will scorn and banter at it. But, what if Jesus Christ had been of that temper and disposition? (if it be fit to make such a supposition) ye had been without a Redeemer, and had perished for ever. When he calls you to be followers of him, and to suffer patiently, as he did, tho' most unjustly, as to men; for you to think or say that you scorn it, and that ye are not so mean-spirited; what is it else, but to think, and to say on the matter, that the blessed Jesus in his patient and silent carriage under all the injuries that he suffered, though very unjustly, from men, shewed himself to be of a mean and low spirit, and that ye disdain to follow his way. O! intollerable, proud, and blasphemous reflection! The many contests, the many high resentments of wrongs done to them, the great grudging, fretting, and foaming that there are in Christians, say plainly, that there is little of the meek and patient spirit of Christ in, and amongst us; and that many of us *know not what spirit we are of.*

S E R M O N XXIX.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 8.

Verse 8. *He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

WE need not tell you of whom the prophet is speaking here, every verse, and every word almost do make it manifest, that he speaks of Christ the Saviour, and indeed it can be applied to none other. It is the same verse, Acts-viii. 24. from which Philip proceeds to preach Christ to the eunuch. The prophet hath been largely holding forth Christ's sufferings in the former verse, and we conceive he also takes occasion to speak of Christ's exaltation and deliverance from these sufferings. It is true, as if he had said, *He was brought to prison and judgment.* He was indeed straitned and laid very low, but prison and judgment did not keep him; *He was taken*, or as the word is, *he was lifted up* from both; and as despicable as he was in mens eyes, yet he was not so in himself; for *who shall declare his generation?* There is a wonderfulness in him who suffered that cannot be reached, but must be left with admiration. And a wonderful glory whereunto he was after his humiliation exalted; and there is a reason of this given for preventing of offence. If any should say, How then could he suffer, and be brought so low in his sufferings if he was so glorious a person? He answers, It is true,

true, that *he was cast off out of the land of the living*, but for no offence in himself, but for the transgression of God's elect *was he stricken*; or, as the word is, *The stroke was upon him*; and this, as we conceive, is given as a reason of his exaltation. Because in the lowest steps of his humiliation, he condescended to fulfil his engagement to the Father, in satisfying justice for the sins of the elect, according to that of, John x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again*; because, according to his engagement, he suffered for the sins of his elect people, therefore he could not but have a comfortable and glorious deliverance.

There are these three things in the words, 1. Somewhat asserted concerning Christ Jesus, *He was taken from prison, and from judgment.* 2. Something hinted which cannot be expressed, *Who shall declare his generation?* 3. There is a reason given in reference to both, *For he was cut off*, &c. which we shall expound when we come to it.

For the *first*, *He was taken from prison, and from judgment*: We conceive these words have a respect both to his humiliation, and to his deliverance from it; the one being clearly supposed, that he was in prison, or straits, and brought to judgment; and the other being expressed, that he was brought from prison and from judgment. 1. *Prison* here may be taken generally for any strait, or pressure that one may be brought into, which we conceive both the words, and the prophet's scope will clear; Christ never having been properly in prison, at least not for any considerable time, but was straitned and sore distressed; he was taken from prison and judgment, being in his humiliation, and in his sufferings in the room of the elect pursued by the law and justice of God. 2. *Judgment* is taken passively, for judgments past on him, and it respects not only the procedure of Pilate, or of the chief priest, and of the scribes and Pharisees,
but

but a judicial process, which the justice of God led against him, in which respect he answered (as the words after will clear) for the sins of God's people. The word, *He was taken*, sometimes signifies to deliver, as a captive is delivered, when he is taken from him that took him captive, as it is, Isaiah xlix. 24. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?* To which the Lord answers, *It, or he shall be taken.*

So then, the scope or meaning of the words is, that the prophet subjoins a narration of Christ's exaltation upon finishing of his humiliation, as it is usual in the scripture to put these together, and in this order, as namely, Phil. ii. 8, 9. 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, &c'. He was exceedingly straitned and put to a pinch for the elects sins, but death had no dominion over him; he had a glorious deliverance; he was taken out and set free from the prison, or straits wherein he was held, and from those judgments that passed upon him. The reason of the exposition is drawn from the plain meaning of the words, which must run thus, *He was taken from judgment*, the very same which is in the following expression, *He was cut off out of the land of the living*, that being the ordinary signification of the preposition *from*; the meaning must be this, that he was taken out of the condition wherein he was: It agrees also best with the scope of the very next words, *Who shall declare his generation?* Wherein he proposeth an admirable aggravation of this delivery.

The second thing hath a connexion with the former, and therefore attend to a word or two for the clearing of it. What to understand by generation here, is somewhat difficult to determine, the word in the original having several meanings, yet generally it respects one or the other of these two, as it is applied
to

to Christ, 1st, Either the time past, and so it is used by many, to express and hold forth Christ's Godhead, and so the meaning is, tho' he was brought very low, yet he was, and is the eternal Son of God: Or, 2. (as commonly it is taken) it respects the time to come, and so the meaning is, who shall declare his duration, or continuance? Generation is often taken thus in scripture for the continuance of an age, and of one age following another successively, as *Joshua* xxii. *This altar shall be a witness to the generations to come.* So then, the meaning is, he was once low, but God exalted him, and brought him through all his sufferings; and who shall declare this duration, or continuance of his exaltation? As it is, *Phil.* ii. 8, 9. *He humbled himself, &c. Therefore God hath highly exalted him.* As his humiliation was low, so his exaltation was ineffable, it cannot be declared, nor adequately conceived, the continuance of it being for ever. There is no inconsistency betwixt these two expositions; his duration or continuance after his sufferings, necessarily presupposing his Godhead, brought in here, partly to shew the wonderfulness of his suffering, it being God that suffered; for the man that suffered was God; partly to shew Christ's glory, who notwithstanding of his suffering, was brought through it, and gloriously exalted. And these reasons make it evident, 1. Whatever these words do signify, *Who shall declare his age or generation?* Yet certainly it is something that can be spoken of no other, but of Christ, and that agrees to him so, as it agrees to no other. Now if we look simply to the eternity of his duration or continuance, that agrees to all the elect, and will agree to all men at the resurrection; therefore the prophet must have respect here to his continuance and duration as he is God. 2. Because, *Who shall declare his generation?* is brought in here, to shew the ineffableness of it, and so to make his sufferings the more wonderful; it was he suffered, whose
con-

continuance cannot be declared. 3. It is such a continuance as is brought in to shew a reason why death could not have dominion over him, nor keep him, according to that, Rom. i. 4. *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead*; and the reason subjoined to this will some way clear it; for *he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken*; thereby insinuating, that because of the great work which he had to do, there behoved to be some singularness in the person that did the work, who, notwithstanding of the greatness and difficultness of it, came through it, and was exalted. However it be, the prophet's scope being to set forth Christ's humiliation and exaltation, his humiliation before, and his exaltation after, which is, as we said, ordinary in scripture; we therefore conceive the meaning we have given is safe, and agreeable to the prophet's scope.

We may observe *three* things from the first part of the words, 1. That our Lord Jesus Christ in his performing the work of redemption was exceedingly straitned and oppressed, or as the word is elsewhere rendered, bound up, and strictly confined, as men who are in prison. And by these straitnings we mean not only, such as he was brought into by men, whereof we spoke before, but especially those that were more inward; and being amongst the last steps of his humiliation, more immediately preceding his exaltation, and spoken of as most wonderful, we conceive they look to those pressures that were upon his spirit; and we shall instance several places of scripture that serve to discover them to us. The first is that of John xii. 27, 28. *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour*; here our blessed Lord is troubled in spirit, and so pinched and hedged in, as in a prison, that he is in a holy nonplus what to say. The 2d scripture is, Matt. xxvi. 38. *My soul is*
ex-

exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, which is like the expressions used by the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 8. [We were pressed above measure, above strength, inasmuch as we despaired of life, and we had the sentence of death in ourselves;] there was no deliverance obvious to human sense; so is it here; wherein we are not only to consider his soul-vexation, but that his soul-vexation was very great, extremely straitning, vexing, and in a manner imprisoning to him. The 3^d scripture is, Luke xxii. 24. [He being in an agony prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;] there was such a striving, wrestling, and conflicting, not with man without him, but with inward pressures on his spirit, that he is like one engaged in a duel with a mighty combatant, sore put to it, very far beyond any thing that we can conceive; so that *he sweat great drops of blood*, and says, *Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done*. It is in Matthew, *If it be possible*; and thereafter, *If it be not possible*, which shews, there was no getting from the hold that law and justice had of him, till they were fully satisfied; and those dreadful words uttered by him on the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* These words discover that from the sinless human nature of Christ, the comfortable and joyful influence of the Godhead for a time was in a great measure suspended, (though the sustaining power thereof was exercised mightily on him;) so that he looks on himself somewhat as forsaken and left in the hand of the curse.

To clear this a little, we would consider these pressures that were on our Lord's spirit, 1st, In respect of their cause. 2^{dly}, In respect of their effects.

1st, In respect of their cause; there is upon the one part, his undertaking for the elect as their surety; and God's justice pursuing and holding him confined on the other part, so that he cannot decline standing at

the bar of justice; because, as it is, verse 6. the sins of all the elect met upon him; and he having, as it is, verse 7. the bitter cup in his hand, which by his engagement he was obliged to drink, he stands there by the decree of God, and by the covenant of redemption, bound to satisfy; and being pursued by wrath and justice, these words come out of his mouth, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup depart from me, yet not my will, but thine be done*; his engagement binding him, and wrath pursuing him, he stands betwixt these two as a prisoner; and upon these two, *the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*; there was a demand made, and he answered for them; for in these verses, the steps of our Lord's humiliation are described out in a legal way, as before the bar of God's tribunal.

2dly, This being our Lord's condition, we shall consider the effects of this pressure of spirit, which may be done in these *four* heads. 1. He was under the sense of great soul-pain, sorrow, and trouble; for the cup of the wrath of God being bitter, which he was to drink, it could not but deeply sting his holy human nature, which was the procuring cause of his agony, and that which made his soul sorrowful, and brought out the bloody sweat. 2. Beside his grief and sorrow, there was a holy horror; for considering the party that he had to do with, it was impossible it could be otherwise; impossible for a finite, though a sinless creature, to look on an angry God, and on wrath poured forth into the cup, which it must needs drink, and not have a horror at it; it were not becoming the sinless human nature of our blessed Lord, not to be afflicted with a holy and sinless horror at that most bitter cup, which brought out that sad cry, *Father, let this cup depart from me*: Which did not proceed from any dislike he had to fulfil his engagement, or from any unwillingness, or unsuitable resentment that he had so engaged himself; but from an apprehended sinless disproportionableness, to speak so,
in

in his finite, sinless, human nature, to encounter with the wrath of his Father; to which though he most willingly yielded, yet in itself it was dreadful. 3. There was a straitning, or holy fear, as if there had been in him a sinless dispute or debate, [What will become of this? Can a man get through this? (tho' he was God as well as man) How will this be borne? This looks as if death would get the victory;] Thus it is said, Heb. v. 7. *In the days of his flesh he offered up strong cries and supplications with tears, and was heard in that he feared; he put up strong cries to be delivered, not from dying, but from the power of death, and was heard in that he feared, to shew a holy care to prevent death, could that have been, and a sinless fear of it, lest it should swallow him up.* 4. There was a pinching and straitning from love to the Father, and to the doing of his will; and from love to the elect, and to their salvation, which pushed him forward to perform and fulfil his engagement; accordingly, Luke xii. 50. he says, *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished;* and hence it was that those words were uttered by him, *Father, not my will, but thine be done;* and therefore, though he had power to command twelve legions of angels for his relief, yet, if we may so speak, love so binds his hands that he will not use his power for his own deliverance. But to guard this doctrine from mistakes, take a fourfold advertisement concerning this inward soul-pinching, which will help to clear somewhat of his soul-suffering that followeth. And 1. Think not that there was any sinful or unsuitable confusion or perturbation of mind in our Lord, such as useth to be in us, there being no dreg of corruption in his mind to jumble or discompose his holy human nature. 2. Beware of thinking that there was any fretting or anxiety in him, or any discontentedness with the engagement; his expressions shew forth the contrary; for, saith he, *I could com-*

mand twelve legions of angels, yet he would not do it.

3. Think not that there was any jealousy in him of the Father's love; though there was a suspension of the comfortable and joyful sense of it, yet there was not the least loosening of the faith of it, as is clear by his doubling of these words, *My God, my God*, when in his saddest distress he cried out as being forsaken.

4. Ye should not look on this, as holding forth any distrust as to the event. I have, saith he, power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again; and I will rise again the third day; he knew that the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and him stood firm and sure: But it is the consideration of God's now coming as the party to exact the elects debt of him, and his standing at the bar to answer for it, which puts him in this agony; and though considering Christ as man personally united to the Godhead (whereby he was kept from sinking) he had no distrust to be carried through; yet considering him as man suffering, and that (to speak so with reverence in such a divine subject) there was an eclipse of that sensible joy that proceeded from the two natures together, it is not possible to conceive of Christ in this condition, but wrath and anger must be some way dreadful or terrible to him.

The uses are *1st*, To evidence the truth of what our Lord suffered, and how severely he was pinched and straitned. It was not the scribes and Pharisees pursuing him, nor the soldiers buffeting and mocking of him, and carrying him to the high-priest's hall, and from Pilate to Herod, and back again, that so much troubled him; but there was a higher hand that he had to look to, and a judge and court to which he was now answering, that was very above theirs.

And therefore, as a *2d* use of the doctrine, Think it not such a light thing (as many do) to satisfy justice, or to give God a ransom for souls. Ye see how it straitned the Surety, and put him as in a prison.

Un-

Unspeakingly deceived are they who think that two or three formal words will make their peace with God, and that they will slip into heaven; be not carried away with this delusion, but consider seriously what will become of you, if ye be put to answer for your own debt, when he handled the Surety, his own Son, so roughly. Ye that will sleep on, and scorn to let any word prick you, the justice of God shall prick you, and put you to straits, out of which ye shall not be able to extricate yourselves; and he shall appear like everlasting burning, when the great day of his wrath comes, and when it shall be said by you, *Who can stand before it?* or abide it? It were good that ye who are most atheistical, and who with a sort of triumph and gallantry will needs destroy yourselves, would lay this to heart, and remember that the day comes when ye will be brought to this bar; and gravely consider what a hell this will be, to have the desperateness of the deliverance sealed up in your consciences; and the evidences of God's hatred, and those aggravations that our Lord's holy nature could not admit of, in your bosom. When wrath meets with corruption, and corruption with wrath, and when these mingle, how dreadful will your case be!

3dly, Let believers see here how they are obliged to Christ; consider what he hath paid, and what the satisfaction of justice for you cost him; men are ready to think that it was an easy thing to satisfy justice, and *to drink of the brook by the way*; but if sinners were sensible of challenges for sin, and if they had they had the arrows of the Almighty drinking up their spirits, they would think otherwise of Christ's drinking up the cup of wrath for them, not leaving so much as one drop of it. It is but the threatnings with some drops of it that any of you meet within your soul-exercises. O! believing sinners, are ye not then eternally obliged to Christ, who drank up this cup of wrath for you?

4thly,

4thly, There is notable consolation here to poor souls that would fain make use of Christ, as, 1. That Christ hath stepped through this deep river, or rather sea before them; and if the cup come into their hand, it is empty: Freedom from the wrath of God is a great consolation, and yet it is the consolation of them that are fled unto him for refuge. 2. It is comfortable to them in their comparatively petty straits and difficulties, when they wot not what to do, when the law seizeth and justice pursueth, and when the conscience accuseth for sin, to consider that Christ was a prisoner before them. Though he had no accusation for his own debt, yet he was accused for ours, that he might be a compassionate high priest, being made like to us, but without sin; justice pursued him, the law arrested him, wrath seized on him; so that when we are set upon by these, he will be tender of us, for he knows our frame, and that we cannot bear much; and therefore on this ground a believing sinner may go with boldness to the throne of grace, because Christ the surety who hath payed his debt, is there. It is a shame for believing sinners to walk so dejectedly, even under those things that are terrible, as if Christ had not gone through them before them and for them. 3. There is consolation here when they are under any heavy cross and difficulty: As there is also ground for patient and pleasant bearing of it, because it was another sort of prison that Christ was put in for them; ye may, I grant, lament over the long want of sensible presence, it being natural to the believer to miss it, and to long for it, but ye should not be discouraged under the want of it, nor complain as the Lord's people do *lament*; *Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?* But submissively and contentedly bear it without fretting, seeing our Lord bare so much for you.

5thly, There is here a notable encouragement to believe, and a notable ground for the believer to expect

pect freedom from sin, and from the punishment that it deserveth, because Christ payed dear for it. Wherefore was all this suffering, but to pay the believer's debt? But when we come to speak of his deliverance, it will clear this more.

2. While it is said, that *he was brought from judgment*, which supposes and implies, that he was once at, or under judgment, even the judgment of God, who is his great party all along: *He laid on him the iniquity of us all*; and verse 10. *It pleased the Lord to bruise him*: He was the Creditor that caused him to be taken and arrested; observe, that in all the soul-vexation, in all the pressure of spirit that our Lord sustained, he was standing judicially before the bar of God, and was judicially proceeded against as the elects surety; there was no bringing Christ to judgment, had he not engaged to be a surety, and had not God laid on him our iniquities, for it was for no debt that he was owing himself, but for what by his engagement as the elects surety he came under, and was made liable to. That which I mean by his being brought to judgment, is not only that he suffered and was occasionally condemned by a court of men, or by a human judicatory, which was rather like a tumultuary meeting, or a company of men in an uproar, than indeed a court; but whatever was before men, there was a legal and judicial procedure before God. For clearing thereof ye should consider, 1. The account whereon he suffered, and was brought before God's court of judgment, to speak so: It was not for any thing that the scribes or Pharisees, or Pilate had to lay to his charge; it was envy in them, the former at least, that moved them in what they did; but the next words tell us, what it was, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*. The priests and people took no heed of this, but this was indeed the ground of his judicial arraignment before God; the elect were in their sins, and he by the covenant of redemption

redemption stood liable for their debt, because he had undertaken for them as their surety. 2. Consider who was his great party in his sufferings; it was not Pilate and the Jews, he cared not so much for them, but it is God, and therefore he cries, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And therefore he makes his address to God, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;* he cared not for answering them, but looks to a higher hand, and upon himself as standing before another tribunal; therefore it is said, ver. 10. *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him;* he looked not to Pilate, but to the Lord pursuing him. 3. Consider our Lord's submission to his being brought to judgment, not only nor chiefly before men, but before God; therefore says he, John xii. 48. *Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour:* Come then Father and let us reckon; he looks not only to the present dispensation, but also to the ground whence it came, and to the end that God had in it: *For this cause came I unto this hour,* even to have my soul troubled, and to be put to answer for the debt of my elect people according to my engagement; *Lo, I come,* saith he, in that often cited fortieth Psalm, *in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will.* Consider 4thly, The effects of his bringing to judgment; a sentence passes, 1 Tim. iii. ult. [Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit,] not before Pilate, but in God's court; having satisfied for the elects debt according to his undertaking, he gets an absolution, which reaches not only to himself, but to all them whose persons he sustained, as is clear, 2 Cor. v. ult. [He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him] the elects obtaining eternal redemption and absolution by his death, and the respect that his satisfaction had to their justification, clears that he stood there judicially at the bar of God in their name to answer

swer for them. And there are three steps of this his judicial answer, 1. He gets the bill of the elects debt put in his hand; [though there was no guile in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he laid on him the iniquity of us all; *and* for the iniquity of my people was he stricken,] these are the persons that he undertook for, and for their debt he answers; the verity of the fact is clear, for they are under guilt; the law's claim is clear, for it is broken, and upon this the bill is put in his hand: Hence it is said, [he died for us, he was made sin for us, *and* he died for our sins.] 2. As the bill is put in his hand, so a sentence passes accordingly, he is found liable to the elects debt, and must answer for it, as the former word is, [It was exacted on him, *and* 2 Cor. v. ult. He was made sin for us, *and* Gal. iii. 13. He was made a curse for us,] that is, by the sentence of justice he is charged to bear the curse. 3. The sentence is executed as it was past, the cup is put in his hand, and not only is he charged with, and doomed to the curse; but actually he is made a curse, and all this as judicially sustaining the persons of the elect, as their Bondsman and Surety.

Here we have some sweet and profitable uses. 1. See here and understand the way of redemption contrived, so as it runs on mercy and justice, mercy to the elect, and justice to the Surety, their debt being fully exacted of him.

2. It learns ^{teaches} us how to establish our faith, and also gives us ground of believing. But to make it distinct; justice must be satisfied, without which no mercy could be shewed to the sinner, and God hath laid down the way by the Surety's interposing; even as it is among men, the Bondsman being imprisoned and satisfying, is the debtor's liberty; and as God hath condescended to deal with us by way of covenant, so he condescended in the covenant of redemption to proceed legally and judicially with Christ, that we might

have the clearer understanding to make application of it.

2. Are there any here that look for redemption through Christ, and hope that their sins were in the roll given to him; O! how warming should this be to your hearts? And how should it make them to melt in love and godly sorrow, to behold Christ standing at the bar of justice, and that for you? O! what an aspect would his sufferings have on us, if we were clear about our interest in him, and could hear him in our name, saying, [Father, here am I, if thou take me, let these go; thy will be done, for this cause came I here to answer for my peoples debt, to own the charge given in against them, and to undergo thy sentence for them; *then says justice*, thou must pay their debt; content, *says he*, here am I; and *so* he gives his back to the smiter and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hides not his face from shame and spitting.] If we were clear that our share was there, and that our iniquities came in among the rest to make up the bill, and if we could discern him aright so straitned in satisfying for us, would we not think ourselves eternally obliged to him, to hate sin, and to *glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his*? As it is, 1 Cor. vi. ult. If indeed ye be Christ's (as ye profess yourselves to be) he pays dear for you; and if so, will not this lie upon you as a just debt to him, to glorify him in your bodies, and in your spirits? For both in body and spirit he payed for you.

4. It is a notable ground of consolation to believers against diffidence and fear to appear before the throne of God; because our Lord Jesus Christ hath been before us, and in our name, hath answered for us to the full, and hath satisfied all that justice could crave of us. What wakens terror at death, and makes the thoughts of Christ's appearing to be dreadful, but our looking on our appearing at the bar of God? But it
is

is a comfort to us, that Christ our Surety was brought to prison and to judgment, and was also brought from both; yea which is more, and without which the consolation is but divided, he was brought to both for us, and he was also brought from both as our Surety, as Surety for all them that betake themselves by faith to him: He was carried to prison and to judgment as Surety for the elect, and he was pursued as their Surety, and therefore his payment of the debt as Surety must be accepted in the name of them, for whom he payed the debt: Our Lord Jesus not only died and was laid in the grave, but he went further, he was even at the bar of justice exacted upon and sentenced, and the sentence executed upon him, else, woe had been unto us. On this ground is that triumph, Rom. viii. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies: Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather who is risen again, &c.* and it is said, Rom. vii. *That we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; the law had us in prison, and the door bolted against us, and had laid us in irons, but our Lord came, and (as Sampson did in another case) carried the gates and bars to the hill-top, He spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed openly over them on the cross, so that now, the prince of this world is judged: These are the true and faithful sayings of God: We have through Christ access, and may with boldness come to the throne of grace, having him an high-priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all things tempted like as we are: He knew not only what it was to be hungry and thirsty and weary, to be pained, and to die; but he knew what it was to come before the terrible tribunal of God, and to be arraigned for sin, though not for his own sin, and what it was to be sentenced and to meet with wrath; which gives to sinners a safe and refreshing shelter under him, as under the shadow of a great*

rock in a weary land. This is the great design of the gospel, to make offer of the benefit of these sufferings to you, and to pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Now may God himself persuade you to it!



S E R M O N XXX.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 8.

Verse 8. *He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

EVERY step of Christ's way to sinners, and every word whereby it is exprest, is wonderful: And therefore it is no marvel that the prophet doth by way of admiration put in this word, *And who shall declare his generation?* We shewed you that we conceive these words to be those that express the prophet's turning of himself from Christ's humiliation to his exaltation: He hath insisted long in setting forth his wonderful abasement, and humiliation, which these words import, *He was brought from prison and from judgment:* Which look not only to his external imprisonment, and to his coming to judgment before men, but also, mainly and principally, to the straits that he was brought into, and his arraignment before God's tribunal, and so to the cause of his suffering, to wit, *for the transgression of his people*, as the words following hold forth, which was not the cause of his censure before men, but the procuring cause of what he met with from, and before God.

But

But though he was brought to prison and to judgment, to death and to the grave, yet they did not, they could not detain him; *He was taken*, or as the word signifies, he was lift up *from prison and from judgment*, being the same word that followeth, *He was cut off out of the land of the living*, which supposes a turn and change from his humiliation to his exaltation, and these words, *Who shall declare his generation?* set forth the unconceivable and unexpressible glory that Christ is exalted unto. So Acts viii. 33, 35. where these words are cited, it is said, *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*: That is, in the lowest step of his humiliation, his judgment, or that to which he was adjudged, was taken from him, and he was declared free. However, since in these words our Lord's humiliation is implied, and his exaltation expressed as following on it, we think it safest to understand it so. The words put together hold forth the high degree of Christ's glorious exaltation, so as his generation cannot be declared; *He was taken from prison and from judgment*, and gloriously exalted in another manner, and to another degree of glory than either angels or believers are, or can be capable of: For he that is exalted is God, whose generation cannot be declared; 'death having no more dominion over him,' and he 'having the keys of hell and of death:' In a word, we take this, 'Who shall declare his generation?' most immediately to relate to Christ's exaltation as Mediator, and to the glory wherewith he was invested, and to the dominion that he hath over all creatures; yet considering that the prophet's scope is to set forth this as wonderful; and considering that the first step of his exaltation is his resurrection, *whereby*, as the apostle speaks, Rom. i. 4. *he was declared to be the Son of God with power*; his resurrection being singular in this respect, that he rose by his own power; and considering that Acts viii. 35. Philip, began to preach to the eunuch Jesus Christ

Christ as the object of faith: We think it reasonable to conceive, that he preached Christ to be God, from this text, so as the eunuch might have a solid foundation for his faith; and also answer the scope, which is to set forth the wonderfulness of Christ's love to elect sinners, who being God, yet condescended to come thus low for saving of them. We may take in his Godhead immediately, from which as the former steps of his humiliation received worth and efficacy, so he was thereby sustained and born up under all those sufferings whereby his people are saved.

From the *first* and *second* expressions put together, we shall draw *three doctrines* relating to three main articles of faith.

The 1. whereof is this, That our Lord had a deliverance from, and victory over the lowest and most pinching parts of his humiliation and suffering; so that though he was at prison and judgment, yet he was lift up from both, and had a glorious deliverance. This takes in three things, which the same grounds will confirm, 1. That in his lowest estate and steps of humiliation, he was sustained, and carried through; so that all the assaults which he was put to endure and encounter with from all his enemies, wicked men and devils, did not overcome him. 2. That as he in himself was born through and sustained; So in respect of God's bar at which he was arraigned, he was absolved and set free: He so came through by paying of the debt, that he had an absolution, as it is, 1 Tim. iii. ult. *Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit:* Our blessed Lord Jesus being sustained by the power of his Godhead, was carried through in his sufferings, payed the elects debt, and received the sentence of absolution, even as a person (to speak with reverence in such a subject) having payed the debt for which he was imprisoned, is absolved and set free. 3. It takes in our Lord's actual delivery, he not only received the sen-

sentence of absolution, but was actually set free; so that as he was pleased to put himself in prison and in straits for us, so he was brought from every step of his humiliation, *from prison and from judgment, from death and from the grave; he nailed the hand-writing which was against us to his cross*, (as the apostle saith, Col. ii. 14, 15.) *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*: And as it is, 1 Cor. xv. at the close, he took the sting from death, disarmed it, and trode upon it: And there was necessity for this, even such necessity, that it was impossible it could be otherways, as we have it, Acts ii. 24. *It was impossible that he could be holden of death*. This will be clear if we consider these things, 1. The person that suffered, he was not an ordinary, nay, nor a meer man, but God man; as is clear, Acts ii. 27. cited out of Psal. xvi. where it is said, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see corruption*. 2. The end of Christ's sufferings, which was to satisfy for the debt, of his people, there having been no reckoning on his score or account, he being still in God's favour, and his holy One in whom his soul delighted all along his sufferings: His sufferings being for the sins of his elect, and he being to make application of his satisfaction, and of the purchase made thereby to the elect for whom he suffered and purchased these things, by his intercession; there was a necessity that he should get the victory of all, otherways he should not have been a perfect and complete Saviour, *Able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him*, as the apostle speaks, Heb. vii. 25. *But such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. 3. It is clear also, if we consider the nature of the covenant, and of the promises made to him therein, upon his engaging and undertaking for the elect, as particularly verse 10. of this chapter,

‘ He

‘ He shall see his seed, and prolong his days, his
 ‘ duration shall be for ever; the pleasure of the Lord
 ‘ shall prosper in his hand, and I will divide him a
 ‘ portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil
 ‘ with the strong :’ Our Lord’s exaltation and victory
 over death being on the Lord’s part conditioned to
 him the Mediator, as well as he engaged to suffer,
 hence it is said, Psal. cx. ‘ He shall drink of the brook
 ‘ in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head.’

The *uses* are *two*, The 1. whereof serves for clearing
 and confirming our faith in a fundamental article
 of Christianity, without which it were both needless
 for us to preach, and for you to hear or believe, and
 that is, that our Lord Jesus suffered, and also got the
 victory over suffering, that ‘ he was raised from the
 ‘ dead, and declared to be the Son of God with pow-
 ‘ er;’ intimating, that justice had gotten full satisfac-
 tion, in evidence and testimony whereof he was de-
 clared free, which is a main thing that believers have
 to believe, even that we have an exalted Christ, a
 raised up Saviour, who could not be detained by all
 the elects guilt in prison. 2. It serves to be matter
 of strong consolation, it puts life in all Christ’s offices
 and qualifications, and in all the promises made to
 believers; to wit, that our Lord Jesus is a living
 Christ, ‘ over whom death had no dominion,’ and he
 overcame it, ‘ now to die no more;’ so that, as it is,
 Heb. vii. 25. ‘ He is able to save to the uttermost
 ‘ those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever
 ‘ liveth to make intercession for them :’ There is no-
 thing that a soul need or can desire, but it is to be
 had in him : And if we look to particular instances,
 much consolation will arise from this ground; for 1.
 Hath a believing sinner to do with accusations at the
 bar of justice? Is it not unspeakable consolation that
 their debt is paid? Hence it is said, Rom. viii. 33.
 ‘ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s
 ‘ elect? It is God that justifies; who shall condemn?

‘ It

‘ It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again :’ It is that which gives proof of complete payment of the elects debt, and defiance to any accusations to come against the believer to his prejudice, because Christ hath not only died, but is also risen; justice being well pleased with his satisfaction, he is let out of the prison. 2. If the believer hath to do with corruption, with the devil and with many enemies: Is it not strong consolation that our Lord is risen, and that ‘ the prince of this world is judged,’ that Satan is trodden under foot; and that ‘ he shall and ‘ must reign till all his enemies be made his foot-stool?’ 3. Our Lord’s resurrection hath a twofold further consolation with it to believers. 1. It serves to be a ground for the exercising of faith on him, that as he is risen, Rom. vi. so may we expect that being spiritually dead with him to sin, we shall be *raised with him to newness of life*. 2. It is a pledge of believers exaltation and complete victory over death and the grave, and over all enemies; for Christ being raised as the common head of all believers who are his members, they by virtue of his resurrection, and by that same efficacy shall be raised; and it is impossible that they can lie under corruption. This is our great consolation who are believers, and live under the gospel, that we have not these things as a prophecy of things to come, but as a plain history of things in part done, and by and by to be completely accomplished. 4. It hath also in it consolation in respect of temporal difficulties. What are they all? they are not sure as Christ’s were; and the day is coming when believers shall have deliverance from them all; and therefore since our Lord is risen, let no believers be afraid of any changes whatsoever.

2dly, Observe, That our Lord Jesus being raised up from his state of humiliation, is invested, and put in a most excellent and glorious condition, even such as the prophet cannot express, *Who can declare his gene-*

ration? saith he. Who can declare how glorious he is now? look to two or three scriptures to confirm this, 1. That Eph. i. 20, 21. ‘He hath set him at his
 ‘ own right hand in the heavenly places, far above
 ‘ all principalities and powers, and might, and do-
 ‘ minion, and every name that is named, not only in
 ‘ this world, but also in that which is to come, and
 ‘ hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be
 ‘ head over all things to the church.’ Our Lord’s throne is exalted far above angels and archangels, even out of sight. The 2^d is, Phil. ii. 9. where having spoken of his humiliation, it follows, ‘Where-
 ‘ fore God hath highly exalted him, and given him
 ‘ a name which is above every name, that at the
 ‘ name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in
 ‘ heaven, and, &c.’ his exaltation is such as hath a dominion and supremacy with it over every name; *He having*, as it is, Col. i. 18. *in all things the pre-eminency.* The 3^d place is, Heb. viii. 1. ‘Of the
 ‘ things which we have spoken, this is the sum, we
 ‘ have such an high priest who is set on the right hand
 ‘ of Majesty in the heavens;’ where Christ’s exaltation is set forth to be such as hath exalted him to the right-hand of the Majesty on high.

Because this is one of the great articles of our faith, to wit, ‘That Christ rose from death the third day,
 ‘ and ascended into heaven, and is set down on the
 ‘ right hand of God;’ we shall add a little more to clear it. And 1. We should know that this exaltation of our Lord is not to be understood of his exaltation properly as he is God, in which respect there is no alteration in him; though his declarative glory was veiled for a time during his humiliation, yet in himself, as he was God, he was still glorious and blessed over all. 2. When we speak of Christ’s exaltation as Mediator, and as man, we do not mean that his human nature hath lost the essential properties of a creature; as if now when exalted he were wholly

wholly or only God ; or as if the properties of the human nature were swallowed up in the Godhead ; this would be inconsistent with his being true man, and would marr and obstruct our consolation exceedingly : But his exaltation consisteth, 1. In the manifestation and declaration of the person that was humbled and brought low, to be God omnipotent, omnipresent, all-sufficient, infinitely wise, powerful, just, &c. For though these properties agree not to the human nature, yet they agree to his person, and they are manifested to be in him without question. 2. The exaltation of the human nature of Christ-man, it is to an unconceivable height of glory, such as the human nature united to the divine nature is capable of, by very many degrees beyond any thing that the elect, whether angels or men are capable of ; the personal union making him capable of far more glory, and his excellent offices calling for it. 3. This exaltation consists in his absolute dominion and kingly power, which is more observably, directly, and plainly manifested in the days of the gospel-administration than it was under the law ; so that now he is clearly known in respect of his kingly-office to be God in our nature, cloathed with our flesh, and to be Immanuel, God with us ; and that this Immanuel hath *all power in heaven and earth committed to him ; he hath the keys of hell and of death, and is King of kings, and Lord of lords, is exalted far above principalities and powers, and is given to be head over all things to the church.* In which respect that is most properly to be understood when it is said, that *he is set on the right hand of God ;* so that now Jesus Christ, God and man in one person is in the highest glory, and in absolute dominion, nearest unto God, far above that which angels or saints are capable of. As kings use to set their greatest courtiers, and ministers, whom they would honour most, on their right hand, and as Solomon set his mother on his right hand ; so is our Lord set on the

right hand of God in highest glory. It is true, that, as God, he hath an absolutely sovereign and independent kingdom; yet, as Mediator, God-man, he hath a dispensatory kingdom next unto the Father in glory.

4. This exaltation consists in Christ's being furnished with qualifications suitable to that glorious condition wherewith he is invested. And though these qualifications of the man-Christ be not simply infinite, yet they are far above what we can conceive; and the qualifications of the person God-man are infinite, in which respect he is omnipotent, all-seeing, and infinitely wise to provide every thing that may be for the good of his church and people, and to prevent what may tend to their hurt, he being omnipresent, &c.

The *uses* are *three*, 1. This should waken and rouse our spirits to an high, holy, and reverent esteem of Christ; he is God above all gods, King above all kings; he hath got *a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, not superstitiously when he is named, but holily and reverently to think of him, and to worship and serve him. We conceive among many faults and evils in believers, this is a root-evil, even low thoughts of the glorious Christ; so that because he hath become low to lift us up, we are ready to think the less of him. But O! that we could behold the glorious condition he is exalted unto, and could look upon him as e'er long we shall, 'coming in the clouds with power and great glory, in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him;' it would furnish us with reverent thoughts of him, tho' not to hurt faith and confidence, yet to breed holy awe and reverence in us towards him.

The *2d use* serves to shew what a formidable party they have to contend with, who slight our Lord Jesus Christ, what loss they sustain who lose him, and what a great aggravation their sin hath who sin against him. Ye that slight, refuse, and oppose him, do ye know

know whom ye refuse, and whose dominion ye spurn against, and how hard it will be for you to kick against the pricks? Do ye know your loss who lose him, and how it will aggravate your guilt who despise him? The more glorious Christ is, the greater will the sin of the unbeliever be; therefore beware what ye are doing; ye have a mighty great and strong party to deal with; and when the great day of his wrath comes, and when he shall appear in his glory, how will you be able to abide the least touch of it? It will aggravate your sin and heighten your misery, that he whom the Father exalted was undervalued by you; that ye scorned to take a direction from him, or to submit to a censure drawn forth in his name, and said, at least by your practice, ‘Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us.’ But he ‘hath set his King on his holy hill of Zion,’ for all that, and ‘he that sits in heaven will laugh, the Lord ‘will have you in derision.’ Think on it seriously, and know that he is no mean person whom ye slight and despise; and tho’ this may now seem less than other sins, yet it will one day lie heavy on your conscience, above many, yea, above all other sins.

The 3d use serves to be a motive and encouragement to them that hear this gospel to receive Christ, and for the consolation of believers, who have received him. 1. It serves to encourage you all to receive him. He is no mean person that courts you, but *King of kings, and Lord of lords*; and if ye think it a happiness to be for ever with him, then let it move you to close with him; if ye do so, ye shall be made glorious as he is glorious, a due proportion betwixt the head and the members being kept, ye shall *sit on the same throne with him, and behold his glory*; as he prayeth, John xvii. *I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me, to behold my glory*; this is certainly a great privilege; if Christ be glorious, he calleth you to share with him in the same glory.

It serves for the consolation of believers, who have received him. Ye have an excellent Mediator, a most glorious Head and Husband, and a most excellent dowry, and ye shall know it to your superabundant satisfaction and joy in that day, when, as it is, Psal. xlv. Ye shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work, *and shall enter into the King's palace, and share of his glory, and see him face to face, and sit with him on his throne, even as he hath overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne.* Labour to be stedfast in the faith and hope of this good, glorious, and desirable day that is coming, when we shall not only see, but partake of, and be fully and for ever possessed of that which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of.

3. From the words, as we expounded them, *observe*, That our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered, and was in his sufferings brought very low, is God. We find ordinarily in scripture, especially through the New Testament, these three going together, 1. Christ's humiliation. 2. His exaltation following on that. And 3. His Godhead. His humiliation is not readily spoken of without his exaltation, nor his exaltation without his Godhead; because it is impossible to separate Christ's exaltation from his Godhead; his exaltation being the evidence of his Godhead; and the prophet's scope here being to set forth Christ's exaltation; and Philip preaching of it to the eunuch from this text, it is doubtless the contemplation of Christ's Godhead that occasioneth this admiring exclamation, *Who shall declare his generation?* Which we apply, not so much to the ineffableness of his generation, as to its being an evidence that he is God. There are three or four ways whereby the scripture confirms this. Let me desire you, by the way, not to look on this as a little momentous, or but a common doctrine. And since there are many so ignorant, that

we should be ashamed to tell, what we hear from some of you concerning the Godhead of Jesus Christ, ye should take better heed to it, being a main pillar of Christian religion, without which our preaching and your faith are vain; for he is not believed on at all, if ye rest not on him as God. But to prosecute what we proposed, to wit, those several ways whereby the scripture confirms this truth; and to this purpose consider, 1st, The express titles and names that are given to him in scripture, and some scripture-sayings of him which hold it forth; of which we shall give three instances, the first is that of, *Isaiah ix. 6, 7.* where, when Christ is prophesied of, it is said, ‘Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders;’ and what is he? ‘He shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.’ Here we have these three, his humiliation, exaltation, and Godhead; his humiliation, ‘Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. His exaltation, ‘Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice;’ and his Godhead is interjected and put in betwixt these two, in the names and titles given to him, ‘Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father,’ not as personally taken, but, as the word signifies, *The Father of eternity*, from whom all things have their being; and for the same reason, chap. vii. 14. he is called Immanuel, *God with us.* A 2^d place is that of, *Phil. ii. 6.* ‘Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery,’ he did God no wrong, ‘to be equal with God; he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, &c. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.’ A 3^d place,

3^d place, is that of, Heb. i. 2, 3. ‘ God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the world,’ and what is he by whom he spake to us? who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.’ There is much of Christ’s excellency holden forth here; *he is* the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person; the beam of the sun is not liker to the sun’s light, the impression of the seal on the wax is not liker to the seal, than the Son is to the Father, (nay, the liveliest resemblances fall infinitely short of a full and exact resemblance) the Father and he being the same God, and he being compared with the Father, not simply as God essentially taken, but as the second person of the Trinity compared with him who is the first person. O deep and adorable mystery!

A 2^d way to clear and confirm it, is to consider his works, oft-times joined with his name; the works of creation, providence, redemption, and guiding of his church. So we have it John i. 1. *In the beginning was the word*, the substantial word of the Father, the Son of his love, called the *word*, either as expressing the Father’s image, as a man’s word expresseth his mind, or because as a prophet of the church he hath revealed the Father’s will. It is said that this word was not only *with* God, but *was* God; and then follows in several verses together his works, the works of creation, *All things were made by him*, &c. the works of providence are attributed to him, John v. 17. *My Father worketh, and I work*, and the work of redemption, and his glorious going through with it, declare him

him to be the Son of God; for none but God could redeem his church.

3dly, For clearing and confirming of this truth, we may take the exprels confession of the saints in scripture, whereon there is much weight laid, and I shall name but five or six of their confessions, which to this purpose are expressly and fully recorded. The first is that of Matt. xvi. 16. *Whom do men say that I am?* Peter answered, *Thou art the Son of the living God;* and Christ says, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood hath not revealed that unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;* to let us know, that it is not such a little thing to believe Christ's Godhead as many take it to be; and then he calls himself *the rock on which his church is built.* Christ's Godhead is the foundation of Christianity. A 2d is John i. 49. in Nathanael's words. Christ tells him, *Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee;* and he having got this proof of Christ's omniscience, presently breaks out, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel;* and that is the first thing his faith evidenceth itself in. A 3d place is John vi. 67, 68, 69. where, when Christ is saying to the twelve, *Will ye also leave me?* Simon answered, *Lord, to whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* There is much in these words, *We believe and are sure* that it is so. A 4th place is, John xi. 27. and it is Martha's confession. *Yea, Lord I believe that thou art Christ, the Son of God; which should come into the world.* The 5th place is that of John xx. 28. when Christ bids Thomas reach hither his hand and put it into his side, his glory shines so full in his face, that he cries out, *My Lord, and my God,* and his faith is summed up and comprehended in that. The last place that we shall name is that of Acts viii. 37. and it is the

eunuch's confession, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, which is the sum of his faith.

The 4th and last way of confirmation of this great truth, is drawn from the worship which is due unto him, and hath been given unto him. He is the object of faith, John xiv. 11. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*. He is the object of prayer, Acts vii. 59. *They stoned Stephen calling upon God, saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit*: And frequently elsewhere in scripture he is prayed unto; tho' these two are not too curiously to be separated.

Use 1. The first use serves to strengthen your faith in this, that our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered for sinners, and is offered to them in the gospel, is God equal with the Father, and so he is to be closed with, and rested on as the brightness of the Father's glory. The reason why we would have you confirmed in the faith of this, is not small; for it is a most necessary thing, and without the faith of it, all the work of our salvation will hang loose; neither can we have any claim to eternal life; and therefore we desire you particularly who are ignorant hearers, and who have the name of Christ often in your mouths, and yet know not what he is, to know, remember, and believe, that he that is the Son of Mary, is also the eternal Son of God, being God before he was incarnate, and before the world was made, and the maker of all that was made.

Use 2. The second use serves to let you know, that tho' it be a most necessary thing to be confirmed in the faith of this truth, that Christ is God, yet it is a greater difficulty to believe and be persuaded of it, than the most part take it to be; many sad proofs whereof we have in peoples words, and more in their practice. *Flesh and blood*, saith Christ, Matt. xvi. *hath not revealed this unto thee*. It is a wonder whence so many peoples faith comes, who never found any the least difficulty in this; and it is a wonder that so few

few are thoroughly grounded in the faith of it; so that if they were called and put to it, they durst not give their oath that he is God; yea, if we would look on a little further, we should find, that the faith of this is but scarce amongst us, not to speak of the gross ignorance of many, who will say when asked, that he is not equal with the Father, or that he was made God, and other such-like expressions will they have, that are abominable to be once named amongst Christians; men, through their ignorance, falling into damnable heresies on the matter, and yet not knowing that they do so. As if our blessed Lord were made a God, and not the same God with the Father; for the proving of him to be God, proves him to be the same God, there being but one God.

Ye should consider for convincing you that it is thus with many of you, 1. The little fear that is in men and women of the majesty of Christ as God; they durst not walk with so little fear of him, if they believed indeed that he were God. What made the Jews with the scribes and Pharisees to spit upon him and despise him? but because they wanted the faith of his Godhead. And have not ye the same nature in you? Ye live in a place where the faith of Christ's Godhead is professed, and is not questioned; but your practice says to beholders, that ye believe it not, because ye fear him not. 2. That your souls do so little welcome the offer of the gospel; that tells that ye believe him not to be God. 3. That ye do not place your happiness in believing on him, and in the way of holiness; ye say in effect, of what use is Christ? ye care not for him. Hence it is that so many live contentedly without him, and are not solicitous about the enjoying of him. 4. Even in believers there is much unbelief of this truth, which is sadly evidenced by this, that they do not so bless themselves in him, and that they do not so reckon themselves to have got a good portion, and to be made up in him, as David

doth, Psal. xvi. where he saith, and holily glorieth, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places*, &c. and by the frequent discouragement that is incident to believers, as if Christ had not the guiding of them, and of what concerns them, or could not guide all things well enough for their good. If he were believed to be God, it would quash temptations, banish discouragement, comfort under crosses, sweeten every condition, induce to holiness, restrain from sin. And in a word, it cannot be told what is contained in this one truth when solidly believed. For what can possibly be wanting to the believer in him that is God? He hath the fulness of the Godhead to supply whatever they want, and sustains the relation of a husband to the believer to make it good to them. And he is furnished with suitable qualifications to make the application thereof. What then could be wanting if this were thoroughly believed, that he is God? Let me say it to you, the faith of this would provoke to more holiness, and to study more the power than the profession of religion, and would help us to live a more comfortable life in every condition.

S E R M O N XXXI.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 8.

Verse 8. *He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

THESE words are a proof of that which we discoursed in the lecture concerning Christ's wonderful love to his people, than which no man hath greater, that a man should lay down his life for his friend; but he hath commended his love to us, in that while we were yet enemies he died for us.

This is the great commendation of Christ's love, and what will he refuse to his people, who in his love hath done so much for them?

In the former part of this verse, we shewed that there was a hint given of Christ's exaltation, of the exaltation and glory of the Mediator following after his lowest sufferings. An ineffable and inexpressible glory, which the prophet rather passeth with a sort of silence that insisteth on the declaration of it, *Who shall declare his generation?*

We come now to the last part of the words, 'For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.' They are added as a reason of the former, and the one part of them is a reason of the other. He said before, *Who shall declare his generation?* Who can sufficiently declare and unfold, how gloriously the Mediator is exalted:

exalted: And he gives this for the reason of it, *For he was cut off out of the land of the living*; the sum of which is, that he humbled himself, therefore God hath highly exalted him, as the apostle reasons, Phil. ii. 9. So that this is not added as being posterior to his exaltation but as a reason shewing the connection of his exaltation with his humiliation. And lest it should be a stumbling to any, that this glorious person suffered death, he gives the reason of that also, which strengthens the reason of his exaltation, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*; or, as the word is, *The stroke was on him*, he suffered not for any wrong in himself, but for the sins of his own elect people. The first particularly looks to Christ's death, which was a prophecy in Isaiah's time, but is now an historical narration to us, we having the gospel as a commentary on it. To be *cut off out of the land of the living*, is to have an end put to the natural life, which is ordinarily done by death. But *cutting off* here signifies to be taken away, not in an ordinary, but in an extraordinary way, to be removed by a violent death, by the stroke of justice.

We may make these two *observations* for the confirmation of two articles of our faith. For looking on it, 1. As a prophecy, we may *observe*, That our Lord Jesus behoved to suffer and die; it was prophesied of him, *That he shall be cut off out of the land of the living*. And Dan. ix. 26. it is plainly and clearly asserted, that *the Messiah should be cut off*, which being compared with the history of the gospel, we have it as a truth fulfilled; for our Lord Jesus was cut off, and as he himself says, Luke xxiv. *It behoved him to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory*; and supposing the elect to be sinners, and the curse to be added to the covenant of works, *The day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*; supposing also the Mediator to have engaged, and undertaken to satisfy justice, and undergo that curse for the elect, there was necessity that

that he should die; as it is, Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, which curse was evident in his death; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

2. *Observe*, That our Lord Jesus behoved to die a violent death, and not an ordinary natural one; which this expression, and that other in Dan. ix. clearly hold forth; and considering that his sinless nature was not liable to death, and that he had not those principles of dying in him, disposing him to die, that we sinful miserable mortals have in us; and considering withal that the Lord Jehovah was (to speak so) pursuing him as sinners surety at the bar of justice, it was meet, yea necessary, that our blessed Lord should not die an ordinary death as men die ordinarily, through weakness or sickness on their beds, but a violent death.

Use. It serves to be a confirmation of this truth, that the Messiah behoved thus to die; therefore we say in the belief, *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried*; which shews, 1st, The reality of his satisfaction, and the compleat payment that he made to justice, when he lays down that price which the sinner ought to have laid down. 2^{dly}, It shews the reality of our Lord's sufferings, and that they were not imaginary, but that as he was a real and true man, so his sufferings were most real; his soul was separated from his body, tho' the union betwixt both his body and his soul and the Godhead continued still. 3^{dly}, It holds forth a proof and confirmation of our faith in this, that our Lord Jesus is the Messiah that was prophesied of, and promised, in whom all the sufferings in his soul and body that were spoken of, to go before his death, were accomplished, and in whom this was also accomplished, that, *he was cut off out of the land of the living*. So that if we look rightly on the scriptures, our Lord's sufferings will be so far from being matter of stumbling, that they

they will rather be a clear, convincing, and an evident proof, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, and that in him, all that was spoken concerning the Messiah is fulfilled and come to pass.

It is matter of great consolation to believers, that our Lord Jesus, who is now exalted, died, and so death is spoiled, and there needs not be any great fear for them to engage with it. This *land of the living* is not their rest, within a little they must be gone hence; our Lord was cut off from it, and that by a shameful death, on the behalf and for the sake of others, and not for himself; and therefore his death cannot but be made good for them for whom he underwent it, and their petty sufferings need not much disturb them. These plainest truths that are most ordinary have in them much spiritual sap, juice, and life, to strengthen faith, and to furnish consolation to believers: And if they were rightly understood, and fed upon by faith, O how lively might they be? And were there no more but these two words in the text, O how much consolation do they yield in life and in death? Our Lord is gone before believers, therefore they may be greatly encouraged to follow him.

The last part, or the last thing in the words, seems to have some more obscurity in it, and therefore we shall insist the more in opening of the same.

For the transgression of my people was he stricken. These words do not look to the reason why Pilate and the priests condemned him; for they had no thought of the sins of God's people; though Caiaphas stumbled, as to himself, by guess, on a prophecy of his dying for them. But they give a reason why he was *cut off out of the land of the living*; and look to the court and tribunal of God's justice, before which he was standing, and by which he was to be sentenced to death, for the transgressions of God's people, and also absolved; he was thus stricken in respect of God's purpose and design.

For

For clearing of these words, it may be enquired, 1st, What is meant here by *my people*? 2^{dly}, What is it to be *stricken* or *smitten* for them?

For the 1st, *My people*, it is a discriminating or differencing of some from others: And therefore, by *my people* here is not meant, 1st, All the world, or all that ever lived and had a being, we find not any where in scripture that these are called *my people*, or God's *people*; but whenever *my people* is spoken of, it is used to set land-marks betwixt his people, and other people that are not his, as John x. 26, 27. 'Ye believe not ' because ye are not of my sheep, my sheep hear my ' voice, and I know them,' which supposeth that some are his, and others not so his; and so *my people* cannot be all the world. Neither 2^{dly}, can it be meant of the whole visible church, who in respect of the external administration of the covenant, are sometimes called his people, as all Israel are. There is a narrower boundary drawn, John x. 26. where they that were only externally in covenant with him, of them he says, *Ye are not my sheep*, to shew, that his reckoning there must not go upon external profession; and verse 16. some that were not for the time professing themselves to be his people, are reckoned; *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring in.* Nor 3^{dly}, can it be limited to them that were actually converted and believers; for he says, as I just now hinted, that 'he hath other sheep that are not yet ' brought in,' and he is said, 'to gather together in- ' to one the children of God that were scattered ' abroad,' John xi. 52. So then, by *my people* must be understood those who in God's eternal purpose are separated by the decree of election to be his own, even those whom he hath chosen to glorify himself in and by them through his grace, and to glorify them with himself; even those spoken off, John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* They are the people who were transacted for in the covenant of redem-

tion, and that were given by the Father to the Son, to be redeemed by him; it was for their sins, even for the sins of the elect, that our Lord Jesus was stricken.

As for the 2d, What it is to be *stricken for their transgression*; the meaning is, the meritorious cause of their stroke was on Christ, which intimates to us, that his sufferings and death were procured by the sins of the elect of God; his stroke, or the stroke that was upon him, as the word is, was the amends that justice got for their sins. In a word, the stroke that the elects sins procured and merited, 'Took him out of,' or away from, 'the land of the living,' brought him 'to prison and to judgment, and made his soul an offering for sin.' Neither can this be otherways understood, for it is not said that for their good, or for their behoof only, or to be an example and pattern of patience only to them, he was stricken, as some grossly erroneous and profane men expound the words, but *for their transgression was he stricken*, that is, it was their guilt, which he having undertaken and engaged to satisfy for, made him liable to this stroke.

In this part of the words thus opened, we have two notable points concerning the covenant of redemption.

1. The party for whom it is contrived and intended, and that is the elect, or God's people. It is not all the world, nor all the visible church-members that God transacted for in the covenant with the Mediator, but *my people*, the elect of God; they were so considered in the transaction and in the execution.
2. The great price that was sought or required, that was offered, and that was agreed upon for the redemption of the elect, to wit, the death of the Mediator, even his dying the cursed death of the cross; this is the sum, for the transgressions of God's people, the stroke was upon him; God's design being to glorify his grace in the salvation of so many, sin having intervened to bring them under the curse; there is upon the one
part

part the Lord's giving of them to the Mediator to be redeemed by him, and upon the other part the Mediator's accepting of them on the terms proposed, he is content to satisfy for them, to take the stroke on himself deserved by them, that they may go free; each of these may be considered several ways for furnishing of sweet doctrines.

1. From the first of these *observe*, that there are some differenced from others in respect of God's purpose, some chosen of God for his people out of the rest of the world. From hence it is, that some are God's people ere they be born, and ere Christ die for them, John xvii. 16. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*: They are supposed to be God's people in some peculiar respect, ere they be given to Christ to be redeemed by him. In a word, the Lord hath an elect people, or a people chosen to salvation in his eternal purpose and decree, an elect people, or a people chosen out of the world, which in this respect others are not his people, or are not elected. There are four qualifications or properties in this doctrine, which will serve to clear it: 1. When we say there is such a decree of election, we say that it is a *discriminating or differencing decree*, wherein or whereby there is a taking of some, and not all; a taking of one, and a leaving another; taking of Isaac, and a leaving of Ishmael; a taking of Jacob, and a leaving of Esau; as it is Rom. ix. And this discrimination or differencing, hath these four steps, 1. There is a difference in God's purpose, in respect of the end, while all men are alike before him, some are designed to eternal life, and others are not; therefore, Matt. xxv. 34. It is said, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*: And in this respect the *book of life* is said to be *opened*, Rev. xx. 12. 2. This difference is in respect of God's offering and giving of them to the Mediator in the covenant of redemption, wherein

some, and not all, are given to Christ, John xvii. 2. *That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him out of the world:* Where it is clear, that so many are given to him in reference to whom he is to exercise his offices. 3. There is a difference made in respect of Christ's undertaking and executing his offices for them, he accepts of them, John xvii. 9. *For their sakes I sanctify myself,* I have separated myself to the office of Mediator, and do offer myself for them, *that they also may be sanctified;* and *I pray for them, I pray not for the world:* It is of them that he maketh that sweet account, John vi. 39. *This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day:* And of whom he saith, John x. 28, 29. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand:* He answers, and is accountable for them, and for them only, but for none other as being redeemed by him, and to be made partakers of his glory. 4. This difference is in respect of the promises made upon God's part to the Mediator in favour of the elect, and of the benefits that flow to them from the covenant: He hath not promised to justify all, nor to make all believe, but some only. He, as it were, saith to the Mediator, these I give thee to be redeemed by thee, and on the laying down of thy life, and satisfying for them, I promise to make them believe, and that through faith in thee, they shall be justified, therefore saith Christ, John vi. 44. *Murmur not among yourselves; no man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him:* And who are they that shall believe on him? See verse 37. 'All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast him out,' but will make him dearly welcome: And verse 45, 'Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me;' and John xvii. 2. 'That he should give eternal life to as

' many

‘many as thou hast given him.’ Thus ye see what is meant when we call this a distinguishing decree. 2. We say that it is a *definite decree*, both in respect of them that are numbred, and that is, so many, and no more; and also in respect of such a man and such a woman in particular, in such a place, and not all persons; for they are all particularly designed, and are therefore said to be *written in the Lamb’s book of life*. It is not all who are foreseen to believe who are elected, as if election did follow believing, as the cause of the decree; but it is such a number whom the Lord engageth to the Mediator to draw, to teach and make them believers. 3. We say it is a *decree that is free*, as to all merit in them whom it reacheth; and it is free in these three respects, 1. In respect of any thing in the person or persons elected, who are supposed to be lying as the rest of the world; therefore it is said of Jacob and Esau, Rom. ix. 11. *The children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, &c.* That is, God respected not the doing good or evil in his electing of the one, and passing by the other. 2. In respect of Christ’s satisfaction and redemption, which presupposeth this decree to be, and is the means by which it is accomplished, so that we are redeemed because we are elected. The elect were God’s people when Christ did undertake and engage for them; and in this respect election is a fountain-grace, and Christ’s death is not the cause of election, though it be the cause of all the benefits that follow upon it. 3. It is free in respect of God’s absolute sovereignty, who acts herein according to the purpose of his own will, having no reason without himself, as it is clear, Mat. xi. ‘Even so Father, because it seemed good in thy sight;’ And Eph. i. 11. ‘Being predestinate according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.’ As the potter hath power over the clay, and makes of the same lump one vessel

vessel to honour, and another to dishonour as he pleaseth; so the Lord acts most sovereignly in the decree of election. 4. We say that this decree is absolute and peremptory; which is not so to be understood as if it admitted of no means in the execution of it: But this is the meaning, that the performing and bringing about thereof depends on nothing without God, neither can it be possibly frustrated. These sheep can never be plucked out of his hand, neither can they perish, but must needs all and every one of them actually enjoy that which it decreed for them by his decree, else they could not be called God's people, if they might not be his. Thus you see what is the meaning of these words *my people*, that is, his elect people in or by the decree of election.

I shall briefly give you some few grounds from scripture to clear and confirm this truth: The 1. whereof is taken from the names that the people of God have, from the expressions that are used in making mention of them in scripture, which will infer all that hath been said. As namely they are called *my sheep*, John x. his sheep that he knows, by name, which cannot be otherways; they are called *the election of grace*, Rom. xi. 5. 'At this present time there is a remnant, according to the election of grace;' and verse 7. 'The election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded:' It is impossible but the elect must obtain, there being an inseparable connection betwixt the decree and the end thereof; they are said to be *written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world*, before there was any mention of themselves, or consideration of ought in themselves, they are said to be loved and beloved, and ordained to eternal life, Acts xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*, where believing is made a fruit and effect of this decree of election, it is so far from being a cause thereof; they are called *blessed of the Father*, Matt. xxv. and those whom he bleblesseth cannot but be bleblessed;

fed; they are called such as *are given to Christ*, holding forth a peculiar difference of them from others; they are called the people, *whom he foreknew and predestinated*, Rom. viii. 29. 'Whom he did foreknow, 'them he did predestinate,' &c. and Rom. xi. 2. 'God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew:' Every one was not so foreknown; for Christ will say to many at the great day, *depart from me; I never knew you*. Titles and names of this kind are frequent in the scripture, whereby God distinguisheth some from others, which hath its rise from God's purpose and decree of election. A 2^d ground is taken from the opposition which the scripture maketh betwixt the elect and others who are not elected, which shews clearly that election cannot be understood of all, as if there were a general and conditional election: Hence it is said, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*; the electing of the one is opposed to the rejecting of the other: So John x. the Lord says of some, *That they are his sheep*, and of others, *They are not my sheep*: And Rom. ix. the apostle speaks of some 'vessels of mercy which are before prepared for glory,' and of some 'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction:' And 2 Tim. ii. 21. some are said to be *vessels of honour*, some of *dishonour*; some are *ordained to eternal life*, Acts xiii. and 'some are ordained of old to that destruction, as Jude speaketh; some are 'written in the Lamb's book of life,' and some not, Rev. xx. and wherefore is all this spoken? but to let us know that God hath freely and sovereignly in his decree put a difference betwixt some and others, which as it began, if we may so speak, in God's eternal purpose, so it will continue in the event; which is a 3^d ground of confirmation; and it will be clear, if we compare God's purpose and decree with the event and effect; for as a thing is in the event and effect, so God intended and purposed in his decree it should be; thus the Lord's final sentence at the day of judgment,

is

is but the result of his eternal purpose: The book of life containing the names of all the elect was written, before the elect existed; and as it is said, Acts xv. 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning,' so in a special manner, and in a peculiar way this great work of redemption, and they that were to be redeemed were particularly known and written down in the book of God's decree of election. Hence it is said, Rom. xi. 7. 'Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained;' and John vi. 37. 'All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me:' And John x. 28. 'I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish.' There is Rom. viii. 30. a blessed harmony of things from God's purpose and decree of election, even to eternal glory, which is the result of election: And it being very clear that some are admitted and owned by Christ in the great day, and others not; this makes it clear, that there was a difference in the decree betwixt these so admitted and owned before the world was, and others not owned nor admitted; especially considering that this difference at the great day of judgment is drawn from the decree of election, Matt. xxv. 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit, the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world was laid:' As if the Lord had said, there was a purpose and design of bringing you to heaven before the world was. A 4th ground is taken from the nature of God's covenant of redemption, which holds forth clearly the truth of this doctrine concerning election in all the steps of it. As 1. In God's making the offer and gift of some to the Mediator; it is only some that he gives, and not all. 2. In Christ's acceptation of the offer and gift: He prays for some, he sanctifies himself for some, and for some he satisfies, and not for all. 3. There is not a promise in all the covenant of redemption, whether it be of grace or of glory, but it is intended for the elect only,

only, and not for all. 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish,' John x. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,' Psal. cx. 3.' Christ's undertaking is for them only, John x. 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring in:' There is a necessity for the bringing of them in and no other, because he undertook for them and for no other. We the rather take notice of, and insist so much on this, because it will much serve to clear the following doctrine concerning the redemption of the elect; for if there be a distinguishing of them from others by the decree of election, then there must be a distinguishing of them from others in Christ's laying down of his life for them and not for any others: Election is the key of all: There is such a people, and they are the object of the covenant of redemption, whose good is sought after and agreed upon therein, and not any others.

Use 1. It serves for the confirmation of an important truth, and we would not have you to think little of any part of truth. We shall not here follow the subtle cavillings of adversaries against this truth, only we would have you confirmed in the faith of it: For 1. If ye be not clear and established in the faith of this truth, ye will be in great hazard, not only to have your evidences clouded, but to obstruct and stop the whole current and tract of grace, so that grace shall be a common thing, heaven and happiness shall go by guess, redemption shall be universal, &c. But let this truth be once established, that God hath a peculiar people for whom the Mediator transacted, and these errors will vanish and fall to the ground. For it is the love of election from which all the rest of the benefits that come to the elect flow; and this love is peculiar, therefore there cannot be a common application of it. It is the peculiarity of grace that commends it to the souls of believers, and makes it wonderful to them: That God should have taken notice

of them, that were by nature separate from God as well as others; that their case being common, his love should be peculiar, is indeed just and great matter of wonder; hence comes in that song, Rev. v. 9. 'Thou
'hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every
'kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:?' Not all of every nation, people, tongue and kindred are redeemed, but some out of every one of these. Let this then be received as a solid truth, that the Lord in his eternal purpose hath made a difference and separation of some from others, which is the great ground of the title that God hath to these some.

2dly, Clearness in this truth serves to keep the hearts of God's people in awe of him, to lift him up very high in their esteem as sovereign over the creature: And if any should quarrel with God and say, Why did God so? That of the apostle comes well in for an answer, *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* It is his sovereign pleasure who is supreme potter, and hath power over the clay to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. When the soul doth thus conceive of God as having all mankind before him as a lump of clay, and choosing out of it, and writing up one man and not another, it must needs in a transport of admiration say, O! what a great and sovereign God must he be, who did determine and write down the eternal condition of men before ever the world was!

3dly, This *first* preacheth to the people of God wonderful grace, when they, having got their calling and election made sure, come in and read their names which were in God's decree of election before they had a being. And 2. It is to them matter of exceeding great consolation. *First*, I say, it preacheth wonderful grace that freely chose them; and that when thousands of great men, and noblemen were passed by, such a poor creature that was half a fool in comparison with them, should be chosen; according to that,

that, 1 Cor. i. ‘Not many wise after the flesh, not
 ‘ many mighty, not many noble hath God called,
 ‘ but he hath chosen the foolish things of the world,
 ‘ weak and base, and things that are not, to make
 them kings and priests unto God and his Father.
Secondly, It is matter of exceeding great consolation
 to them, that it is *free* and *sure*. *Free*, even so free
 that it stops the mouths of boasters; for what I pray,
 have the elect more to speak of as a ground for boast-
 ing, than a Pagan in America, or one in hell? ‘Who
 ‘ made thee to differ, or what hast thou, O man, that
 ‘ thou hast not received?’ It is election that made the
 difference. And it is *sure*, for their salvation is found-
 ed on God’s purpose and decree, which is the solid
 rest of a believer; kindness began not on our side,
 but on God’s, as Christ says, *We have not chosen me,*
but I have chosen you, John xv. 16.

4. It speaks forth this, that all of you had need to
 make your calling and election sure. This is the very
 hinge of the believers consolation, even to have the
 proof of it in your consciences, that ye are enrolled
 among the elect; and so labour to have the evidence
 of this decree, that ye may see and read your names
 in it. Hence many streams of consolation flow out:
 If it be so with you, then ye were given to Christ;
 Christ undertook to satisfy justice for you; ye shall
 have faith and more faith, ye shall have repentance
 and sanctification, and also heaven and glory at the
 end of your course. If it be said, this is much, how
 shall it be brought about? we answer, it is not impos-
 sible. And to make it out, hear but two words, that
 are both directions and marks, the practice whereof
 will give a solid proof of your enrollment in God’s
 book, whence all these great and glorious things have
 their rise. 1. Where there is a yielding to Christ’s
 call in the gospel, and a falling in with him, that evi-
 denceth election; for it is certain that none shall, or
 can come to Christ and believe in him but the elect,

and whoever are elected must and shall come, sooner or later, John vi. 37. ‘All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me;’ and John x. 4. ‘His sheep follow him, and know his voice:’ They accept of and make welcome Christ’s call in the gospel, and they that accept of it are elected. So that there is no need of any new revelation about the matter, neither needs there any torturing anxiety to know, how to come by thy name in the roll of the elect. Try it by this; if thou hast given obedience to the call of the gospel, if thou hast in the sense of thy need of a Saviour fled unto Jesus Christ, and on his own terms accepted of him; by this thy tenure or holding is sure: And by this thou hast an evidence that thou art an elect. For his sheep come unto him and hear his voice; and as many of you as truly believe on him, and have betaken yourselves to him for life and salvation, have the seal and witness in yourselves, that your names were in God’s book before the world was. But if this be not, debate, dispute and question as ye will about it, whatever may be afterwards, ye have no evidence for the present of your election. 2. Where there is real holiness, or a real study and endeavour to be holy and more holy; it is an evidence of election, and of a person’s being enrolled in the volume of the book of God’s decree, because holiness is a fruit of election, as is clear, Eph. i. 4. ‘According as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy;’ never a person is really holy but such as God designed should be holy. To this purpose the apostle having, 2 Tim. ii. 21. spoken of election, ‘The foundation of the Lord stands sure, having this seal; the Lord knows who are his, and let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity; but in a great house are not only vessels of gold,’ &c. he subjoins, ‘If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified,’ &c. not that election

dependeth

dependeth on man's holiness, but by his holiness he shall be manifested to be, and accounted an elect vessel, and may warrantably conclude himself to be such; so that true holiness brings people to be acquainted with the great secret of election, and gives them boldness to make the application of it. There is nothing that men readily desire more to know than this, whether they be elected or not: Here is a sure way to come by the knowledge of it, even to study to believe, and to be holy; and then we may be confident that our names were written in the Lamb's book of life; but if we despise faith in Christ and holiness, whatever may be in God's purpose about us, we have for the time no ground to conclude that we are elected. May God himself fix us in these things that have such mighty consequents depending on them!



S E R M O N XXXII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 8.

Verse 8. He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

THE prophet hath been long in describing Christ's sufferings, and hath shown what height they came to, even *to prison and to judgment*, and to death itself, 'He was cut off out of the land of the living,'
Now

Now he puts in a word to shew wherefore all this was; or what was the procuring cause that brought all this suffering and sorrow on Christ, which also was the end that he had before him in it, in these words; ‘For the transgression of my people was he stricken.’ We shewed that by *my people* here, was not meant all men and women in the world, nay, nor all men who are externally called in the visible church, but his elect only; those whom he hath chosen to be his people, and separated from others by an eternal decree of election; we shewed also that these words, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*, do not only contain a reason of Christ’s extream sufferings, even of his being *brought to prison and to judgment* before men, but also and mainly of his being brought so before God, and of his being *cut off*: For the sins of God’s people are not laid to his charge before men, but before God they are; and so it does imply an influence that the sins of the elect had upon Christ’s sufferings, and a respect that his sufferings had to their sins; the elects sins procured these sufferings to him, and his sufferings were undergone by him for the satisfying of justice for their sins, and for the removing of them.

I shall not insist further in the exposition of the words, having opened them the last day, but shall hint at a few *doctrines* from them; and because they are general and more doctrinal, I shall be the shorter in speaking to them. Though it may be ye do not regard them much, yet they are not a little for your edification; and if ye were suitably sensible of sin, and of your hazard, there is no doctrine concerning the covenant of redemption, but it would be useful and refreshing to you.

There are several things implied here concerning the efficacy of Christ’s death, and concerning the extent of it, as its laid down as a price for the sins of the elect, which I shall first only speak a little to, and then
come

come to those doctrines that are more directly held forth in the words.

1. Then, it is implied, that there is a people of God separated from others, and chosen by him, on whom he intended and purposed before the world was, to glorify his grace. The very designation that they have here clears this: It is *my people*, not only of the Jews, nor my people of the Gentiles, but my people both of Jews and Gentiles; as Christ says, John x. *Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, them I must bring in.*

2. It is implied that this decree of election is antecedent to, and goes before the covenant of redemption: in order of nature, it flows not from Christ's death as the effect of it, but is prior to it; for if Christ's death be the means or price (as indeed it is) whereby the sins of God's elect people are satisfied for, then the decree of election must precede it; only we should beware how we ascribe to God any priority or posteriority in his decrees in order of time, for he is infinite in wisdom and foresight, and able to look on all things with one view; and to decree things infinite in number at once, which we cannot conceive of, nor comprehend. But this we say, that considering the order of things, the decree of election is not a fruit or effect of Christ's death, but prior to it; and Christ's death follows as a means to make it effectual: He is appointed to save the elect from their sins, and from that which their sins deserved; *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*: They were God's people by election before Christ's engagement to suffer and satisfy for them, much more before his actual suffering; and so their election cannot be a fruit and effect of his suffering.

Use. It serves to vindicate this truth from an error and mistake of the Arminians, who, as they overthrow the design of grace in the salvation of sinners, in other steps thereof, so do they in this, in making Christ's

Christ's death to precede election, and election to follow it. But, as we hinted before, the decree of election is sovereign, being an act of grace absolutely free, the Lord in it having designed some for manifesting the glory of his grace upon them as the end; he hath taken in Christ's death and other means for the promoting of it.

3. It is implied here, that even the elect or God's people are considered as sinful in the covenant of redemption: 'For the transgression of my people was he stricken;' they were considered as sinful as well as others, when they were engaged for. We need not dispute, whether they were considered as sinful in the decree of election; it not being necessary in this place; nor profitable for you, but sure in Christ's undertaking for them they are considered as sinful; for God sent not Christ, neither came he into the world to purchase life and salvation for righteous men, but he was sent and came to lay down his life *as a ransom for many*, to wit, sinners; and therefore it is given as the reason of his name, Matt. i. 21. 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.'

Use 1. It serves to humble the elect greatly, who when ever they come to receive grace, they have it most freely, for they were no better by nature than others whom God past by, as is clear, Eph. ii. 1. 'We were dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others:' Peter and Paul were by nature children of wrath as well as Judas. And David was a child of wrath by nature, as well as Saul; when this transaction concerning the work of redemption was agreed upon and concluded betwixt these most responsal parties.

2. It serves also much for the encouragement of a believer, who is sensible of sin, and afraid, of wrath, and in that posture betakes himself to Christ for refuge; though his belief should make him say
with

with Peter, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, yet this consideration may hearten him to draw near, that Christ was stricken for sinners, for the transgressions of his elect people; yea, if there had not been sin, and if the covenant of works had stood, there needed not to have been a Saviour, and therefore sinners have here a solid ground to lay hold upon for life and salvation.

And therefore as a 3^d use of it; it is an unsafe assertion, beside the curiosity of it, that Antinomians maintain, which is, that though man had never fallen, yet Christ would have become man; for we see here that Christ's becoming man, and his being stricken, flowed from his being Surety for elect sinners; and his being Surety flowed from the covenant of redemption concerning elect sinners. To be wise without, or beside and above what is written in the scripture, it is vanity, pride and folly.

4. It is implied here, that sin wherever it is deserves strokes, even the sins of the elect: Yea, we may add this to it, that not only do the sins of the elect deserve strokes in themselves, being branches of God's law; but that there is an actual curse standing against them till it be removed: And God's threatning, *The day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*, infers a necessity of strokes. This we say is clearly implied here, because the Mediator entering himself Surety for the elects debt behoved to be smitten; and when he was so smitten, sure sin must deserve much: We speak not of an absolute necessity; but God having revealed to man his duty, and added a threatning, that in the day he should eat he should die, there is a necessity in respect of God's truth, faithfulness, and unchangeableness, who had spoken the word, that strokes should follow sin, for sin cannot be removed till the threatning be satisfied.

Use. This may point out to us that sin is no little nor light thing, neither is the obtaining of pardon an

easy business, whatever men generally think of them. There are many sad strokes that follow sin, which will hotly pursue sinners who are not in Christ. O! do not then make light of sin, which is the fountain of so much misery and woe to the sinner. If ye knew how exceeding bitter wrath and the curse is that follows sin, ye would as soon go into a flame of fire as ye would meddle with it: If ye believed that word to be true which is in, *Exod. xxxiv. He will by no means clear the guilty*: And if ye believed God's faithfulness that is engaged to make good his threatnings, quarrels with sin would be more strong and vehement.

5. It is implied here, that though the elect sins deserve wrath, and that there must be a satisfaction ere they can be removed, that yet the elect cannot satisfy for themselves; *For the transgressions of my people was he stricken*; Christ behoved to be smitten ere their sin could be removed: If the elect could have done their own business, they needed not to have been so much in Christ's debt, nor to have given him thanks for his undertaking. But this is brought in to hold forth the condescendency of his love, that when no other thing could do it, he interposed as Surety. The abominableness of sin was so great, that the majesty of God, his infinite holiness and his spotless justice being wronged, and the finite creature not being able to make amends for the wrong done, did require this: For all mankind, yea all the holy angels could not satisfy for the wrong done by one man to the infinite God; therefore he says, *I am the Saviour, and there is none else*: He gives defiance to all saviours besides himself, *None can redeem his brother's soul from death, nor give a price sufficient for it, the redemption of it ceaseth for ever among the creatures.*

Use. Study then to be suitably sensible of this. Ye may possibly think it to be but a common doctrine, but alas, ye walk not under the due and deep conviction and sense of it: Hence it comes to pass that so few

few think themselves debtors to Christ, and that so few make their address to him. Ask the most part how they think they shall get to heaven? They will readily name many things and ways ere they will rely upon Christ and believe in him: If they have done a fault, they say they will make amends, or they will pray for pardon; and they think that will do the business. Such have this language in effect, that either there is no need of satisfaction for sin, or that they can satisfy for themselves.

6. It is implied here, that though the elect have sinned, and cannot satisfy for themselves, yet it is necessary that a satisfaction be provided for them. I do not say simply that whoever hath sinned must have a satisfaction made for them; for the Lord hath left legions of angels, and many thousands of reprobate men and women without hope of a Saviour, or of a satisfaction; but considering God's purpose to bring many sons to glory, and his decree of election which must needs stand, and that the elect's names are written in the book of life; it is impossible that they can continue under the curse, but must be satisfied for, and redeemed from it. *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*: My people have sinned, and must be redeemed; on supposition of the decree of election our Lord undertook that great work, the elect cannot perish, sin cannot draw them utterly away from God; not only shall not externals, such as devils or men, persecution, tribulation, &c. interpose betwixt them and life, but not even sin itself that is within them; his decree being peremptory must stand, as he says, John x. *I have other sheep which are not of this fold, them also I must bring in*: God's purpose cannot be frustrated or altered, therefore of necessity their sins must be satisfied for.

7. It is implied here, that for this end, to wit, that the elect might be saved from sin, and that God's decree of election might stand sure, Christ Jesus became

Surety, and did undertake to satisfy for their sins, otherways he could not have been liable to be stricken for them. That he was for the transgression of God's people stricken, is as much as to say that he was engaged for them; as it is, Heb. vii. 22. *He was made Surety of a better testament*: And Psal. xl. 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is writen of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.* These things being spoken after the manner of men, and borrowed from, the bargains or transactions that use to be amongst them, we may conceive the business thus, (hinted before) there is the Father's refusing of somewhat, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire*, and his proposing of somewhat else, and that is, that the Mediator would engage for the elect: And upon the other side, there is the Mediator's offer to undertake, and his actual undertaking and accepting of the Father's proposal, when sacrifices and offerings, when thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oyl will not do it; *Lo, I come*, saith he: And then for a conclusion of the engagement and transaction, there is the Father's accepting of his undertaking, he is content to take his sufferings as the price for the elects debt; hence John xvii. he saith, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*; that is, thine they were by election, and thou gavest them me to be redeemed by me: And Heb. x. 10. it is said, that *it is by this will that we are sanctified*; that is, by the will of the Father, that the Son should be Surety.

Use. Look upon the work of redemption as a great, gracious, and glorious work; about the designing and contriving whereof, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were employed, to speak with reverence before the world was. He might have made worlds of angels, and of sinless men and women at a word, and yet he hath graciously condescended to this way for redeeming of the poor elect. We are, alas, sinfully disposed to think little of the salvation and redemption
of

of a soul; but it is a great matter in God's account, the deepest of whose consultation (if we may so speak) is taken up about it, and in the contrivance whereof the manifold wisdom of God conspicuously shineth forth; and as in other things therein, so in this, that there was an ancient undertaking and engaging by Jesus Christ in the room of the elect as their Surety.

8. While it is said, *For the transgression of my people was he cut off and stricken*, it implies that Christ in his undertaking for the elect did oblige himself to undergo all those sufferings that were due to them, and even the sufferings of a cursed death, which was the curse threatned against man for sin; *the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*. And though Christ becoming Surety, the party is altered, yet the price is still continued to be the same, as is clear, Gal. iii. 11. *He was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on us Gentiles*: Whereby the justice of God is vindicated, and he hath access to shew mercy to the elect without any the least imputation to it; nay, this way is more for the vindication of God's justice, and for the making of his faithfulness to shine, that Christ became man, and died for the elect, than if the curse had fallen and lain on all the elect themselves; and it is a greater restraint on sinners to hate sin: I say again, that thereby the pure and spotless justice of God is vindicated, and his faithfulness more demonstrated, when he will needs so severely, and with so much holy rigidness exact of the Surety the elects debt to the least farthing, than if they had suffered themselves eternally. It shews forth also both the manifold wisdom and riches of the free grace of God: there being a decree of election for saving of many, and for bringing them to glory; and they being under sin, there is another decree and threatning that goes forth for cursing the sinner: and these two seeming to be altogether irreconcilable, the question comes in on the one hand, how is it possible that a sinner under the
curse

curse can be saved ? and upon the other hand, how is it possible than an elect of God can be damned ? The wisdom of God looseth the knot ; spotless justice is satisfied by taking hold of, and falling on the Surety : wonderful grace and love vent themselves in pardoning the sinner, and accepting of a ransom for him ; and manifold wisdom manifests itself in knitting these two together, so as none of them can witness its effect ; but all turns to the manifestation of the glory of grace at length ; it cannot be that the elect shall be damned, yet here stands the threatening of a just God, and his curse ready to be executed, but here is the reconciliation ; the curse is executed on the Mediator, whereby God shews himself to be a hater of sin, and an avenger of the wrong done to his justice ; and the elect sinner is pardoned, whereby God manifesteth the freedom of his grace, and his wonderful condescending love.

But now we come to a 6th doctrine, which is more directly held forth in the words, and it hath two branches, that our Lord Jesus his death and sufferings is a proportionable price and satisfaction laid down for the sins of the elect, and for them only. This is in the express words of the prophet : If the question be asked, wherefore suffered Christ all this ? He answers, he suffered it as a price for transgression : If it be asked again for whom, or for whose transgression did he suffer ? He answers, not for all men and women in the world, but, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*, or the stroke was on him for their transgressions. The first branch of the doctrine is to this purpose, that Christ's suffering is intended to satisfy for the transgression of God's elected people, and with respect to satisfying, for their sins did he suffer. And if we take these to be truths that we marked before, as implied in the words, this will natively and necessarily follow : If he engaged to be Surety for the elects debt, then his laying down his life, must be,

on

on the same account, and for the same end. Now, when we speak of Christ's laying down a price to satisfy for the transgressions of the elect, we mean not only this, that his sufferings and death have a value in themselves to satisfy for their sins; but that they are so intended by him in undergoing of them, and that they are so accepted of God according to his purpose, and according to the transaction that past betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator. They are not only (as Socinians say) to be a confirmation of the doctrine which he preached, and to be a rule and example to us of patient suffering, and of giving obedience to the death, as he did; but its also and mainly to satisfy the justice of God for our debt. So then this wicked tenet of the Socinians is exceeding derogatory to the sufferings of Christ, and to the matchless love that shined in them, yea, even to the whole design of redemption; for if Christ's sufferings be not a satisfaction to justice, we are left without all just plea and apology for ourselves at God's bar; and if we have none, then that curse looks the awakened sinner full in the face, *The day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*: And whoever men in their security may please themselves with such dreams, and think that a satisfaction to justice is not needful; yet if the conscience be once awakened, it will not be quieted without one; and if mens faith give not credit to God's threatnings, they can have but little, or rather no comfort at all in his promises. There is therefore a necessity of a satisfaction; and if Christ's sufferings be not the satisfaction, there is not another, and so the whole work of redemption is overturned. So then, though Christ in his sufferings hath left us a copy how we should suffer, yet that is not the only nor the principal end of them; but it is contrived in the covenant of redemption, and intended by the Mediator, and withal accepted by Jehovah, that they should be the meritorious cause of pardon to the elect, and the price of their redemption.

This may be further cleared and confirmed, 1. From the phrase that is ordinarily made use of in scripture, *He suffered for the sins of his people*: And in the text, *for the transgressions of my people was he stricken*: Their sins had a peculiar influence in bringing the stroke on him; and what influence I pray could they have but as they procured the stroke to him? And if his strokes were procured by our sins, then the desert of them was laid on him, and his sufferings behoved to be the curse that we elect sinners should have suffered; so when he is called their Surety, it tells us that he undertook their debt, and his laying down of his life is the performance and fulfilling of his undertaking as Surety. And considering that their debt was exacted of him, and that he was arraigned before God's tribunal as their Surety in their room; and that this could be for nothing else but to answer for them as being their bondsman; his sufferings must be intended as a satisfaction for their sins; for the elects sins were not the cause why Pilate, the people of the Jews, and the scribes and Pharisees pursued him to death; but for our sins he was arraigned before God's tribunal, and being our Surety he was called to reckon for them, and they were put upon his account. 2. It is clear also from the names that his sufferings have in the scripture, where they are called the *price of our redemption*, a *buying of us*, a *propitiation* for our sins that pacified God, Rom. iii. 25. and 1 John ii. 2. A *sacrifice* often, and *ransom*, Matt. xx. 28. *The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many*, that is, for all his elect people, to relieve them from the bondage they were under, which plainly shews the respect that his sufferings had to our sins, that they were a propitiation for them to God. 3. It is clear, if we consider that Christ's death as to its object is for the transgressions of all God's people, of all the elect that lived before he suffered, whether they died in their infancy

or

or at age, and for all that lived or shall live and die after his suffering, to the end of the world. Now, what benefit could redound to them that died ere Christ came in the flesh by his sufferings, if it were as Socinians say? For his death could not sure be a pattern of patience and obedience to them; but the efficacy of his death was from the beginning of the world: He was still in that sense the Lamb slain before his incarnation, as well as since. And if it be not meritorious in procuring salvation to elect infants, what influence or advantage can it have as to them? Either they are not taken to heaven at all, or they are taken to heaven, and yet not in the least obliged to Christ for their being brought thither; or if they be obliged to him, it is certainly by virtue of the merit of his sufferings for expiating the sins of his people. 4. It is clear from this, that in this same chapter, and throughout the gospel, all the benefits that come to God's people, as namely justification and pardon of sin, they are attributed to this as the cause of them; as verse 11. *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*: And if all the spiritual benefits that come to us were procured by his death, there must necessarily be virtue in it that procured them; and it must be a price and satisfaction in reference to the procuring and purchasing thereof, that he laid down in his dying. 5. It is clear from the end that God had before him in the work of redemption, and in Christ's sufferings; which was to glorify his justice as well as his mercy, and that neither of them might be clouded, or reflected upon. Now, by Christ's death, God's justice is glorified, and he is seen to be just in executing his threatening against sin, even in the person of his own dearly beloved Son, when he became Surety for sinners; but if his sufferings had not a satisfaction in them to divine justice, though there might be some shew of shewing mercy, yet none at all of a satisfaction to justice; but saith

the apostle, Rom. iii. 25, 26. ' God hath set him
 ' forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,
 ' to declare his righteousness, and that he might be
 ' just, and the justifier of them which believe in Je-
 ' sus.' By this, God hath made it manifest, that he
 is a just God, that none may preposterously presume
 upon mercy, nor dare to be familiar with sin, when
 it is pursued in the Surety with such severity.

For use and application, 1. Do not think these
 truths to be of little concernment to you, as alas they,
 and such like truths of the gospel are often thought
 of by many, and therefore they are tasteless to them,
 and it is a weariness to people to hear them spoken of.
 And yet notwithstanding, this same truth that we are
 now upon, is a great ground of our faith; for if we
 believe not this, that Christ was a propitiation for sin,
 we can have no ground of trusting to him, or believ-
 ing on him; but knowing and being confirmed in
 the faith of this truth, we have good ground from it
 to lay hold of Christ, to expect God's favour, and to
 be freed from the curse; because Christ is our Surety,
 who undertook, and accordingly satisfied for us,
 which is the thing that makes his death to be sweet.
 That Christ in his death should demean himself to
 leave us an example, is much, yet if we had no more
 by it, it would be but cold comfort, except we had it
 as a satisfaction to divine justice to rest upon. Tho'
 this may be looked upon as doctrinal only, yet it
 comes nearer to our practice than we are aware of;
 and though we have no Socinians in opinion and pro-
 fession to deal with, yet we have two sorts that are
 Socinians in heart amongst us. 1. Those that go on
 securely in sin, and yet hope to get mercy; and who
 will confess they are sinners, but that for making an
 amends, they will pray and mend their life, and they
 will speak of a number of things, but it may be, not
 one word of Christ or of his purchase, or of their na-
 tural inclination to presume, and despising Christ, as
 if

if they had nothing yet to look to but a covenant of works without a Saviour, as if God had removed, or would remove the curse threatened without a satisfaction, so that Christ's satisfaction is not known nor rested on by a multitude of hypocrites that live in the visible church. And this is easily proved from this, that there are but very few who make use of him, or stand in awe of sin. If it were believed, that justice required, and would have satisfaction either of the sinner himself, or of a Surety in his room, and that Christ is the only Surety, people would either quit their hopes of heaven, or be more ready to acknowledge their obligations to Christ; and that so many maintain the hope of heaven without a due consideration of a satisfaction to justice by Christ, and without employing of him, it declares plainly, that they are drunken with this error. A second sort are those, who being wakened in conscience, and sensible of sin, yet are as mournful, hesitating, and hopeless to have peace through him, as if he had not satisfied; what else does the doubting and despondency of such say, but that there is not a complete satisfaction in Christ's death? and that therefore they dare not trust to it, otherwise they would wonder that God hath provided such a remedy, and adventure to rest upon it, seeing God is as well pleased with it as if they had not provoked him at all, or had satisfied his justice themselves.

2dly, It serves to let us see what we are in God's debt, and how much we are obliged to the Mediator, when there was a necessity, that either he should suffer, or that we should perish; and that though his sufferings drew so deep as to bring him *to prison and to judgment*, and to put him to a holy sinless anxiety and perplexity, that yet he yielded to it, and underwent all for our sakes. This is our great ground of confidence, and the strong stay of the mind of a wakened believer; and should make us wonder at the

Father's love that gave the Son, and at the Son's love that was so condescending, and should make our souls warm towards him, who, when we deserved nothing but to be hurried away to the pit, was content to enter himself as our Surety, and to pay our debt. It should also be a motive to chase souls into him, knowing that where sin is, there a satisfaction must be, and that there is therefore a necessity to fly to him, and to be in him, because there is no other way to get justice satisfied; the thorough conviction whereof is that which, through grace, not only chaseth the soul to, but engageth it to close with Christ, and to rest upon him, and to give him the honour of its preservation, when it is ready otherwise to sink. Now the Lord himself teach you to make this use of this doctrine!



S E R M O N XXXIII.

ISAIAH LIII. Verse 8.

Verse 8. He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

THERE is nothing that concerns us more than to be well acquainted with the doctrine of Christ Jesus, and his sufferings; the prophet hath therefore been shewing much what Christ suffered in the former words, and hath largely described his humiliation
to

to judgment and death, *For*, saith he, *he was cut off out of the land of the living* : In the words read he answers two important questions concerning his sufferings, 1. To what end were all these sufferings? he answers, That they were for transgressions, even to be a satisfaction to justice for them. The 2d question is, For whose sins were the sufferings of Christ to be a satisfaction? it is answered expressly in these words, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*, or the stroke was upon him; it was for the sins of the elect, and of the elect only. For this is the prophet's scope, who having spoken of Christ's sufferings and death, holds forth the meritorious and procuring cause and end thereof; and this is the result, design, and sum of all, even to be a satisfaction for God's elect people; for, as we shewed, by God's people are not meant all men in the world, nor the Jews only, for Christ hath many sheep beside them; but it is God's peculiar people, in opposition to the multitude, who are not his people.

The doctrine, or rather the branch of the doctrine we left off at, was this (and it is exclusive) that Christ's death is only intended to be a price for the sins of God's elect people, and was laid down with respect to them; his death and sufferings are to be looked upon, and considered only as a price and satisfaction for their sins, and for the sins of none other; or thus, Jesus Christ, in his suffering, and in the laying down of his life, had a respect to the elect, and intended the removing of the sins and transgressions of God's elect people only, and of none other. We know nothing that we can make of these words, nor of the prophet's scope in them, but this; who, as he hath been describing Christ's sufferings in all other respects, so he doth in this; to wit, in respect of the persons for whom he suffered, and of the meritorious cause, and end of his sufferings; for says the text, *for the transgressions of my people*, that is of God's elect people *was he stricken*.

This branch of the doctrine is of great moment in the whole strain of grace, for if this land mark be removed, grace becomes common, and as some call it *universal*, and so in effect no grace at all; for grace hath a peculiar channel of its own, wherein it runs towards a certain select number, and not towards all; I do not mean of grace taken in a large sense, for so all men, as they are partakers of any mercy, or of common favours, may be said to have grace extended to them; but I mean God's special grace, favour and good will, which is extended only to the elect, for whose sins Christ suffered; the right bounding of which doctrine shews forth both God's sovereignty in the dispensing of grace, and the freeness thereof in communicating, and manifesting of it to whom he will, and which thus considered, is especially engaging of the hearts of them on whom he pleaseth to manifest it.

Ere I come to confirm this branch of the doctrine, take a word or two of advertisement in the entry, 1. That Christ's death may be considered two ways, 1. In respect of itself, and as abstracted from the covenant, of redemption, wherein it is contrived as to all the circumstances of it; in which sense as his death and sufferings are of infinite value and worth, so they are (as divines use to speak) of value to redeem the whole world, if God in his design and decree had so ordered, and thought meet to extend it. 2. We are to consider his sufferings and death as a price agreed upon in the covenant, or bargain of redemption, wherein these two or three things concur. 1. God's proposal. 2. Christ's acceptation, and design in laying down his life. 3. The Father's acquiescing therein, and declaring himself well pleased therewith; we speak not here of Christ's death in the first respect, that is as abstract from the covenant; for in that respect he might have laid down his life for few or more, for some or for all, if it had been so intended; but we.

we speak of it in the second respect, as it is a price agreed upon in God's purpose, and Christ's design, and in God's acceptation; and thus we say, that his death is only intended as a satisfaction and recompence for the sins of the elect, and was laid down for them only.

2dly, We may consider Christ's sufferings and death, in the fruits of it either as they respect common favours and mercies, common gifts, and means of grace, which are not peculiar and saving, but common to believers with others, being bestowed upon all professors in the visible church; or as they are peculiar and saving, such as faith, justification, adoption, &c. Now, when we say, that Christ's sufferings and death, are a price for the sins of his people, we exclude not the reprobate, simply from temporal and common favours and mercies that come by his death, they may have, and actually have common gifts and works of the spirit, the means of grace, which are some way effects and fruits of the same covenant; but we say, that the reprobate partake not of saving mercy, and that Christ's death is a satisfaction only for the elect, and that none other get pardon of sin, faith, and repentance, &c. by it, but they only, it was intended for none other, and this we clear and confirm from, and by these following grounds and arguments, which we shall shortly hint at.

The first argument is drawn from this same assertion of the prophet, thus, If Christ's death be only a satisfaction for the sins of God's people, then it is not a satisfaction for the sins of all; but it is a satisfaction only for the sins of God's people, therefore not for all; for his people are not all men, or all men are not his people, but his people are a peculiar people separate from others, in God's purpose and decree, as we cleared before, from John xvii. *Thine they were and thou gavest them me*; and the text says expressly, *for the transgressions of my people was he stricken*; he respected

respected the sins of God's people, in accepting of the engagement, and in laying down his life, and for their sins only God accepted him; yea, the very mentioning of them thus here secludes all others; and we must expound them exclusively, as taking in none other, and must look upon the things spoken of them, as agreeing to no other; even as it is said, Heb. iv. *There remains therefore a rest to the people of God*, which is certainly exclusive of all others; and hence, when our Lord speaks of them, John xvii. he opposes them to, and contra-distinguisheth them from all others; *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me out of the world*; to let us know that the things prayed for to the one, are denied to the other, according to the design of the covenant.

A second ground is drawn from the intentment of the covenant of redemption, where we find two things clear. 1. That as to the end and conveyance of it; the elect are the only persons for whose good it is intended; and if it be the elect for whom he entered into that covenant, then the advantage, good and benefit of the elect must be eyed in this main article of the covenant which relates to Christ's death and sufferings. For, 1. In the covenant of redemption, the good of the elect is proposed and designed by the Father, as is clear, John vi. 39, 40. *This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; and this is the Father's will that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him may have everlasting life*; which will be the more clear, if we consider the time when this is spoken; it is at such a time when many will not come to him, as verse 36, 37. *Ye also have seen me, and believe not; all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out; for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*; and then follows, *This*

This is the will of him that sent me, &c. and verse 43, 44. Murmur not (saith he) among yourselves, no man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: This ye heard from John xvii. 2. at greater length. 2. Look on the Son's part of the covenant, and it will also be clear; for his undertaking must be according to the Father's proposing; if the Father did not propose all, but some only to be redeemed, then his undertaking must be for these some, and not for all, agreeable to the Father's proposal, Psal. xl. Then, said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God: Now, the Father's will is, that he should undertake for those given him; and it is not his will, that he should undertake for others, therefore he did not undertake for them. 3. Christ's sufferings and death are the executions of the Father's will, and therefore must be the execution of his undertaking, according to his engagement for the elect and given ones; therefore these two are put together, John xvii. 9. and 19. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that is, for their sakes whom thou hast given me, and not for the world; he sanctifies himself for them for whom he prays, for them that are given him, and no more.

*2dly, This is clear in the covenant, that Christ's death is intended therein, as all other covenanted mercies are; that is to say, to whom faith, effectual calling, and justification, &c. are covenanted for, for these is Christ's death covenanted for, and for none other; for the covenant being mutual, the promise on the Father's part must be of equal extent with the Son's stipulation; but all these are only peculiarly applicable to the elect, as benefits flowing from, and following upon Christ's death, which therefore must be peculiarly intended for them, as being undergone for them. Hence when Christ speaks of faith, and effectual calling, John vi. he says, *All that**

the Father hath given me shall come unto me, and none other will, or can come; so justification, pardon of sin, &c. are bought to the elect, and to none others; and when the smallest of blessings are covenanted, and articulated for none other, but for the elect, shall Jesus Christ himself, that gift of God, or his death, which is the chief thing articulated in the covenant, be covenanted for, or applied to any others but to them?

A third ground is drawn from Christ's executing of his offices; for this part of Christ's executing of his offices must correspond, and be of equal extent with all the other parts of his offices, such as his effectual teaching, interceding, subduing to himself, &c. which are no larger than the elect, for he executes no part of any of his offices for the behoof and benefit of any but of the elect, he savingly enlightens no others; he subdues none other to the faith of the gospel; he interceeds for none other; his intercession is not for the world; therefore his death must be for none other, all these being commensurable and of equal extent; his intercession being grounded on his sufferings, therefore John xvii. he lays aside the world expressly, as those for whom he will not pray, and looks back to the covenant, as the ground of his undertaking for the elect, given him out of the world, and not for others; and if he will not pray, nor interceed for others, what reason can be given for his dying for others? when he will not do the less, which is to pray for them, it were absurd to think or say, that he will do the greater, which is to lay down his life for them.

A fourth ground is this, Christ's death is one of the peculiar evidences of his dearest love, beyond which there is none greater, and a main proof and fruit thereof, and therefore it is not common to all, but is intended for them only, whom he peculiarly loves and designs to bring safe to glory; which is clear, Eph. v. 26. *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved*

loved his church, and gave himself for it, &c. Rom. v. 5. *God commends his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* John xv. 13. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends;* there is a world of reprobates whom Christ never loved with peculiar love, and sure for these he did not die; *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,* saith the Lord, Rom. ix. 13. which the apostle holdeth forth, as a sort of copy of God's dealing in reprobation and election in reference to all mankind; and where the Lord himself hath set bounds betwixt them whom he loves and hates, it is too great liberality, or rather too great presumption for any, under whatever specious pretences, to extend this his peculiar love to those whom he disclaims.

A fifth ground is taken from the effect, thus; All for whom Christ died are justified, and freed from the guilt of their sins in due time, but Christ Jesus hath not purchased and actually procured freedom to all men from their sins, all men are not justified, therefore he laid not down his life for all; for, 1. It cannot be said, that he laid down his life for purchasing and buying of such men and women, and yet that he got not that which he bought; and seeing the event tells plainly, that all are not justified, and brought to heaven, it cannot be that he laid down his life a ransom for all, but it must be for the elect only, that he died. 2. To say, that God exacts double payment of one and the self same debt, that he exacts from men over again that which Christ paid already for them, reflects on the justice and wisdom of God; and to say that those persons that go to hell are as much in his debt as those that go to heaven, is no less absurd; for the apostle says, Rom v. 10. *If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life:* Where he plainly insinuates, that if a person

be bought by Christ's death, it cannot be that he can perish; for if the price be paid by his death, and so the greater thing be done, much more will the lesser, *we shall be saved by his life*. Now this reasoning could have no force, if Christ died for any that shall perish; yea, verse 11. of this chapter, it is said, *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities*; where it is clear, that as many (and no more) whose iniquities Christ hath taken on him and born, shall be justified; for the one is given as a reason of the other; if otherways there would be no difference of the elect from others, if he could by his death bear their iniquities, whom he never justified.

A 6th ground is taken from the end of the covenant, which is to put a difference betwixt special grace peculiar to some, and severe justice to others, and particularly and specially in Christ's death, which makes out what we affirm; for if when Christ died, many were actually damned, it cannot be said that he died for these, nor that it was with them, as with believers before his death; for it cannot be said, that the intention of his death, in the covenant, could be beyond what it was at his death, the one being the execution of the other: And sure it could not be intended at his death for the damned; for it would seem a very absurd thing to say, that when Christ was to go and lay down his life, that he was going to suffer for many, that were suffering for their own sins in hell, as many reprobate sinners were before he came in the flesh. Can any imagine a possibility of such a thing? Our Lord was not to be so indifferent in his administration, as to cast it thus away; and can any reasonably think, that at one and the same time, the same punishment shall be exacted from Christ, and from the persons themselves, for whom he suffered? Is it possible that this could be intended in the covenant of redemption; or is there free access to justice to pursue Christ as surety, when the principal debtor

is actually seized upon? Indeed when the principal is set free, as the elect were before his death, there is access to pursue the surety for their debt; but no such thing can be alleged for others that were already damned: But their being taken hold of by justice, is a proof that he answered not for them, nor paid their debt.

7. We may argue thus, If Christ died for all, then either for all indifferently, and so all were alike obliged to Christ; or for some more absolutely that must be satisfied for, and for others conditionally, on supposition that they should believe; but this last is absurd; for, 1. The scripture makes not two considerations of Christ's death. 2. It were absurd to say, that now it cannot be told, whether Christ died for such an one or not. 3. Either that condition is bought for them, or not; if it be bought, then it must be fulfilled; if it be not bought, then 1. That person cannot be said to be bought, because all needful for his redemption is not bought and paid for. 2. Either that condition can be fulfilled by themselves or not; if it may be by themselves, then is free-will established, and none are absolutely redeemed; if it cannot be fulfilled by themselves, and yet bought by him for them, they are determined for another end, to wit, not to get it, and what wisdom can there be in such redemption as this?

The 1. *use* serves for clearing and confirming of a gospel-truth of the covenant of redemption, and for the refutation of a contrary error. As we have somewhat of many errors practically in our hearts, so have we this amongst the rest, that Christ died for all sinners, which nourishes peoples security, and their groundless hope of admission to heaven: But here we see that our Lord Jesus so laying down his life, intended the satisfaction of divine justice, for none but his elect people; and if so, there are many for whom he never intended the benefit of his death. There
are

are *three* particular branches of the error which this doctrine confutes: 1. Their opinion which is more wide, and takes in the sins of all men and women in the world, and giveth them an equal share of Christ's sufferings; as if in his intention in laying down his life, and in God's purpose he had suffered and died for all, for him that goes to hell, as well as for him that goes to heaven: But if Christ stand as surety for the elect only, then sure this opinion cannot hold; for all are not God's elect, and therefore all are not indifferently redeemed: And though it may be that some of you think that this looks liker grace, yet it is not only absurd, as being contrary to truth, but it is absurd also, even with respect to grace; for 1. It makes grace a common thing; a man that is in hell to be as much obliged to Christ, as one that is in heaven; and though it plausibly pretends to give grace a broad and large extent, yet it takes away the power of it; for if grace be thus largely extended, it is not grace that makes the application of grace, but the free-will of the creature; for grace, according to this opinion, leaves men to be saved, or not, as they please, and leaves itself to be overcome by man's will, and therefore these errors divide not, but go together hand in hand: For where grace is made so large, free-will is made to have dominion over it; and thus the stress of grace and of election is laid upon it. 2. It lesseneth the esteem of God's grace in the minds of people; for thus, they think little of heaven, and suppose that it is an easy matter to come at it; and it breeds in them a fearlessness of hell, and of God's wrath: And if many of you had not drunken in this error practically, ye would not be so confident of it, nor so obstinately maintain your hope of heaven without ground. Hence, alas! it is, that many will say, God is merciful, and Christ died for all sinners, and for me, and so sleep away their time in security. I am persuaded, that much of the security and presumption

tion that abounds among carnal professors is from this ground, that grace is fancied to be thus broad and large. We grant, that as to the conveyance and nature of it, it is broad, but in respect of the objects on whom it is bestowed it is narrow, though it cometh from large bowels. 3. It exceedingly mars, and diminisheth man's thankfulness, for when a mercy is judged to be common, who will be thankful for it, as he would be, if it were special and peculiar? That which is a great ground of thankfulness for election, effectual calling, justification, &c. is because these mercies are peculiar; even so that which makes the redeemed thankful for redemption, is because they are redeemed, and bought when others are left; hence is that song of the redeemed company, Rev. v. 9. *Thou art worthy to open the book, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*: It heightens not their praise that all of every kindred and tongue, and nation were redeemed; but this doth it, that when the Lord had the whole world before him, he was graciously pleased to purchase, and redeem them out of it; that as it is, John xi. 52. *He should gather together in one the children of God, that were scattered abroad*: They therefore, I say, bless him, and wonder when they consider, that they are pitched on, who are by nature the same with those that are past by. It were a strange thing to affirm, that they who are in hell have as great ground of praise, and of saying, *We thank thee, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood*, as those that are in heaven have. 4. This making of grace so wide and large in its extent as to take in all, doth leave the people of God altogether comfortless. But it may be here said, how is it that it is more comfort to believers, that grace is peculiar in saving, and that but a few are redeemed, in comparison of others that are not redeemed, than if we should extend it unto, and account it to be for all?

all? Or how is this more comfortless to them, that grace is made universal? answer, 1. Because, if it were universal, many whom Christ died for, are now in hell, and what consolation can there be from that? A man may be redeemed, and yet perish, and go to hell for all that: But its strong consolation when this comes in, *If when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* If he died for us when we were enemies, will he not much more save us being friends? 2. Suppose a person to be in a state of nature, what comfort could he have by looking on redemption, as universal? He could not expect heaven by it; for many expect heaven on that ground who will never get it: But it is a sort of consolation, even to them that are without, to consider that redemption is peculiar to some; for though all get not to heaven, yet they that believe shall have it; and so upon their closing with Christ, the consolation presently flows out unto them; whereas, if they should lay it for a ground that Christ's death were universal, they could never have solid ground of consolation by flying to him. 5. This error doth quite overturn and enervate the whole covenant of redemption and peculiar love. 1. It enervates and obscures the wisdom that shines in it, if Christ may buy and purchase many by his death, who shall yet notwithstanding perish. 2. It enervates and obscures the love and grace that shine in it; for it makes Christ to throw away the love and grace of it on reprobates, and so cast pearls to swine. 3. It obscures the freedom of it, which appears in his taking of one, and refusing another, as it is, Rom. ix. 11, 12. *The children not being yet born, and having done neither good nor evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said, the elder shall serve the younger, (as it is written) Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* 4. It obscures the justice of it, if he should buy
all,

all, and yet have but some ; for it being the design of God to inflict on Christ the curse that was due to sinners, and to spare them ; if this should be the result of it, that many for whom he died, and took on him the curse, should perish, he would have but some of those whom he bought, and justice would twice exact satisfaction for one and the same debt, once of the Surety, and again of the principal debtor that perisheth ; whereas when Christ becomes Surety they are set free for whom he was Surety, and it is justice that it should be so. We do the rather insist on the confutation of this error, because this is a time wherein it is one of the devil's great designs which he drives, to trouble the clear springs of the gospel, and to revive this error among the rest. And there is something of it in those poor foolish creatures, who speak so much of a light within, as if all were alike, and had something, which if they use well, they may get life by. This error always leads men to be masters and carvers of God's decree, and of Christ's purpose and design in the work of redemption, and suspends the benefit of his death mainly, if not only on the consent of man's free-will.

A 2^d branch of the error which this doctrine refutes, is that which is vented by some, who are not professed enemies, but in other things deserve well of the church of Christ, which therefore should be our grief to mention : And it is this, that though Christ hath not simply purchased redemption from sin to all men, that yet he hath taken away from all the sins of that first covenant of works, as if there were, as they say, no sin for which men are now condemned, but the sin of infidelity, or unbelief. But this is dangerous ; for 1. If this be true, that Christ's death is only a price for the sins of the elect, then there are no sins of others reckoned on this score. 2. It divideth Christ's purchase ; and never, sure, can we find Christ's death divided, which were to say, that he hath

bought a man in part from wrath, and not wholly; such a dividing of Christ, and of his death, seems not consistent with the strain of the gospel; for as there is one sacrifice, so there is one account on which it is offered. 3. It seems to infer a good and safe condition to all them that die without sinning against the gospel, and so to infants born out of the church, that never sinned against the covenant of grace; and it pleads much for them that never heard the gospel; yea possibly for all, if they be not obliged to believe the gospel, as it is hard to say they are, who never heard of it. 4. There are many in hell this day, who know and feel this to be an untruth, being condemned for sins against the covenant of works; therefore he undertook not their debt, nor payed for them: And when the books shall be opened, there will be many other sins found to be reckoned for, than sins against the gospel. Are not whoremongers, adulterers, murderers, thieves, &c. to reckon for these sins? It is very sad that such things should take place with men otherways useful; but as in other things, so in this it is hurtful, which we should not speak of, were it not that they are spread abroad in books, wherewith many may be leavened.

A 3^d branch of the error which this doctrine refutes, is, That Christ died conditionally for all hearers of the gospel, to whom he is conditionally offered; and this is also vented by the same authors, who say, that though he hath not bought all men absolutely, nor died to procure life absolutely for them, yet that he did so conditionally, and upon supposition that they should afterward believe on him. But there can be no conditional satisfaction intended here; for 1. If respect be had only to the sins of the elect in Christ's undertaking, then none is had to the sins of all. 2. If the Father's acceptation of the price be absolute, then there is no conditional buying. 3. If it be conditional, then he suspended the effect of his death,

death, the satisfaction for his soul-travel on man's will: And if this condition could not be fulfilled by man, then it is an unwise bargain, and nothing of it may come to be fulfilled, and then believing is no fruit of grace. Again, he hath either bought faith to them as he hath done to the elect, or not: If he hath, then they reject it, and so grace is not efficacious; if not, he hath bought the end without the means leading to it. Or thus, if it be conditional, it is either on a condition that they can fulfil, or on a condition that they cannot fulfil: If it be on a condition which they can fulfil, then it hangs grace on mens free-will, and suspends the decree of election on their receiving of Christ: If it be a condition that is not in their power to fulfil, then either Christ hath bought that condition to them, or not; to say that he hath not bought the condition of faith, will infer a strange assertion that he hath bought life, and not the condition, the end, and not the means: And if it be said that he hath bought it, it cannot be said that he hath done it absolutely, because they never get it, or if absolutely, then to the elect only in whom it must be, and is in due time fulfilled: And so in effect it resolves in this, that Christ's purpose is to be bounded and confined to the elect only.

There are some difficulties and objections that will readily be here moved, which we will not enter upon, only for preventing of mistakes: It stands in the way of some to hinder their believing as they suppose, that Christ hath died for some, and not for all, and they know not if they be of that small number; if we were to speak to such, we would say, 1. God hath not elected all, and so who knows if he hath elected them? And he will not save all, and who knows if he will save them? And so the doubt will stick still; if people will thus break in upon God's secret will and purpose, which belongs not to them. 2. Christ's dying for you is not the formal ground nor warrant

of your faith, nor yet of the offer of the gospel, but the Lord's own will encouraging you to believe, and calling for it from you, and his commanding you to rest upon Christ for the attaining of righteousness, as he is offered to us in the gospel. We are invited by his command and promise, for we are not first called to believe that Christ died for us, but we are called first to believe in him that is offered to us in the gospel, that is our duty: People are not condemned, because Christ died not for them, but because when he offered the benefit of his death and sufferings to them, they slighted and rejected it: We are to look first to what Christ calleth us to, and not to meddle with the other, to wit, whom Christ minded in his death, till we have done the first. The word bids all believe, that they may be saved; and such as neglect this command will be found disobedient. 3. Though Christ hath not died for all, yet all that flee unto him by faith, shall be partakers of his death, and from this ye should reason, and not from his intention in dying. If ye come not to him ye cannot have ground to think that he died for you, but if ye go to him by faith, ye may expect that he will pray for you, and own you for believers. Christ puts in that word, John xvii. *They have believed thy word*, as well as that other, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*: And if we put these two together, the one will be found as sure a ground of consolation as the other. But it were but a poor comfort to say, that Christ died for all; and yet that they may all, or most, or many of them perish for all that.

The 2d use serves to stir them up to thankfulness for whom Christ hath satisfied, and who are fled for refuge to him. If there be any here to whom Christ hath manifested such love, that they can say he hath loved me, and given himself for me; O! How are ye obliged to wonder, and bless him? Greater love than this cannot be; and it should warm your hearts with love

love to him the more, when ye reflect on God's design upon you in particular in the covenant of redemption.

Use 3d, If Christ intended his death and sufferings only for the elect, then few come to heaven; so all believers should be the more diligent. Because Christ died not for all, every one should aim in God's own way, to have it made sure to himself that Christ died for him, and should engage him to be the more watchful and diligent, to make his calling and election sure, because as its not all that are elected, so its not all that are purchased by Christ's death. Redemption is sure in itself, and free grace appears conspicuously in it; yet wisdom and sovereignty do also appear in this, that it is not of all; therefore study ye to make it sure by fleeing to Christ by faith, and by the study of holiness and mortification in his strength, and through the power of his death, which will be a proof of your interest in it. This were much more suitable than to be quarrelling with God's decrees, as some are brought in Rom. ix. 19. *Why doth he find fault? Who hath resisted his will?* To whom the apostle answers, *Who art thou that repliest against God?* It becomes you not to dispute with God, but to seek with more sollicitude, and with holy and humble carefulness, to make the matter sure to yourselves. We may easily raise storms by our disputes, but shall come to no peace by them; this only can be come at by flying to the hope set before us.