

“ (for of them he spake immediately before) they have believed “ that thou didst send me.” (2.) If you savingly know God in Jesus Christ, such were given him by the Father, John xvii. 6. “ I have manifested thy name unto the men thou gavest me.” By this they are discriminated from the rest, verse 25. “ The world “ hath not known thee, but these have known,” &c. (3.) If you are men and women of another world; John xvii. 16. “ They “ are not of the world, as I am not of the world.” May it be said of you, as of dying men, that you are not men and women for this world, that you are crucified and dead to it, Gal. vi. 14. that you are strangers in it? Heb. xi. 13, 14. (4.) If you keep Christ’s word, John xvii. 6. “ Thine they were, and thou gavest “ them me; and they have kept thy word.” By keeping his word, understand the receiving of the word, in its sanctifying effects and influences into your hearts, and your perseverance in the profession and practice of it to the end, John xvii. 17. “ Sanctify “ them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” John xv. 7. “ If “ ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what “ ye will.” Blessed and happy is that soul upon which these blessed characters appear, which our Lord Jesus hath laid so close together, within the compass of a few verses, in this xvii. chapter of John. These are the persons the Father delivered unto Christ, and he accepted from the Father, in this blessed covenant.

SERMON IV.

Opens the admirable love of GOD in giving his own SON for us.

JOHN iii. 16.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.

YOU have heard of the gracious purpose and design of God, to recover poor sinners to himself by Jesus Christ, and how this design of love was laid and contrived in the covenant of redemption, whereof we last spake.

Now, according to the terms of that covenant, you shall hear from this scripture, how that design was by one degree advanced towards its accomplishment, in God’s actual giving or parting with his own Son for us: “ God so loved the world, that he gave,” &c.

The whole precedent context is spent in discovering the nature and necessity of regeneration, and the necessity thereof is in this

text urged and inferred from the peculiar respect and eye God had upon believers, in giving Christ for them; they only reaping all the special and saving benefits and advantages of that gift: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish."

In the words are to be considered,

1. The original spring or fountain of our best mercies, the love of God. The love of God is, either *benevolent*, *beneficent*, or *complacential*. His benevolent love, is nothing else but his desire and purpose of saving, and doing us good; so his purpose and grace to Jacob is called love, Rom. ix. 13. "Jacob have I loved;" but this being before Jacob was, could consist in nothing else but the gracious purpose of God towards him. His *beneficent* love, is his actual doing good to the persons beloved, or his bestowing the effects of his love upon us, according to that purpose. His *complacential* love, is nothing else but that delight and satisfaction he finds in beholding the fruits and workings of that grace in us, which he first intended for us, and then actually collated or bestowed on us. This love of benevolence, is that which I have opened to you, under the former head, God's compact with Christ about us, or his design to save us on the articles and terms therein specified.

The love of *beneficence*, is that which this scripture speaks of; out of this fountain Christ flowed to us, and both ran into that of complacency; for therefore he both purposed and actually bestowed Christ on us, that he might everlastingly delight in beholding the glory and praise of all this reflected on himself, by his *redeemed ones*. This then is the fountain of our mercies.

2. The mercy flowing out of this fountain, and that is Christ; *The mercy*, as he is emphatically called, Luke i. 72. The marrow, kernel, and substance of all other mercies. He gave his* only begotten Son: This was the birth of that love, the like whereunto it never brought forth before, therefore it is expressed with a double emphasis in the text, the one is the particle *εγω* so; "he so loved the world;" here is a *sic* without a *sicut*: How did he love it? Why, he *so loved it*; but how much, the tongues of angels cannot declare. And moreover, to enhance the mercy, he is stiled his only begotten Son: to have given a Son had been wonderful; but to give his only begotten Son, that is love inexpressible, unintelligible.

3. The *objects* of this love, or the persons to whom the eternal

* *Hic igitur unigeniti nomen εμφορτικον est ad probandam in nos amoris divini vehementiam. i. e. This strong epithet, of only begotten, is given in order to heighten the exceeding greatness of the love of God towards us. Bulling. on this place.*

Lord delivered Christ, and that is the [World.] This must respect the elect of God in the world, such as do, or shall actually believe, as it is exigetically expressed in the next words, "That whosoever believes in him should not perish:" Those whom he calls the *world* in that, he stiles *believers* in this expression; and the word [World] is put to signify the elect, because they are scattered through all parts, and are among all ranks of men in the world; these are the objects of this love; it is not angels, but men, that were so loved; he is called *φιλανθρωπος*, a Lover, a Friend of Men, but never *φιλαγγελος*, or *φιλοκλιεος*, the Lover or Friend of Angels, or creatures of another species.

4. The manner in which this never-enough celebrated mercy flows to us, from the fountain of divine love, and that is most freely and spontaneously. He *gave*, not he *sold*, or barely parted from, but *gave*. Nor yet doth the Father's giving imply Christ to be merely passive; for as the Father is here said to give him, so the apostle tells us, Gal. ii. 20. That he gave himself, "who loved me, and gave himself for me:" The Father gave him out of good will to men, and he as willingly bestowed himself on that service. Hence the note is,

Doct. That the gift of Christ is the highest and fullest manifestation of the love of God to sinners, that ever was made from eternity to them.

How is this gift of God to sinners signalized in that place of the apostle, 1 John iv. 10. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins?" Why doth the apostle so magnify this gift in saying, "Herein is love," as if there were love in nothing else! * May we not say, that to have a being, a being among the rational creatures, therein is love? To have our life carried so many years like a taper in the hand of Providence, through so many dangers, and not yet put out in obscurity, therein is love? To have food and raiment, convenient for us, beds to lie on, relations to comfort us, in all these is love? Yea, but if you speak comparatively, in all these there is no love, to the love expressed in sending or giving Christ for us: These are great mercies in themselves; but compared to this mercy, they are all swallowed up, as the light of candles when brought into the sun-shine. No, no, herein is love,

* God loves all his creatures: and among these he especially loves those he hath endowed with reason, and of those he loves more especially those who are members of the Only-begotten. How much more the Only-begotten himself! *Aug. T. 9. on John.*

that God gave Christ for us. And it is remarkable, that when the apostle would shew us, in Rom. v. 8. what is the noblest fruit that most commends to men the root of divine love that bears it, he shews us this very fruit of it that I am now opening; "But God, saith he, commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" this is the very flower of that love.

The method into which I will cast this precious point, shall be this: (1.) To shew how Jesus Christ was given by the Father. (2.) How that gift is the fullest and richest manifestation of the love of God that was ever made to the world. (3.) And then draw forth the uses of it.

1. How was Jesus Christ given by the Father, and what is implied therein.

You are not so to understand it, as though God parted with his interest and property in his Son, when he is said to give him; he was as much his own as ever. When men give, they transfer property to another; but when God had given him, he was, I say, still as much his own as ever: but this giving of Christ implies,

(1.) His designation and appointment unto death for us; for so you read, that it was done "according to the determinate counsel of God," Acts ii. 23. Look, as the Lamb under the Law was separated from the flock, and set apart for a sacrifice; though it were still living, yet it was intentionally, and preparatively given, and consecrated to the Lord: so Jesus Christ was, by the counsel and purpose of God, thus chosen, and set apart for his service: and therefore in Isa. xlii. 1. God calls him *his Elect*, or chosen One.

(2.) His giving Christ, implies a parting with him, or setting him (as the French hath it) at some distance from himself for a time. There was a kind of parting betwixt the Father and the Son, when he came to tabernacle in our flesh: so he expresseth it, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." This distance that this incarnation and humiliation set him at, was properly as to his humanity, which was really distant from the glory into which it is now taken up, and in respect of manifestation of delight and love, the Lord seemed to carry it as one at a distance from him. Oh! this was it that so deeply pierced, and wounded his soul, as is evident from that complaint, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not," &c.

(3.) God's giving of Christ, implies his delivering him into the hands of justice to be punished; even as condemned persons are,

by sentence of law, given or delivered into the hands of executioners. So Acts ii. 23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have slain:" and so he is said, Rom. viii. 32 "To deliver him up to death for us all." The Lord, when the time was come that Christ must suffer, did, as it were, say, O all ye roaring waves of my incensed justice, now swell as high as heaven, and go over his soul and body; sink him to the bottom; let him go, like Jonah, his type, into the belly of hell, unto the roots of the mountains. Come all ye raging storms, that I have reserved for this day of wrath, beat upon him, beat him down, that he may not be able to look up, Psal. lx. 12. Go justice, put him upon the rack, torment him in every part, till all his "bones *be* out of joint, and his heart within him *be* melted as wax in the midst of his bowels," Psal. xxii. 14. And ye assembly of the wicked Jews and Gentiles, that have so long gaped for his blood, now he is delivered into your hands; you are permitted to execute your malice to the full: I now loose your chain, and into your hand and power is he delivered.

(4.) God's giving of Christ, implies his application of him, with all the purchase of his blood, and settling all this upon us, as an inheritance and portion, John vi. 32, 33. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth light to the world." God hath giveth him as bread to poor starving creatures, that by faith they might eat and live. And so he told the Samaritaness, John iv. 10. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Bread and water are the two necessaries for the support of natural life; God hath given Christ, you see, to be all that, and more, to the spiritual life.

2. How this gift of Christ was the highest, and fullest manifestation of the love of God, that ever the world saw: * and this will be evidenced by the following particulars:

(1.) If you consider how near and dear Jesus Christ was to the Father; he was his Son, "his only Son," saith the text; the Son of his love, the darling of his Soul: His other Self, yea, one with himself; the express image of his person; the brightness of his Father's Glory: In parting with him, he parted with his own

* God might have redeemed us in another way, (for I suppose it is *opus liberi consilii*) a free dispensation: but God so loved the world, *i. e.* he took this way, that we might love Christ as well as believe in him. He might have redeemed us so much in another way, but he could not oblige us so much in another way. *Manton on Jude*, p. 108. *Mr. Wall* in his *None but Christ*.

heart, with his very bowels, as I may say. "Yet to us a Son is given," Isa. ix. 6. and such a Son as he calls "his dear Son," Col. i. 13. A late writer tells us, that he hath been informed, that in the famine in Germany, a poor family being ready to perish with famine, the husband made a motion to the wife, to sell one of the children for bread, to relieve themselves and the rest: The wife at last consents it should be so; but then they began to think which of the four should be sold; and when the eldest was named, they both refused to part with that, being their first-born, and the beginning of their strength. Well, then they came to the second, but could not yield that he should be sold, being the very picture and lively image of his father. The third was named, but that also was a child that best resembled the mother. And when the youngest was thought on, that was the Benjamin, the child of their old age; and so were content rather to perish altogether in the famine, than to part with a child for relief. And you know how tenderly Jacob took it, when his Joseph and Benjamin were rent from him. What is a child, but a piece of the parent wrapt up in another skin? And yet our dearest children are but as strangers to us, in comparison of the unspeakable dearness that was betwixt the Father and Christ.—Now, that he should ever be content to part with a Son, and such an only One, is such a manifestation of love, as will be admired to all eternity. And then,

(2.) Let it be considered, *To what he gave him*, even to death, and that of the cross; to be made a curse for us; to be the scorn and contempt of men; to the most unparalleled sufferings that ever were inflicted or borne by any. It melts our bowels, it breaks our heart, to behold our children striving in the pangs of death: but the Lord beheld his Son struggling under agonies that never any felt before him.* He saw him falling to the ground, groveling in the dust, sweating blood, and amidst those agonies turning himself to his Father, and, with a heart-rending cry, beseeching him, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass," Luke xxii. 42. To wrath, to the wrath, of an infinite God without mixture; to the very torments of hell was Christ delivered, and that by the hand of his own Father. Sure then that love must needs want a name, which made the Father of mercies deliver his only Son to such miseries for us.

(3.) It is a special consideration to enhance the love of God in giving Christ, that in giving him he gave the richest jewel in his cabinet; a mercy of the greatest worth, and most inestimable value, Heaven itself is not so valuable and precious as Christ is: He is the better half of heaven; and so the saints account him, Psal. lxxiii.

* Christ's pain was sorer than all pains put together. *Aquinas.*

25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Ten thousand thousand worlds, *saith one*,* as many worlds as angels can number, and then as a new world of angels can multiply, would not all be the bulk of a balance, to weigh Christ's excellency, love, and sweetness. O what a fair One! what an only One! what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One, is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand paradises, like the garden of Eden, into one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one; O what a fair and excellent thing would that be? And yet it should be less to that fair and dearest well-beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder.

Now, for God to bestow the mercy of mercies, the most precious thing in heaven or earth, upon poor sinners; and, as great, as lovely, as excellent as his Son was, yet not to account him too good to bestow upon us, what manner of love is this!

(4.) Once more, let it be considered on whom the Lord bestowed his Son: upon angels? No, but upon men. Upon man his friend? No, but upon his enemies. This is love; and on this consideration the apostle lays a mighty weight, in Rom. v. 8, 9, 10. "But God (saith he) commendeth his love towards us, in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,—When we "were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his "Son." Who would part with a son for the sake of his dearest friends? but God gave him to, and delivered him for enemies: O love unspeakable!

(5.) *Lastly*, Let us consider how freely this gift came from him: It was not wrested out of his hand by our importunity; for we as little desired as deserved it: It was surprising, preventing, eternal love, that delivered him to us: "Not that we loved him, but he "first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. Thus as when you weigh a thing, you cast in weight after weight, till the scales break; so doth God, one consideration upon another, to overcome our hearts, and make us admiringly to cry, what manner of love is this! And thus I have shewed you what God's giving of Christ is, and what matchless love is manifested in that incomparable gift.

Next we shall apply this, in some practical corollaries.

Corollary 1. Learn hence, *The exceeding preciousness of souls, and at what a high rate God values them, that he will give his Son, his only Son out of his bosom, as a ransom for them.* Surely this speaks their preciousness: God would not have parted with such a Son for small matters: all the world could not redeem them; gold and

* *Christus et cœlum non patiuntur hyperbolen.* Christ and heaven can suffer no hyperbole.

silver could not be their ransom; so speaks the apostle, 1 Peter i. 18. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Such an esteem God had for them, that rather than they should perish, Jesus Christ shall be made a man, yea, a curse for them. Oh then, learn to put a due value upon your own souls: do not sell that cheap, which God hath paid so dear for: Remember what a treasure you carry about you; the glory that you see in this world is not equivalent in worth to it. Matth. xvi. 26. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Corollary 2. If God has given his own Son for the world, then it follows, that *those for whom God gave his own Son, may warrantably expect any other temporal mercies from him.* This is the apostle's inference, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things?" And so 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "All is yours, for ye are Christ's." i. e. They hold all other things in Christ, who is the capital, and most comprehensive mercy.

To make out the grounds of this comfortable deduction, let these four things be pondered, and duly weighed in your thoughts. (1.) No other mercy you need or desire, is, or can be so dear to God, as Jesus Christ is: he never laid any other thing in his bosom as he did his Son. As for the world, and the comforts of it, it is the dust of his feet, he values it not; as you see by his providential disposals of it; having given it to the worst of men. "All the Turkish empire," saith Luther, "as great and glorious as it is, is but a crumb which the master of the family throws to the dogs." * Think upon any other outward enjoyment that is valuable in your eyes, and there is not so much comparison betwixt it and Christ, in the esteem of God, as is betwixt your dear children and the lumber of your houses, in your esteem. If then God has parted so freely from that which was infinitely dearer to him than these; how shall he deny these, when they may promote his glory, and your good? (2.) As Jesus Christ was nearer the heart of God than all these; so Christ is, in himself, much greater and more excellent than all of them: Ten thousand worlds, and the glory of them all, is but the dust of the balance, if weighed with Christ. These things are but poor creatures, but he is over all, God blessed for ever, Rom. ix. 5. They are common gifts, but he is *the Gift of God*, John iv. 10. They are ordinary mercies, but he is *The mercy*, Luke i. 72. As one pearl, or precious stone is greater in value than ten thousand common pebbles. Now, if

* *Totum Turcicum imperium, quantum quantum est, mica tantum est, quam Patrum familias projicit canibus.* Luther.

God has so freely given the greater, how can you suppose he should deny the lesser, mercies? Will a man give to another a large inheritance, and stand with him for a trifle? how can it be? (3.) There is no other mercy you want, but you are entitled to it by the gift of Christ; it is, as to right, conveyed to you with Christ. So, in the fore-cited 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. "the world is yours, yea, all is yours; for ye are Christ's." So 2 Cor. i. 20. "For all the promises of God in Christ, in him they are yea, and in him, amen." With him he hath given you all things, *εις απολαυσιν*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *richly to enjoy*: the word signifies *rem aliquam cum lætitia percipere*, to have the sweet relish and comfort of an enjoyment. So have we in all our mercies, upon the account of our title to them in Christ. (4.) *Lastly*, If God has given you this *nearer, greater, and all-comprehending mercy*, when you were enemies to him, and alienated from him; it is not imaginable he should deny you any inferior mercy, when you are come into a state of reconciliation and amity with him. So the apostle reasons, Rom. v. 8, 9, 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." And thus you have the second inference with its grounds.

Corollary 3. If the greatest love hath been manifested in giving Christ to the world, then it follows, *that the greatest evil and wickedness is manifested in despising, slighting, and rejecting Christ.* It is sad to abuse the love of God manifested in the lowest gift of providence; but, to slight the richest discoveries of it, even in that peerless gift, wherein God commends his love in the most taking and astonishing manner; this is sin with a witness. Blush, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth; yea, be ye horribly afraid! No guilt like this. The most flagitious wretches among the barbarous nations are innocent, in comparison of these. But, are there any such in the world? Dare any slight this gift of God? Indeed, if men's words might be taken, there are few or none that dare do so; but if their lives and practices may be believed, this, this is the sin of the far greater part of the christianized world. Witness the lamentable stupidity and supineness; witness the contempt of the gospel; witness the hatred and persecution of his image, laws and people. What is the language of all this, but a vile esteem of Jesus Christ?

And now, let me a little expostulate with those ungrateful souls, that trample under foot the Son of God, that value not this love that gave him forth. What is that mercy which you so contemn and undervalue? is it so vile and cheap a thing as your enterainment speaks it to be? is it indeed worth no more than this in your eyes? Surely you will not be long of that opinion! Will you be of

that mind, think you, when death and judgment shall have thoroughly awakened you! Oh, no: Then a thousand worlds for a Christ! as it is storied of our crooked-backed Richard, when he lost the field, and was in great danger by his enemies that pressed upon him; Oh now, (said he) a kingdom for a horse! Or think ye, that any beside you in the world are of your mind? you are deceived, if you think so, "To them that believe he is precious," through all the world, 1 Pet. ii. 7. and in the other world they are of a quite contrary mind. Could you but hear what is said of him in heaven, in what a dialect the saved of the Lord do extol their Saviour; or could you but imagine the self-revenges, the self-torments, which the damned suffer for their folly, and what a value they would set upon one tender of Christ, if it might but again be hoped for; you would see that such as you are the only despisers of Christ.* Beside, methinks it is astonishing, that you should despise a mercy in which your own souls are so dearly, so deeply, so everlastingly concerned, as they are in this gift of God. If it were but the soul of another, nay, less, if but the body of another, and yet less than that, if but another's beast, whose life you could preserve, you are obliged to do it; but when it is thyself, yea, the best part of thyself, thine own invaluable soul, that thou ruinest and destroyest thereby, Oh, what a monster art thou, to cast it away thus! What! will you slight your own souls? care you not whether they be saved, or whether they be damned? is it indeed an indifferent thing with you which way they fall at death? have you imagined a tolerable hell? is it easy to perish? are you not only turned God's enemies, but your own too? Oh see what monsters sin can turn men and women into! Oh the stupifying, besotting, intoxicating power of sin! But perhaps you think that all these are but uncertain sounds, with which we alarm you; it may be thine own heart will preach such doctrine as this to thee: Who can assure thee of the reality of these things? why shouldest thou trouble thyself with an invisible world, or be so much concerned for what thine eyes never saw, nor didst ever receive the report from any that have seen them? Well, though we cannot now shew you these things, yet shortly they shall be shewn you; and your own eyes shall behold them. You are convinced and satisfied that many other things are real which you never saw: but be assured, That "if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence

* Fy, fy, saith one, upon this condemned and foolish world, that will give so little for Christ and salvation: Oh! if there were but a free market proclaimed of Christ and salvation in that day, when the trumpet of God shall awaken the dead, how many buyers would be there? God send me no more happiness but that which the blind world (to their eternal woe) letteth slip through their fingers.

“ of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and “ was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing “ them witness?” Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4. But if they be certain, yet they are not near; it will be a long time before they come. Poor soul! how dost thou cheat thyself? It may be not by twenty parts so long a time as thy own fancy draws it forth for thee; thou art not certain of the next moment.

And suppose what thou imaginest: What are twenty or forty years when they are past? yea, what are a thousand years to vast eternity? Go trifle away a few days more, sleep out a few nights more, and then lie down in the dust; it will not be long ere the trump of God shall awaken thee, and thine eyes shall behold Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, and then you will know the price of this sin. Oh, therefore, if there be any sense of eternity upon you, any pity or love for yourselves in you; if you have any concernments more than the beasts that perish, despise not your own offered mercies, slight not the richest gift that ever was yet opened to the world; and a sweeter cannot be opened to all eternity.



SERMON V.

Of CHRIST'S wonderful Person.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, &c.

YOU have heard the covenant of redemption opened. The work therein propounded by the Father, and consented to by the Son, is such as infinitely exceeds the power of any mere creature to perform. He that undertakes to satisfy God, by obedience for man's sin, must himself be God; and he that performs such a perfect obedience, by doing, and suffering all that the law required, in our room, must be man. These two natures must be united in one person, else there could not be a concourse or co-operation of either nature in his mediatory works. How these natures are united, in the wonderful person of our *Immanuel*, is the first part of the great mystery of godliness:* a subject studied

* The incarnation is the miracle of miracles; a testimony against unbelievers, Isa. vii. 14. and a document to believers. None can declare his generation, Isa. liii. 8. Neither can any declare his incarnation, his name is secret, Judges xiii. 18. Won-