themselves! Thus Demas and Judas gave up Christ to gain a little of the world; O soul-undoing bargain! How dear do they pay for the world, that purchase it with the loss of Christ, and their own peace for ever!

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the Mercy of mercies.

SERMON XII.

Containing a third Motive to enliven the general Exhortation from a third Title of Christ.

Cant. v. Part of Verse 16.

Yea, He is altogether lovely.

AT the ninth verse of this chapter, you have a query propounded to the *spouse*, by the *daughters of Jerusalem*, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" To this question the spouse returns her answers in the following verses, wherein she asserts his excellency in general. Ver. 10. "He is the chiefest among ten thousands;" confirms that general assertion, by an enumeration of his particular excellencies, to ver. 16. where she closes up her *character* and *encomium* of her beloved, with an elegant *epiphonema*, in the words that I have read: "Yea, he is altogether lovely."

The words, you see, are an affirmative proposition, setting forth the transcendent loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and naturally

resolve themselves into three parts, viz.

The subject.
 The predicate.

3. The manner of predication.

First, The subject, He, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ, after whom she had been seeking, for whom she was sick of love; concerning whom these daughters of Jerusalem had enquired: whom she had endeavoured so graphically to describe in his particular excellencies. This is the great and excellent subject of whom she here speaks.

Secondly, The predicate, or what she affirmeth or saith of him, viz. That he is a lovely one, Machamaddim, desires; according to the import of the * original, "which signifies earnestly to desire, covet, "or long after that which is most pleasant, grateful, delectable, "and admirable." The original word is both in the abstract, and

^{*} Significat appetere, expetere quod jocundum, gratum, voluptuosum, utile et amabile est. Pag.

of the *plural number*, which speaks Christ to be the very essence of all delights and pleasures, the very soul and substance of them. As all the rivers are gathered into the ocean, which is the congregation or meeting-place of all the waters in the world: so Christ is that

ocean in which all true delights and pleasures meet.

Thirdly, The manner of predication; He is [altogether] lovely, Totus, totus desiderabilis; lovely in all, and in every part; as if she had said, Look on him in what respect or particular you will; cast your eye upon this lovely object, and view him any way; turn him in your serious thoughts which way you will; consider his person, his offices, his works, or any other thing belonging to him; you will find him altogether lovely, There is nothing ungrateful in him, there is nothing lovely without him. Hence note,

Doct. That Jesus Christ is the loveliest person souls can set their eyes upon, Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children "of men."

That is said of Jesus Christ, which cannot be said of any creature; that he is "altogether lovely." In opening this lovely point I shall,

1. Weigh the importance of this phrase "altogether levely."

2. Shew you in what respect Christ is so.

First, Let us weigh this excellent expression, and particularly consider what is contained in it, and you shall find this expression

" altogether lovely."

First, That it excludes all unloveliness and distastefulness from Jesus Christ. So * Vatablus; "There is nothing in him which is "not amiable." The excellencies of Jesus Christ are perfectly exclusives of all their opposites; there is nothing of a contrary nature or quality found in him to alloy or debase his excellency. And in this respect Christ infinitely transcends the most excellent and loveliest creatures. For whatsoever loveliness is found in them, it is not without a distasteful tang; the fairest pictures must have their shadows: The most orient and transplendent stones must have their foils to set off their beauty; the best creature is but a bitter sweet at best: If there be somewhat pleasing, there is also somewhat distasting; if there be gracious and natural excellencies in the same person to delight us, yet there is also some natural corruption intermixed with it to distaste us: But it is not so in our altogether lovely Christ; his excellencies are pure and unmixed; he is a sea of sweetness without one drop of gall.

^{*} Nihil in eo quod non est amabile.

Secondly, * Altogether lovely, i. e. as there is nothing unlovely found in him, so all that is in him is wholly lovely; as every ray of God is precious, so every thing that is in Christ is precious: Who can weigh Christ in a pair of balances, and tell you what his worth is? "His price is above rubies, and all that thou canst desire

"is not to be compared with him," Prov. viii. 11.

Thirdly, Altogether lovely, i. e. He is comprehensive of all things that are lovely: he seals up the sum of all loveliness: Quæ faciunt divisa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt: Things that shine as single stars with a particular glory, all meet in Christ as a glorious constellation. Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness "dwell." Cast your eyes among all created beings, survey the universe, observe strength in one, beauty in a second, faithfulness in a third, wisdom in a fourth; but you shall find none excelling in them all as Christ doth. Bread hath one quality, water another, raiment another, physic another; but none hath all in itself as Christ hath: He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded; and whatever a soul can desire is found in him, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Fourthly, Altogether lovely, i. e. Nothing is lovely in opposition to him, or in separation from him. If he be altogether lovely, then whatsoever is opposite to, or separate from him can have no loveliness in it; take away Christ, and where is the loveliness of any enjoyment? The best creature-comfort out of Christ, is but a broken cistern; it cannot hold one drop of true comfort, Psal. lxxiii. 26. It is with the creature, the sweetest and loveliest creature, as with a beautiful image in the glass: turn away the face and where is the image? Riches, honours, and comfortable relations are sweet when the face of Christ smiles upon us through them; but without him, what empty trifles are they all?

Fifthly, Altogether lovely, i. e. Transcending all created excellencies in beauty and loveliness; so much it speaks. If you compare Christ and other things, be they never so lovely, never so excellent and desirable; Christ carries away all loveliness from them; "He is (saith the apostle) before all things," Col. i. 17. Not only before all things in time, nature, and order; but before all things in dignity, glory, and true excellency: In all things he must have the pre-eminence. For let us but compare Christ's excellency with the creature's in a few particulars, and how evidently will the transcen-

dent leveliness of Jesus Christ appear! For,

First, All other loveliness is derivative and secondary; but the loveliness of Christ original and primary. Angels and men, the

^{*} The more excellent he is, the more he is to be sought after, by earnest prayer and desires. Brightman.

world and all the desirables in it, receive what excellency they have from him; they are streams from the fountain. But as the waters in the fountain itself are more abundant, so more pure and pleasant * than in the streams. And the farther any thing departs, and is removed from its fountain and original, the less excellency there is in it.

Secondly, The loveliness and excellency of all other things, is but relative and respective, consisting in its reference to Christ, and subserviency to his glory; but Christ is lovely, considered absolutely in himself: He is desirable for himself, other things are so for him.

Thirdly, The beauty and loveliness of all other things is fading and perishing; but the loveliness of Christ is fresh to all eternity: the sweetness of the best creatures is a fading flower; if not before, yet certainly at death it must fade away. Job iv. 21. "Doth "not their excellency, which is in them, go away?" Yes, yes, whether natural excellencies of the body, or acquired endowments of the mind, lovely features, amiable qualities, attracting excellencies; all these like pleasant flowers are withered, faded, and destroyed by death; "but Christ is still the same, yesterday, to day, "and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8.

Fourthly, The beauty and holiness of creatures are ensnaring and dangerous; a man may make an idol thereof, and dote beyond the bounds of moderation upon them, but there is no danger of excess in the love of Christ. The soul is then in the healthiest frame and temper when it is most sick of love to Christ, Cant. v. 8.

Fifthly, The loveliness of every creature is of a cloying and glutting nature; our estimation of it abates and sinks by our nearer approach to it, or longer enjoyment of it: creatures, like pictures, are fairest at a due distance, but it is not so with Christ; the nearer the soul approacheth him, and the longer it lives in the enjoyment of him, still the more sweet and desirable is he.

Sixthly, and lastly, All other loveliness is unsatisfying and straitening to the soul of man; there is not room enough in any one, or in all the creatures for the soul of man to dilate and expatiate itself; but it still feels itself confined and narrowed within those strait limits †: And this comes to pass from the inadequateness and unsuitableness of the creature, to the nobler and more excellent

^{*} Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ. Waters drink more pleasantly from the fountain itself.

[†] Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis;

Æstuat infectix angusto in limite mundi.

The world is not sufficient for the Macedonian youth (viz. Alexander;) he frets at being confined within the narrow boundary of the world.

soul of man, which like a ship in a narrow river hath not room to turn; and besides, is ever and anon striking ground and foundering in those shallows. But Jesus Christ is every way adequate to the vast desires of the soul; in him it hath sea-room enough; there it may spread all its sails, no fear of touching the bottom. And thus you see what is the importance of this phrase, Altogether lovely.

Secondly, Next I promised to shew you in what respects Jesus

Christ is altogether lovely. And,

First, He is altogether lovely in his person: a Deity dwelling in flesh, John i. 14. The wonderful union and perfection of the divine and human nature in Christ, render him an object of admiration and adoration to angels and men, 1 Tim. iii. 16. God never presented to the world such a vision of glory before: And then consider how the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ is replenished with all the graces of the Spirit, so as never any of all the saints was filled; O how lovely doth this render him! John iii. 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." This makes him fairer than the children of men, grace being poured into his lips, Psal. xlv. 2. If a small measure of grace in the saints make them such sweet and desirable companions, what must the riches and fulness of the Spirit of grace filling Jesus Christ without measure, make him in the eyes of believers? O what a glory and lustre must it stamp upon him!

Secondly, He is altogether lovely in his offices: for let us but consider the suitableness, fulness, and comfortableness of them.

First, The suitableness of the offices of Christ to the miseries and wants of men; and we cannot but adore the infinite wisdom of God in his investiture with them; we are, by nature, blind and ignorant, at best but groping in the dim light of nature after God, Acts xvii. 27. Jesus Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, Isa. xlix. 6. When this great prophet came into the world, then did the day-spring from on high visit us, Luke i. 78. The state of nature is a state of alienation from, and enmity against God; Christ comes into the world an atoning sacrifice, making peace by the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20. All the world, by nature, are in bondage and captivity to Satan, a lamentable thraldom; Christ comes with kingly power, to rescue sinners, as a prey from the mouth of the terrible one.

Secondly, Let the fulness of his offices be also considered, by reason whereof he is able "to save to the uttermost, all that come to "God by him," Heb. vii. 25. The three offices, comprising in them all that our souls do need, become an universal relief to all our wants; and therefore,

Thirdly, Unspeakably comfortable must the offices of Christ be to

the souls of sinners. If light be pleasant to our eyes, how pleasant is that light of life springing from the Sun of righteousness! Mal. iv. 2. If a pardon be sweet to a condemned malefactor, how sweet must the sprinkling the blood of Jesus be to the trembling conscience of a law-condemned sinner? If a rescue from a cruel tyrant be sweet to a poor captive, how sweet must it be to the ears of enslaved sinners, to hear the voice of liberty and deliverance proclaimed by Jesus Christ? Out of the several offices of Christ, as out of so many fountains, all the promises of the new covenant flow, as so many soul-refreshing streams of peace and joy: all the promises of illumination, counsel and direction flow out of the prophetical office; all the promises of reconciliation, peace, pardon, and acceptation flow out of the priestly office, with the sweet streams of joy, and spiritual comforts depending thereupon; all the promises of converting, increasing, defending, directing, and supplying grace, flow out of the kingly office of Christ; indeed, all promises may be reduced to the three offices: so that Jesus Christ must needs be altogether lovely in his offices.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is altogether lovely in his relations.

First, He is a lovely Redeemer, Isa. lxi. 1. He came to open the prison-doors to them that are bound. Needs must this Redeemer be a lovely one, if we consider the depth of misery from which he redeemed us, even "from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10. How lovely was Titus, in the eyes of the poor enthralled Greeks, whom he delivered from their bondage! this endeared him to them to that degree, that when their liberty was proclaimed, they even trod one another to death to see the herald that proclaimed it; and all the night following, with instruments of music, danced about his tent, crying with united voices, "a Saviour, a Saviour." Or, whether we consider the numbers redeemed, and the means of their redemption. Rev. v. 9. And they sang a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals there-"of: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy "blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and na-"tion." He redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, by way of price, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. with his out-stretched and glorious arm, by way of power, Col. i. 13. he redeemed us freely, Eph. i. 7. fully, Rom. viii. 1. seasonably, Gal. iv. 4. and out of special and peculiar love, John xvii. 9. In a word, he hath redeemed us for ever, never more to come into bondage, 1 Pet. i. 5. John x. 28. O how lovely is Jesus Christ in the relation of a Redeemer to God's elect!

Secondly, He is a lovely bridegroom to all that he espouses to himself. How doth the church glory in him, in the words following my text; "this is my Beloved, and this is my Friend,

"O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" q. d. Heaven and earth cannot shew such another: which needs no fuller proof than the follow-

ing particulars.

First, That he espouses to himself, in mercy and in loving-kindness, such deformed, defiled, and altogether unworthy souls as we are; who have no beauty, no excellency to make us desirable in his eyes; all the springs of his love to us are in his own breast, Deut. vii. 7. he chuseth us, not because we were, but that he might make us lovely, Eph. v. 27. he passed by us when we lay in our blood, and said unto us, Live; and that was the time of love, Ezek. xvi. 5.

Secondly, He expects nothing with us, and yet bestows himself, and all that he hath, upon us. Our poverty cannot enrich him, but he made himself poor to enrich us, 2 Cor. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Thirdly, No husband loves the wife of his bosom, as Christ loved his people, Eph. v. 25. He loved the church and gave himself for it.

Fourthly, None bears with weaknesses and provocations as Christ doth; the church is stiled "the Lamb's wife," Rev. xix. 9.

Fifthly, No husband is so immortal and everlasting a husband as Christ is; death separates all other relations, but the soul's union with Christ is not dissolved in the grave; yea, the day of a believer's death, is his marriage day, the day of his fullest enjoyment of Christ. No husband can say to his wife, what Christ saith to the believer, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

Sixthly, No bridegroom advanceth his bride to such honours by marriage, as Christ doth; he relates them to God as their father, and from that day the mighty and glorious angels think it no dishonour to be their servants, Heb. i. 14. they are brought in admiring the beauty and glory of the spouse of Christ, Rev. xxi. 9.

Seventhly, and lastly, No marriage was ever consummated with such triumphal solemnity, as the marriage of Christ and believers shall be in heaven, Psal. xlv. 14, 15. "She shall be brought to "the king in raiment of needle-work, the virgins, her compani-"ons that follow her, shall be brought unto thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace." Among the Jews the marriage-house was called Bethillula, the house of praise; there was joy upon all hands, but none like the joy that will be in heaven, when believers, the spouse of Christ, shall be brought thither: God the Father will rejoice, to behold the blessed accomplishment and confirmation of those glorious designs of his love. Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, will rejoice

to see the travail of his soul, the blessed birth and issue of all his bitter pangs and agonies, Isa. liii. 11. The Holy Spirit will rejoice to see the completion and perfection of that sanctifying design which was committed to his hand, 2 Cor. v. 5. to see those souls whom he once found as rough stones, now to shine as the bright, polished stones of the spiritual temple. Angels will rejoice: great was the joy when the foundation of this design was laid, in the incarnation of Christ, Luke ii. 13. great therefore must their joy be, when the top-stone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace, The saints themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the King's palace, and be for ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17. Indeed there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned, who shall gnash their teeth with envy at the everlasting advancement and glory of believers.

Thus Christ is altogether levely, in the relation of a Bride-

groom.

Thirdly, Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of an Advocate. 1 John ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with "the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the Propitia-"tion;" it is he that pleads the cause of believers in heaven; appears for them in the presence of God, to prevent all new breaches, and continues the state of friendship and peace betwixt God and us. In this relation Christ is altogether lovely. For,

First, He makes our cause his own, and acts for us in heaven, as for himself, Heb. iv. 15. He is touched with the tender sense of our troubles and dangers, and is not only one with us, by way of representation, but also one with us in respect of sympathy and af-

fection.

Secondly, Christ our Advocate, follows our suit and business in heaven, as his great and main design and business; therefore, in Heb. vii. 25. he is said to "live for ever to make intercession for "us;" as if our concernments were so minded by him there, as to give up himself wholly to that work, as if all the glory and honour which is paid him in heaven would not satisfy him, or divert him one moment from our business.

Thirdly, He pleads the cause of believers by his blood; it satisfies him not, as other advocates, to be at the expence of words and oratory, which is a cheaper way of pleading; but he pleads for us by the voice of his own blood, Heb. xii. 24. where we are said to be come "to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things "than that of Abel:" Every wound he received for us on earth, is a mouth opened to plead with God on our behalf in heaven; Quot vulnera, tot ora. And hence it is, that in Rev. v. 6. he is represented standing before God, as a lamb that had been slain; as it were, exhibiting and opening in heaven those deadly wounds re-

ceived on earth, from the justice of God, on our account. Other advocates spend their breath, Christ his blood.

Fourthly, He pleads the cause of believers freely. Other advocates plead for reward, and exhaust the purses, while they plead

the causes of their clients.

Fifthly, In a word, he obtaineth for us all the mercies for which he pleads; no cause miscarries in his hand, which he undertakes, Rom. viii. 33, 34. O what a lovely Advocate is Christ for believers!

Fourthly, Christ is altogether lovely in the relation of a *friend*, for in this relation he is pleased to own his people, Luke xii. 4, 5. There are certain things in which one friend manifests his affection

and friendship to another, but none like Christ. For,

First, No friend is so open-hearted to his friend as Christ is to his people: he reveals the very counsels and secrets of his heart to them. John xv. 15. "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant "knoweth not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends; "for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made "known unto you."

Secondly, No friend in the world is so generous and bountiful to his friend, as Jesus Christ is to believers; John xv. 13. he parts with his very blood for them; "Greater love (saith he) hath no "man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He hath exhausted the precious treasures of his invaluable blood to pay our debts. O what a lovely friend is Jesus Christ to believers!

Thirdly, No friend sympathizes so tenderly with his friend in affliction, as Jesus Christ doth with his friends: "In all our afflic"tions he is afflicted," Heb. iv. 15. He feels all our sorrows, wants and burdens as his own. Whence it is that the sufferings of believers are called the sufferings of Christ, Col. i. 24.

Fourthly, No friend in the world takes that complacency in his friend, as Jesus Christ doth in believers. Cant. iv. 9. "Thou "hast ravished my heart, (saith he to the spouse) thou hast ravishe" ed my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." The Hebrew, here rendered ravished, signifies to puff up, or to make one proud: how is the Lord Jesus pleased to glory in his people! how is he taken and delighted with those gracious ornaments which himself bestows upon them! No friend so lovely as Christ.

Fifthly, No friend in the world loves his friend with so fervent and strong affection as Jesus Christ loves believers. Jacob loved Rachel, and endured for her sake the parching heat of summer and cold of winter; but Christ endured the storms of the wrath of God, the heat of his indignation, for our sakes. David manifested

his love to Absalom, in wishing, "O that I had died for thee!" Christ manifested his love to us, not in wishes that he had died, but in death itself, in our stead, and for our sakes.

Sixthly, No friend in the world is so constant and unchangeable in friendship as Christ is, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own "which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He bears with millions of provocations and injuries, and yet will not break friendship with his people. Peter denied him, yet he will not disown him; but after his resurrection he saith, "Go, tell the "disciples, and tell Peter," q. d. Let him not think he hath forfeited, by that sin of his, his interest in me; though he have denied me, I will not disown him, Mark xvi. 7. O how lovely is Christ in the relation of a friend! I might farther shew you the loveliness of Christ in his ordinances and in his providences, in his communion with us and communications to us, but there is no end of the account of Christ's loveliness: I will rather chuse to press believers to their duties towards this altogether lovely Christ, which I shall briefly dispatch in a few words.

Use. First, Is Jesus Christ altogether lovely, then I beseech you set your souls upon this lovely Jesus. Methinks such an object as hath been here represented, should compel love from the coldest breast and hardest heart. Away with those empty nothings, away with this vain deceitful world, which deserves not the thousandth part of the love you give it; let all stand aside and give way to Christ. O did you but know his worth and excellency, what he is in himself, what he hath done for, and deserved from you, you would need no arguments of mine to persuade you to love him.

Secondly, Esteem nothing lovely but as it is enjoyed in Christ, or improved for Christ. Affect nothing for itself, love nothing separate from Jesus Christ. In two things we all sin in love of creatures, viz. in the excess of our affections, loving them above the rate and value of creatures; and in the inordinacy of our affections, i. e. in

loving them out of their proper places.

Thirdly, Let us all be humbled for the baseness of our hearts, that are so free of their affections to vanities and trifles, and so hard to be persuaded to the love of Christ, who is altogether lovely. O how many pour out streams of love and delight upon the vain and empty creature; whilst no arguments can draw forth one drop of love from their obdurate and unbelieving hearts to Jesus Christ! I have read of one Joannes Mollius, who was observed to go often alone, and weep bitterly; and being pressed by a friend to know the cause of his troubles; O! said he, it grieves me that I cannot bring this heart of mine to love Jesus Christ more fervently.

Fourthly, Represent Christ, as he is, to the world, by your car-

riage towards him. Is he altogether lovely; let all the world see and know that he is so, by your delights in him and communion with him; zeal for him, and readiness to part with any other lovely thing upon his account; proclaim his excellencies to the world, as the spouse here did; convince them how much your beloved is better than any other beloved; display his glorious excellencies in your heavenly conversations; hold him forth to others, as he is in himself, altogether lovely. See that you "walk worthy of him "unto all well-pleasing," Col. i. 10. "Shew forth the praises of "Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 19. Let not that "worthy name be blas-"phemed through you," James ii. 7. He is glorious in himself, and will put glory upon you; take heed ye put not shame and dishonour upon him; he hath committed his honour to you, do not betray that trust.

First, Never be ashamed to own Christ: he is altogether lovely; he can never be a shame to you; it will be your great sin to be ashamed of him. Some men glory in their shame; be not you ashamed of your glory: if you be ashamed of Christ now, he will be ashamed of you when he shall appear in his own glory, and the glory of all his holy angels. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; and among other sins, be ashamed especially for this sin, that you have

no more love for him who is altogether lovely.

Sixthly, Be willing to leave every thing that is lovely upon earth, that you may be with the altogether lovely Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. Lift up your voices with the spouse, Rev. xx. 20. "Come "Lord Jesus, come quickly." It is true, you must pass through the pangs of death into his bosom and enjoyment; but sure it is worth suffering much more than that to be with this lovely Jesus. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jesus Christ," 2 Thes. iii. 5.

Seventhly, Strive to be Christ-like, as ever you would be lovely in the eyes of God and man. Certainly, my brethren, it is the Spirit of Christ within you, and the beauty of Christ upon you, which only can make you lovely persons; the more you resemble him in holiness, the more will you discover of true excellency and loveliness; and the more frequent and spiritual your converse and communion with Christ is, the more of the beauty and loveliness of Christ will be stamped upon your spirits, changing you into the same image, from glory to glory.

Eighthly, Let the loveliness of Christ draw all men to him. Is loveliness in the creature so attractive? And can the transcendent loveliness of Christ draw none? O the blindness of man! If you see no beauty in Christ why you should desire him, it is because

the god of this world hath blinded your minds.