

believe it, it is a daring sin that flies higher than you are aware, Luke x. 16. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." *Secondly*, You despise the knowledge of Christ, when you despise the directions and loving constraints of that knowledge; when you refuse to be guided by your knowledge, your light and your lusts contest and struggle within you. O it is sad when your lusts master your light. You sin not as the heathens sin, who know not God; but when you sin, you must slight and put by the notices of your own consciences, and offer violence to your own convictions. And what sad work will this make in your souls? How soon will it lay your consciences waste?

Secondly, Take heed that you rest not satisfied with that knowledge of Christ you have attained, but grow on towards perfection. It is the pride and ignorance of many professors, when they have got a few raw and indigested notions, to swell with self-conceit of their excellent attainments. And it is the sin, even of the best of saints, when they see (*veritas in profundo*) how deep the knowledge of Christ lies, and what pains they must take to dig for it, to throw by the shovel of duty, and cry, *Dig we cannot*. To your work, Christians, to your work; let not your candle go out: sequester yourselves to this study, look what intercourses, and correspondences are betwixt the two worlds; what communion soever God and souls maintain, it is in this way; count all, therefore, but dross in comparison of that excellency which is in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.



SERMON II.

Sets forth CHRIST in his essential and primeval GLORY.

PROV. viii. 30.

Then was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.

THESSE words are a part of that excellent commendation of wisdom, by which in this book Solomon intends two things; *first*, Grace or holiness, Prov. iv. 7. "Wisdom is the principal thing." *Secondly*, *Jesus Christ*, the fountain of that grace: and look, as the former is renowned for its excellency, Job xxviii. 14, 15. so the latter, in this context, wherein the Spirit of God des-

cribes the most blessed state of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, from those eternal delights he had with his Father, before his assumption of our nature: "Then was I by him," &c. that long *Evum* was wholly swallowed up, and spent in unspeakable delights and pleasures. Which delights were twofold, (1.) The Father and Son delighted one in another (from which delights the Spirit is not here excluded) without communicating that their joy to any other, for no creature did then exist save in the mind of God, verse 30. (2.) They delighted in the salvation of men, in the prospect of that work, though not yet extant, verse 31. My present business lies in the former, *viz.* the mutual delights of the Father and Son, one with and in another; the account whereof we have in the text; wherein consider,

1. The glorious condition of the non-incarnated Son of God, described by the person with whom his fellowship was, "Then was I by him," or with him; so with him as never was any, in his very bosom, John i. 18. the only begotten Son was in the bosom of the Father; an expression of the greatest dearness and intimacy in the world; as if he should say, wrapt up in the very soul of his Father, embosomed in God.

2. This fellowship is illustrated by a metaphor, wherein the Lord will stoop to our capacities, (as "One brought up with him") the Hebrew word * אָמוֹן [*Amon*] is sometimes rendered a *cunning workman*, or *curious artist*, as in Cant. vii. 1. which is the same word. And indeed Christ shewed himself such an artist in the creation of the world; "For all things were made by him, and without him there was nothing made, that was made," John i. 3. But Montanus, and others, render it *nutricius*; and so Christ is here compared to a delightful child, sporting before its Father: the Hebrew root † שָׁחַק [*Shachak*,] which our translation renders "rejoicing before him," signifies *to laugh, play, or rejoice*; so that, look as parents delight to see their children sporting before them, so did the Father delight in beholding this darling of his bosom.

3. This delight is farther amplified by the perpetuity, and uninterruptedness thereof; "I was day by day his delights, rejoicing always before him." ‡ These delights of the Father and the

* [*Amon*] Signifies a *Skilful Artist*; he is pleased to assume this character, in order to shew men, that their conversion is not owing to any strength of their own, but is the work of this skilful Artist. *Brightman on Cant.* i. 26.

† [*Shachak*] *Ridere*, to laugh; *ludere*, to sport; *letari*, to rejoice: ἀνθρώπου παθώς, *after the manner of men*; he compares himself to a pleasant child, standing before his father. *Luvat.* on this place.

‡ [*Jom, Jom Meshacheketh*] continually rejoicing.

Son one in another, knew not a moment's interruption, or diminution: thus did these great and glorious persons mutually let forth their fullest pleasure and delight, each into the heart of the other; they lay as it were embosomed one in another, entertaining themselves with delights and pleasures ineffable, and unconceivable. Hence we observe,

Doct. That the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and most unspeakable delight and pleasure, in the enjoyment of his Father.

John tells us he was in the bosom of his Father: * to lie in the bosom is the posture of dearest love, John xiii. 23. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved:" but Christ did not lean upon the Father's bosom, as that disciple did in his, but lay in it: and therefore in Isa. xliiii. 1. the Father calls him, "Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;" which is † variously rendered; the Septuagint, *quem suscepit*, whom my soul takes, or wraps up: others, *complacuit*, one that highly pleases and delights my very soul: and 2 Cor. viii. 9. he is said, in this estate, wherein I am now describing him, to be *rich*: and, Phil. ii. 7. "To be equal with God, and to be in the form of God," (i. e.) to have all the glory and ensigns of the majesty of God; and the riches which he speaks of, was no less than all that God the Father hath, John xvi. 14. "All that the Father hath is mine:" and what he now hath in his exalted state, is the same he had before his humiliation, John xvii. 5. Now to sketch out (as we are able) the unspeakable felicity of that state of Christ, whilst he lay in that blessed bosom, I shall consider it three ways, negatively, positively, and comparatively.

1. Let us consider that state negatively, by removing from it all those degrees of abasement and sorrow which his incarnation brought him under: as,

First, He was not then abased to the condition of a creature, which was a low step indeed, and that which upon the matter undid him in point of reputation; for by this (saith the apostle) "he made himself of no reputation," Phil. ii. 7. it emptied him of his glory. For God to be made man, is such an abasement as none

* John i. 18. Here is insinuating, metaphorically, the intimate communion of the Son of God with the Father, which consists in eternal generation, in the strictest oneness or unity of nature, in the most ardent love, and in communication of the most secret affairs. *Glass*.

† Hieron. *Quem approbat*, i. e. Whom my soul approves. Pagninus & Montanus, *Complacuit animæ meæ*, i. e. One that highly delights my soul. The Septuagint, *Quem suscepit anima mea*, i. e. Whom my soul takes or wraps up.

can express: but then not only to appear in true flesh, but also in the likeness of sinful flesh, as, Rom. viii. 3. O what is this!

Secondly, Christ was not under the law in this estate. I confess it was no disparagement to Adam in the state of innocency, to angels in their state of glory, to be under law to God; but it was an unconceivable abasement to the absolute independent Being to come under law: yea, not only under the obedience, but also under the malediction and curse of the law, Gal. iv. 4. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

Thirdly, In this state he was not liable to any of those sorrowful consequents and attendants of that frail and feeble state of humanity, which he afterwards assumed, with the nature. As, (1.) He was unacquainted with griefs; there was no sorrowing or sighing in that bosom where he lay, though afterwards he became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isa. liii. 3. "A man of sorrows," as if he had been constituted and made up of pure and unmixed sorrows; every day conversing with griefs, as with his intimate companions and acquaintance. (2.) He was never pinched with poverty and wants, while he continued in that bosom, as he was afterwards, when he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," Matth. viii. 20. Ah blessed Jesus! thou needest not to have wanted a place to have lain thine head, hadst thou not left that bosom for my sake.* (3.) He never underwent reproach and shame in that bosom, there was nothing but glory and honour reflected upon him by his Father, though afterwards he was despised, and rejected of men, Isa. liii. 3. His Father never looked upon him without smiles and love, delight and joy, though afterwards he became a reproach of men, and despised of the people, Psalm xxii. 6. (4.) His holy heart was never offended with an impure suggestion or temptation of the Devil; all the while he lay in that bosom of peace and love, he never knew what it was to be assaulted with temptations, to be besieged and battered upon by unclean spirits, as he did afterwards, Mat. iv. 1. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." It was for our sakes that he submitted to those exercises of spirit, "to be in all points tempted

* He that was *in the bosom of his Father*; an expression showing the intimate, close, and secret delight and love he had from the Father. How unspeakable is it, that he should deprive himself of the sense of it? to put himself, as it were, out of heaven into hell? this is deeper love than ever we can imagine or conceive: No wonder the apostle calls it *περισσευων* [*perisseuon*], and *υπερπερισσευων* [*hyperperisseuon*] the unsearchable riches of grace; we are never able to go to the bottom of it, but still there is more grace and love behind. *Mr. Anth. Burgess, lect. on John xvii. p. 503.*

“like as we are, that he might be unto us a merciful and faithful High-priest,” Heb. iv. 15. (5.) He was never sensible of pains and tortures in soul or body, there were no such things in that blessed bosom where he lay, though afterwards he groaned and sweat under them, Isa. liii. 5. The Lord embraced him from eternity, but never wounded him till he stood in our place and room. (6.) There were no hidings or withdrawings of his Father from him; there was not a cloud from eternity upon the face of God, till *Jesus Christ* had left that bosom. It was a new thing to Christ to see frowns in the face of his Father; a new thing for him to cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Mat. xxvii. 46. (7.) There were never any impressions of his Father’s wrath upon him, as there were afterwards: God never delivered such a bitter cup into his hands before, as that was, Matth. xxvi. 39. *Lastly*, There was do death, to which he was subject, in that bosom. All these things were new things to Christ; he was above them all, till for our sakes he voluntarily subjected himself unto them. Thus you see what that state was not.

2. Let us consider it *positively*, what it was, and guess by some particular considerations (for indeed we can but guess) at the glory of it; as, (1.) We cannot but conceive it to be a state of matchless happiness, if we consider the persons enjoying and delighting in each other: he was with God, John i. 1. God, you know, is the fountain, ocean and centre of all delights and joys: Psal. xvi. 11. “In thy presence is fulness of joy.” To be wrapt up in the soul and bosom of all delights, as Christ was, must needs be a state transcending apprehension; to have the fountain of love and delight letting out itself so immediately, and fully, and everlastingly, upon this only begotten darling of his soul, so as it never did communicate itself to any; judge what a state of transcendent felicity this must be. Great persons have great delights.

(2.) Or if we consider the intimacy, dearness, yea, oneness of those great persons one with another: the nearer the union, the sweeter the communion. Now Jesus Christ was not only near and dear to God, but one with him; “I and my Father are one,” John x. 30. one in nature, will, love and delight. There is indeed a moral union of souls among men by love, but this was a natural oneness; no child is so one with his father, no husband so one with the wife of his bosom, no friend so one with his friend, no soul so one with its body, as Jesus Christ and his Father were one. O what matchless delights must necessarily flow from such a blessed union!

(3.) Consider again the purity of that delight with which the blessed Father and Son embraced each other; the best creature-delights one in another, are mixed, debased, and allayed; if there

be something ravishing and engaging, there is also something cloying and distasting. The purer any delight is, the more excellent. Now, there are no chrystal streams flowing so purely from the fountain, no beams of light so unmixed from the sun, as the loves and delights of these holy and glorious persons were: the holy, holy, holy Father embraced the thrice holy Son with a most holy delight and love.

(4.) Consider the constancy of this delight; it was from everlasting, as in verse 23. and from eternity; it never suffered one moment's interruption. The overflowing fountain of God's delight and love never stopped its course, never ebbed; but as he speaks in the text, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Once more, consider the fulness of that delight, the perfection of that pleasure; *I was delights*: so the word is in its original; not only plural, *delights*, all *delights*, but also in the abstract, *delight* itself: as afterwards from the abundance of his sorrows, he was stiled, a man of sorrows; so here, from the fulness of his delights: as though you should say, even constituted and made up of pleasure and delight.

3. Once more, let us consider it *comparatively*, and this state will yet appear more glorious, comparing it with either the choicest delights that one creature takes in another, or that God takes in the creature, or that the creatures take in God: measure these immense delights, betwixt the Father and his Son, by either of these lines, and you shall find them infinitely short: For, (1.) Though the delights that creatures take in each other, be sometimes a great delight; such was Jacob's delight in Benjamin, whose life is said *to be bound up in the lat's life*, a dear and high expression, Gen. xlv. 30. Such was that of Jonathan in David, whose soul was knit with his soul, "and he loved him as his own soul," 1 Sam. xiii. 1. and such is the delight of one friend in another: "there is a friend that is as a man's own soul," Deut. xiii. 6. yet all this is but creature-delight, and can in no particular equal the delights betwixt the Father and the Son; for this is but a finite delight, according to the measure and abilities of creatures, but that is infinite, suitable to the infinite perfection of the divine Being; this is always mixed, that perfectly pure. (2.) Or if you compare it with the delight that God takes in the creatures, it is confessed that God takes great delight in some creatures. "The Lord takes pleasure in his saints, he rejoices over them with singing! and resteth in his love," Zeph. iii. 17. Isa. lxii. 5. But yet there is a great difference betwixt his delight in creatures, and his delights in Christ; for all his delight in the saints is *secondary*, and for Christ's sake; but his delights in Christ are *primary*, and for his own sake: we are accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. he is be-

loved, and accepted for himself. (3.) To conclude, compare it once more with the delights that the best of creatures take in God, and Christ, and it must be confessed that is a choice delight, and a transcendent love, with which they love and delight in him; * Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth there is none I desire besides thee." What pangs of love, what raptures of delight did the spouse express to Christ? "O thou whom my soul loveth!" But surely our delight in God is no perfect rule to measure his delight in Christ by: for our love to God (at the best) is still imperfect; that is the burden and constant complaint of saints, but this is perfect; ours is inconstant, up and down, ebbing and flowing, but this is constant. So then, to conclude, the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and matchless delight, in the enjoyment of his Father. The uses follow.

Use of Information.

INFERENCE 1.

What an astonishing act of love was this then, for the Father to give the delight, the darling, of his soul, out of his very bosom, for poor sinners! all tongues must needs pause and falter, that attempt the expressions of his grace, expressions being here swallowed up: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," John iii. 16. Here is a *sic* without a *sicut*; so loved them: how did he love them? nay, here you must excuse the tongues of angels; which of us would deliver a child, the child of our delights, an only child, to death for the greatest inheritance in the world? what tender parent can endure a parting pull with such a child? when Hagar was taking her last leave (as she thought) of her Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 16. the text saith, "she went and sat her down over against him, a good way off: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over-against him, and lift up her voice, and wept:" though she were none of the best of mothers, nor he the best of children, yet she could not give up the child. O it was hard to part! what an outcry did David make, even for an Absalom! wishing he had died for him. What a hole (as I may say) hath the death of some children made in the hearts of some parents, which will never be closed up in this world! yet surely, never did any child lie so close to a parent's

* *Amo te, Domine, plusquam meos, plusquam mea, plusquam me, i. e. O Lord, I love thee above all my relations, above all that is mine, above myself. Bern.*

Suppose (saith one) there were a hell betwixt me and Christ, and Christ should say, put in thy foot and come through, or thou shalt have none of me, would I not do it.

heart, as Christ did to his Father's; and yet he willingly parts with him, though his only one, the Son of his delights, and that to death, a cursed death, for sinners, for the worst of sinners. *O miranda Dei philanthropia!* O the admirable love of God to men! matchless love! a love past finding out! Let all men, therefore, in the business of their redemption, give equal glory to the Father with the Son, John v. 23. if the Father had not loved thee, he had never parted with such a Son for thee.

INFERENCE 2.

From one wonder let our souls turn to another, for they are now in the midst of wonders: adore, and be for ever astonished at the love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners; that ever he should consent to leave such a bosom, and the ineffable delights that were there, for such poor worms as we are. O the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of unmeasurable love! O see, Rom. v. 6, 7, 8. read, and wonder; how is the love of Christ commended in ravishing circumstances to poor sinners!* You would be loth to leave a creature's bosom, a comfortable dwelling, a fair estate for the best friend in the world; your souls are loth to leave their bodies, though they have no such great content there; but which of you, if ever you found by experience what it is to be in the bosom of God by divine communion, would be persuaded to leave such a bosom for all the good that is in the world? and yet Jesus Christ who was embraced in that bosom after another manner than ever you were acquainted with, freely left it, and laid down the glory and riches he enjoyed there, for your sakes; and as the Father loved him; even so (believers) hath he loved you, John xvii. 22. What manner of love is this! Who ever loved as Christ loves? Who ever denied himself for Christ, as Christ denied himself for us?

INFERENCE 3.

Hence we are informed, That interest in Jesus Christ is the true way to all spiritual preferment in heaven. Do you covet to be in the heart, in the favour and delight of God? Get interest in Jesus Christ, and you shall presently be there. What old Israel said of the children of his beloved Joseph, Thy children are my children; the same God saith of all the dear children of Christ, Gen. xlviii. 5, 9. You see among men, all things are carried by interest:

* It is admirable that Christ should not only put himself out of comfort, but also from the enjoyment of that manifested glory and honour he might have retained to himself: for he prayeth here for that glory which he had with the Father from the beginning of the world: he had it in *right*, but not in *possession*; he voluntarily divested himself of that to accomplish our redemption. *Burgess on John xvii. 19.*

persons rise in this world as they are befriended; preferment goes by favour: So it is in heaven, persons are preferred according to their interest in the beloved, Eph. i. 9. Christ is the great favourite in heaven: his image upon your souls, and his name in your prayers, makes both accepted with God.

INFERENCE 4.

How worthy is Jesus Christ of all our love and delights? You see how infinitely the Father delighteth in him, how he ravishes the heart of God; and shall he not ravish our hearts? I present you a Christ this day, able to ravish any soul that will but view and consider him. O that you did but see this lovely Lord Jesus Christ! Then would you go home sick of love: surely he is a drawing Saviour, John xii. 32. Why do ye lavish away your precious affections upon vanity: None but Christ is worthy of them: when you spend your precious affections upon other objects, what is it but to dig for dross with golden mattocks? *The Lord direct our hearts into the love of Christ.* O that our hearts, loves and delights did meet and centre with the heart of God in this most blessed object! O let him that left God's bosom for you, be embosomed by you, though yours be nothing to God's; he that left God's bosom for you, deserves yours.

INFERENCE 5.

If Christ be the beloved darling of the Father's soul, think what a grievous and insufferable thing it is to the heart of God, to see his dear Son despised, slighted, and rejected by sinners: verily, there is no such cut to the heart of God in the whole world. Unbelievers trample upon God's darling, tread under foot him that eternally lay in his bosom, Heb. x. 29. Smite the Apple of his eye, and how God will bear this, that parable, Mat. xxi. 37, to 40, will inform you; surely he will miserably destroy such wretched sinners. If you would study to do God the greatest despight, there is none like this. What a dismal word is that; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," (i. e.) let the great curse of God lie upon that man till the Lord come. O sinners! you shall one day know the price of this sin; you shall feel what it is to despise a Jesus, that is able to compel love from the hardest heart. O that you would slight him no more! O that this day your hearts might fall in love with him! I tell you, if you would set your love to sale, none bids so fair for it as Christ.

2. Use of Exhortation

1. To saints: If Christ lay eternally in this bosom of love, and yet was content to forsake and leave it for your sakes; then, (1.) Be you

ready to forsake and leave all the comforts you have on earth for Christ: famous Galleacius left all for this enjoyment. Moses left all the glory of Egypt: Peter, and the other Apostles left all, Luke xviii. 28. But what have we to leave for Christ in comparison of what he left for us? Surely Christ is the highest pattern of self-denial in the world. (2.) Let this confirm your faith in prayer: If he, that has such an interest in the heart of God, intercede with the Father for you, then never doubt of audience and acceptance with him; surely you shall be accepted through the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Christ was never denied any thing that he asked, John xi. 42. the Father hears him always; though you are not worthy, Christ is, and he ever lives to make intercession for you, Heb. vii. 25.

(3.) Let this encourage thy heart, O saint, in a dying hour, and not only make thee patient in death, but in a holy manner impatient till thou be gone; for whither is thy soul now going, but to that bosom of love whence Christ came? John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am:" and where is he but in that bosom of glory and love where he lay before the world was? ver. 5. O then let every believer encourage his soul; comfort ye one another with these words, I am leaving the bosom of a creature, I am going to the bosom of God.

2. To sinners, exhorting them to embrace the bosom-son of God: Poor Wretches! Whatever you are, or have been; whatever guilt or discouragement at present you lie under; embrace Christ, who is freely offered to you, and you shall be as dear to God as the holiest and most eminent believer in the world: but if you still continue to despise and neglect such a Saviour, sorer wrath is treasured up for you than other sinners, even something worse than dying without mercy, Heb. x. 28. O that these discoveries and overtures of Christ may never come to such a fatal issue with any of your souls, in whose eyes his glory hath been this day opened!