

coming from hell, and the state of the damned, with this very sound and sense? ‘ Good souls, if ever you expect to be delivered from this state, and place of torments, strive, to the utmost, strive while you have opportunity, strive whilst breath and strength do last, to flee from, and escape, by a sound conversion, this doleful state of eternal damnation.’

Supposition 4. Lastly, and in a word, suppose you had a vision of heaven, as Stephen and Paul had in the body; suppose you saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, surrounded with the triumphant myriads of palm-bearing saints, singing Hosanna’s and Hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb for ever; and blessing, praising, and admiring him that gave them another spirit, vastly different from that which governs such as you: Blessing the Lord, that enabled them to be praying and praising, whilst others were cursing and swearing; to be sighing and groaning for sin in secret, whilst others were shouting and singing in taverns and ale-houses: to beat down their bodies, and keep them under, whilst others were pleasing and gratifying their lusts; would you still drive that course you do? Well, sirs, if ever you expect to come where these blessed ones are, you must take the course they did. Let this be your endeavour, and it shall be my fervent and hearty prayer.



A

CORONATION-SERMON,

PREACHED AT

DARTMOUTH.

 CANT. iii. 11.

Go forth ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

A CROWN is the top of earthly glory, the culminating point of human dignity. Psalm xxi. 2, 3. “Thou hast given him his heart’s desire; thou hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.” The ambition of the many, moves in various spheres below it; the ambition of none aspires above it, except it be that *anomalous monster*, the man of sin, who affects to sit in the very throne of God, and exalts himself above all that is called God, 2 Thess. ii. 4.

When God puts a crown upon the head, and a sceptre into the hand of a man, he engraves upon that man (in a qualified sense) both his name, and the lively characters of his Majesty and authority, Psal. lxxxii. 6. "I have said, ye are gods, and all of you the children of the Most High." But yet, in all the grants and conveyances of Heaven, there is always a reservation and salvo to the divine prerogative, to *displace at pleasure, and set it upon what head he shall please, Ezek. xxi. 26. "Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; This shall not be the same: Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high."

Though dominion be not founded in grace, yet grace both embellishes, and secures the dominion of men. The princes of the earth owe fealty and homage to Jesus Christ; (Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12.) and had some of them been more subject to his laws, their kingdoms had flourished, and their government been more auspicious.

The coronation-day of a king, is, in a sense, the marriage-day betwixt him and his people, and is accordingly solemnized with all the signs and demonstrations of joy and gladness: *For the shout of a king is among them.* Thus when the crown of Israel was set upon the head of Solomon, the scripture represents their exuberant joy, in an elegant and lofty hyperbole: 1 Kings i. 40. "And all the people came up after him; and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

Carnal men rejoice carnally, and spiritual men should rejoice spiritually: The most glorious part of the solemnity of such a day consists in,

1. Praises and prayers for him that wears the crown.

2. In a spiritual improvement of the action to ourselves.

1. In praises and prayers for the king, whom God hath set over us. Your prayers and praises reflect more glory upon the crown than all the jewels and sparkling stones with which it shines: And so I am persuaded our king will account it; according to Zech. xii. 5. "The governors of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God."

Praise thy God, O England! for setting thy crown this day upon the head of a Protestant prince; who accounted not his treasures, or blood, dear unto him, to redeem the interest of Christ out of the dangers that were ready to swallow it up.

Pray fervently for your king this day: The concerns of the people of God are so great in him, as that they exact from all the saints the uttermost importunity in prayer.

(1.) That God would cleanse and wash the crown of England from all that guilt and pollution it hath contracted under former governments, that the sins of the crown may not descend with it.

(2.) That the royal head on which it shall be set this day, may be filled with the wisdom of God, and matched with an holy heart, inflamed with love to God, and zeal for his glory.

* The Lord dethrones kings, disposes of kingdoms.

(3.) That as soon as men have set the crown upon his head, he may cheerfully take it off again, and cast it at the feet of Jesus Christ, as the twenty-four elders did, Rev. iv. 10. "And the twenty-four elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne," &c.

(4.) That God would make the crown sit easy, and long upon his royal head. Easy, because crowns are usually lined with thorny cares; and long, for the church's peace and tranquillity.

Secondly, The next thing belonging to the due solemnity of this day, will be the spiritual improvement of the whole scene of actions, to your own instruction and spiritual advantage; and this will be much more glorious, than all the triumphant arches, royal robes, thundering guns, and loud acclamations of the people. To this purpose, I have chosen this text, for the direction, and spiritualizing of the duties of the day. "Go forth ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

This book of the Canticles, is a spiritual *epithalamium*, sung in parts betwixt the heavenly bridegroom and the bride. The matter of it is most spiritual and weighty, the stile of it rapturous and lofty, the intimate union and communion of Christ and the church, is elegantly illustrated in an *allegory* of marriage: But nothing is found here light, or obscene.

—————*Procul hinc, procul este profani :*

*Nil hic nisi custum.**

It is a crystal stream of pure spiritual love, sliding sweetly betwixt two pleasant banks, Christ and the church.

In the ninth and tenth verses you have the description of a triumphant chariot, prepared by king Solomon for the daughters of Jerusalem: "The pillars thereof of silver, the bottom of gold, the covering of purple, and the midst thereof paved with love." A chariot is an instrument framed for easy, safe, and honourable conveyance: This chariot is the covenant of grace, fitted by Christ for the safe and honourable transporting of his bride, the church, through this world, to her stately pavilion, or glorious mansion in the highest heavens.

But how stately and magnificent soever this royal chariot be, he that contrived and framed it is much more glorious to behold: And therefore in the next words, which are my text, believers are summoned, and invited to behold and contemplate Christ, that framed it: "Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with his crown," &c. In which words we have,

1. The *spectators* summoned, or invited.
2. The *spectacle* they are invited to see.

* Hence, far hence what e'er's profane:
There's nought to feed your unchaste flame.

1. The *spectators* invited; the daughters of Zion. By Zion, understand the church; and by the daughters of Zion, the members of the church, or every particular believer: These are here invited, or summoned to go forth, i. e. of their entangling, diverting temptations: and to behold, viz. by the eye of faith, this most glorious, and heart-ravishing object.

2. The *spectacle* they are invited to behold and contemplate; *king Solomon with his crown, &c.* the most illustrious, glorious, and ravishing sight that ever the eyes of men did, or shall behold. By king Solomon, understand Christ; of whom Solomon in this book, is the figure, or shadow; yet one to whom Solomon, in all his glory was but a depainted sun on a sign-post, to the sun in the mid heavens, shining in all his glory.

And by his crown, understand not any material crown, as that of Solomon's was; but the glory and honour that is put upon Christ, the king of Zion; of which glory a crown is the emblem.

What crown is here meant, interpreters are not all agreed about it; some would have it to be understood of our human nature, which he was crowned withal by his mother Mary, of whom he took it: But though this assumption of our nature, put such a crown of glory upon it as it never had before, yet it was rather an obscuring of Christ's glory, than any addition of glory to him.

Others interpret it of the crown of thorns, with which his mother (the Jewish church or synagogue) crowned him in the day of his passion at Jerusalem; but this seems to be as hard and foreign a sense as the former.

The most judicious expositors are agreed in a third sense, viz. That by the crown on Christ's head, we are to understand that glory and honour, which believers give unto, or put upon Christ, when in the day of their espousals to him by faith, renouncing Satan, sin, and all that had exercised dominion over them before, with all trust and dependence on any righteousness of their own, they give their deliberate, full and hearty consent, that Christ alone shall reign over them for ever and ever; saying, "The Lord is our King, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver." Christ is "the Lord our righteousness," and in all things we will obey him. This Christ esteems as a crown of glory put upon his head, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. There is no such honour, no such pleasure a poor sinner can give to Christ, as to believe in him; this is as the putting of a crown of glory upon his head. It is true, it adds no glory to him, but it is the greatest manifestation of his glory, we are capable to make.

Objection. *But then it will be objected, in what sense believers can be tolerably stiled his mother? For the text tells us, it was the crown his mother put upon him.*

Answer. They may be so stiled in a double respect:

(1.) Because Christ is formed in every believer, he is (in a spiritual

sense) conceived and formed in their souls, as the child is formed in its mother's womb. So the apostle speaks, Gal. iv. 19. "My little children, of whom I travail again in birth, till Christ be formed in you."

(2.) In respect of the dear affection Christ bears to every soul that believeth in him. No man loves his brother, sister, or mother, as Christ esteems and loves believers, Mark iii. 34. when he was told, his mother and brethren were without seeking him; he said, "Behold my mother, and my brethren: For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." The day of a sinner's consent to come under Christ's government, is the day of his espousals, 2 Cor. xi. 2. And the day of a sinner's espousals to Christ, is the day of the gladness of his heart, Luke xv. 32. Thus you have the parts and sense of the text. The point from it is this:

Doct. That the day of a believer's espousals to Christ by faith, is to Christ as the day of a king's coronation is to him, even the day of the gladness of his heart.

It is very remarkable, what we find in Luke x. 21. where the Spirit hath carefully recorded one hour of joy in the life of Christ; for he had not many, being a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit," saith the text: And what hour was that? Why, it was the same hour in which the seventy returned with these joyful tidings to him; "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," ver. 17. The hour when Christ saw "Satan falling as lightning from heaven," ver. 18. his kingdom tottering, his forces routed by the gospel, his subjects running away to Christ, from under his cruel bondage, and made willing to come under his government: "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit." This was joyful news to Christ, it was the day of the gladness of his heart: He had now got a new throne in the souls of poor sinners, over whom the devil and sin had reigned; this was a crown of glory to Christ.

In opening this point, I shall discourse these three things:

- (1.) In what respect a sinner's espousals to Christ resembles the day of a king's coronation over his subjects.
- (2.) Wherein these two days differ each from other.
- (3.) On what accounts it is the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, as the text calls it.

And then apply it.

Let me shew the resemblances and agreements which are betwixt the day of a king's coronation, and the day of a sinner's espousals to Christ by faith. And this will appear in six respects:

(1.) A king that is duly crowned over his subjects, hath a lawful right to govern them, either by lineal descent, conquest, or compact. Solomon had his right and title to the kingdom, by descent from his royal father David, who, by his last will and testament, constituted

and appointed him to be his immediate successor upon the throne of Israel, 1 Kings i. 35. The Roman Cæsar's title to that kingdom, was by conquest, and this title was legitimated not only by the Jews acknowledgment of it, but also by Christ's express owning it, and submission to it. The people said, "We have no king but Cæsar," John xix. 15. And Christ owned it, Luke xx. 25. when he had paid tribute, saying, "Give unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's." But David had his title by compact with, and voluntary election of the people: Abner confers with the elders of Israel about it, and they meet David at Hebron, and there chuse him king, in the room of Saul, 2 Sam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and that in consideration of the eminent service he had performed for that kingdom, in delivering them from their mortal enemies the Philistines, enemies to their religion, and civil liberties. And certainly, the crown of Israel was not a reward above the merit of such a performance. "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and said, Behold we are thy bone, and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out, and broughtest in Israel: And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel; and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron, before the Lord: And they anointed David king over Israel."

But Christ hath right to reign over our souls, by all these titles and claims: The throne of our souls, by his Father's constitution and decree, Psalm ii. 6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;" by conquest, for he wins it by the sword of his Spirit, before he possesseth it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. he casts down by spiritual weapons all that opposeth, and brings every thought into obedience to him. And he hath right also, by consent and compact, Psalm cx. 3. "The people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Of which more anon.

(2.) On the coronation-day, kings appear in all their royal robes, glittering jewels, and all the lustre that can be put upon them; they shine in the eyes of the people more gloriously than all that are about them. *Velut luna, inter minora sidera*; There is none like him, in the beauty of his ornaments. Much more doth Christ excel all others in beauty and glory, in the eyes of those that chuse him for their Lord and King. 1 Pet. ii. 17. "To you that believe, he is precious." *Ἐτιμῆν*, Honour itself. Col. i. 17. "He is before all things; not only in time, or in order, but real dignity, and solid glory and excellency. So his spouse pronounceth him, Psalm xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips." And Cant. v. 10. "My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand." Examine and mark all the creatures in both worlds, angels and men, and they bear no more proportion to Christ in glory, than a glow-worm to the sun.

(3.) On the coronation-day, the consent of the people is demand-

ed, and given. Consent was demanded by Abner, in the behalf of David, 2 Sam. iii 17, 18, and freely given by them, in order to David's coronation, 2 Sam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. Thus at the coronation of our kings, the consent of the nobles and commonalty is demanded on the public theatre, in these words :

“ **I** HERE present you such an one, (naming the king) the rightful inheritor of the crown of this realm: Are you willing to do your homage, service, and do bounden duty to him?”

And they say,

“ **W**E are willing; or signify they are so, by their loud and joyful acclamations.”

So it is, when Christ is crowned King over the soul; his right is asserted, and their consent demanded by his ambassadors; the believer manifests his hearty consent, Psalm cx. 3. “ Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” And over all that are made truly willing to receive him, he reigns, and invests them with all the privileges of his kingdom, John i. 12. The unbeliever is not willing to come under Christ's government, John v. 4. *You will not come to me, &c.* And the issue of their unwillingness, is their eternal ruin, Luke xix. 27. “ But those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them; bring them hither, and slay them before me.” Now to make a soul truly willing to accept Christ's government, and give his consent to him, four things must be done upon, and by such a soul; (1.) He must be convinced of his sin and misery; no man will be willing to change his Lord, whilst he finds no matter of complaint. (2.) He must know, and deliberate upon the terms of Christ; for an ignorant person cannot be said to consent; *Non consentit, quinon sentit.* Christ will have all the world to know his terms, and will not hide the worst and hardest things from them, whether they like them or not: No man shall say afterwards, I was surprized, or imposed upon; had I known this, I had never consented to be a Christian. Therefore the hardest terms of Christianity are plainly propounded, Luke xiv. 26. and that to cut off all after-pleas and pretences for resiling from Christ, John xvi. 1. “ These things have I spoken to you, that ye should not be offended in me.” (3.) Upon deliberation, there must appear to the soul that chuseth Christ, and consents to his government, a preponderating good; that Christ, with all his reproaches and sufferings, is better than sin, with all its honours and pleasures: No man will change for no advantage, much less to his loss. Thus Moses saw more glory and excellency in the very reproaches of Christ, than in all the treasures of Egypt, or pleasures of sin, Heb. xi. 25, 26. O! saith the soul, though there be hard and bitter sufferings in the way of godliness, yet it is infinitely better for me to endure them for Christ, than to be damned. And upon balancing the gains and losses, the conveniences and inconveniences of Christianity, the odds appear so great, that the soul pronounceth they are not wor-

thy to be compared, Rom. viii. 18. (4.) When all is done, there must be a divine Almighty influence upon the will; without which men will never heartily consent to Christ's terms. "No man (saith Christ) can come unto me, except my Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John vi. 44. This influence of God upon the will is in a way suitable to its nature, Hos. xi. 4. and produceth a consent without co-action. If the Lord shew any man the infinite advantages that come and accrue to his soul by Christ, this very discovery doth as it were, compel that man to come in to Christ; as that expression is used, Luke xiv. 23. a scripture vilely abused in our times. Christ compels none into his kingdom, as the Spaniards did the poor Indians to baptism, or as others have been compelled to the Lord's table: He will reign over a willing people, or not reign at all.

(4.) On the coronation-day, a champion appears on the king's behalf, to challenge any that shall deny his right, or by allurements or threatenings attempt to draw his subjects from their duty and allegiance: He throws down the gantlet, and defies the proudest enemy the king hath.

So when Christ is crowned King over the souls of his people, there is a public defiance bid, a formal challenge given, to all the enemies of Christ and his people; as you may read at large, Rom. viii. 33, 34, 35. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Devils and men are defied to do their worst. Christ must reign, till all his enemies are put under his feet: sin shall not have dominion over his people, for they are not under the law, but under grace. Come, Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; come Satan, and all his infernal powers; they are all defied in the name of Christ. Believers are his own subjects, and none shall pluck them out of his hand.

(5.) At, or about, the coronation-day, an act of indemnity, pardon and oblivion, is past and published, pardoning the offences the subjects had committed unto that day. Thus it is at the day of Christ's coronation over the believer's soul, and its espousals to him by faith; all his sins are pardoned, new and old, great and small. And of this, proclamation is openly made in the gospel, Acts x. 43. "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sin." O glorious pardon! free without purchase; full without exception, and final without revocation. Now there is a gaol-delivery, the prison-doors are open, liberty proclaimed to the captives, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. The King of Sion is a merciful King, and his subjects shall find him so: they have gladdened his heart, by accepting his government; and he will glad theirs, by his pardons: *The Son hath made them free, and they are free indeed.*

(6.) In a word, a coronation-day is a day of gladness, a day of joy and triumph; joy displays itself in the faces of all loyal subjects; those

only that had rather be under another government, hang the head, and bite the lip.

So it is here; all that are loyal subjects to Jesus Christ, rejoice exceedingly in his government; and it must needs be so, because his kingdom consists in joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. When Zaccheus came under this King, he came down joyfully, Luke xix. 6, 9. when the eunuch received him for his Lord and King, he went home rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. when Samaria submitted to his sceptre, there was great joy in that city, Acts viii. 5, 6, 7. and let the joy be what it will, the causes of joy are greater than the joy itself. But those that belong to Satan's kingdom, that love to be under the dominion of sin, and hate the strictness and severities of religion; these are the only malecontents; these fret to see Christ's kingdom enlarged, and secretly plot to destroy it. Thus we see the agreement betwixt the day of a king's coronation over his subjects, and Christ's coronation over believers.

But though they harmonize in these particulars, and divers others that may be named; yet,

2dly, There are as many remarkable differences and disagreements betwixt them, but none to the believer's loss or disadvantage; for they all fall on his side: As, *ex. gr.*

(1.) It is not the privilege of every subject, no, nor of one among many thousands, to see the king who is crowned over them, to hear his voice, or give their explicit consent in his presence; but every subject in Christ's kingdom doth see Christ by the eye of faith. John vi. 40. "He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him." Seeing, and believing, are terms convertible; they do all hear his voice, and give their explicit consent to take him for their King. Union with Christ is not a work to be done by a proxy, or representative; but is the result of a solemn debate betwixt Christ and the soul.

(2.) Kings are crowned over many that love them not, but are filled with prejudice against their persons and government.

But it cannot be so in the kingdom of Christ; *To them that believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. All Christ's subjects love him above father or mother, wife or children, yea, above their own lives; otherwise they cannot be his subjects, Luke xiv. 27. They also delight in his government, and nothing would be more pleasant to their souls, than to find every thought of their heart brought into subjection to him, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. They dare not confederate with his enemies, and will chuse rather to die, than forsake him: They will esteem it a glorious thing, though their right arm should be severed from their shoulder-blade, for their regular endeavours to defend and support the crown upon the head of their royal Master.

(3.) The relation betwixt a king and his subjects, may, and must be dissolved by death: death fears not to arrest the most potent monarch upon his throne, and translate his crown to another head.

But our King, Christ, lives for ever; death hath no dominion over him: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion that which shall have no end, Dan. vii. 13, 14. Death is so far from separating Christ, and his subjects, that it brings them nearer together than ever they were before; it brings them into his immediate presence, to his facial vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. and fixes them there for ever, 1 Thess. iv. 17.

(4.) Kings may degenerate into tyrants, and subjects into rebels; they may undermine the laws, liberties, and religion of their people: they that rule over the people, may make them to howl, Isa. lii. 5. The world is too full of such instances and examples; but Christ can never oppress his subjects. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre," Psal. xlv. 6. "His yoke is easy, and his burden is light," Matth. xi. 29. And his true subjects can never shake off their allegiance to him; they shall rather die, than do it.

(5.) Kings will not permit their greatest favourites to sit in their thrones; it is their peculiar honour, and not communicable to any. Gen. xli. 40. "Only in the throne, I will be greater than thou," said Pharaoh to his Joseph.

But Christ permits, and appoints all his subjects to sit with him upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21. The glory which God gave him, he hath given to them, John xvii. 22. What king is like Christ?

(6.) To conclude: the joy and triumph at the king's coronation, is only among men, in this lower world; but the joy and triumph at Christ's coronation, is among angels in heaven, Luke xv. 7. The city of God holds a solemn triumph at the conversion of a particular sinner; what are the shouts of men, to the jubilations of angels?

Thus you have six particulars wherein they agree, and as many in which they differ.

We come, in the next place to enquire into,

Sdly, The reasons why Christ's coronation over believers, is the day of the gladness of his heart. And it must be so,

(1.) Because it is Christ's marriage-day, at least the day of his espousals; and the day of marriage, or espousals, is a day of joy and gladness. Christ hath now a new spouse, a soul, in which he never dwelt before; and *as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth Christ over believers*, Isa. lxii. 5. Here is a new relation entered, and that with the King of kings; the angels of God rejoice exceedingly in it, but much more Christ, the blessed Bridegroom.

(2.) It is Christ's day of conquest and victory over Satan, the day in which he hath deposed him from his throne, Matth. xii. 29. delivered a soul, of invaluable worth in his eyes, out of the power of darkness, and translated it into his own kingdom, Col. 1. 13. and the day of conquest is a day of extraordinary joy and triumph, Isa. ix. 3.

(3.) It is the day in which he receives the fruit and reward of his bloody travels, and bitter agonies: there is now a son, or daughter,

born to God, an heir born to the heavenly inheritance. Now it is most pleasant and joyful to Jesus Christ, to see of the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11. no satisfaction in this world comparable to it. When a young heir is born to the kingdom and crown of heaven, it deserves a triumph.

(4.) It is the day in which Christ finds a soul that was lost, Luke xv. 5, 6. What joy was it to the father of the prodigal, when he had found his lost son? Luke xv. 20. there was mirth and music, feasting and rejoicing: "This my son was lost, and is found; was dead, and is alive."

Poor sinners are lost creatures by nature, they have lost their God, and therein themselves too. God hath lost, and the devil found, every unregenerate sinner: all strayers from God fall to his share. But this loss is not irrecoverable; the errand and end for which Christ came into the world, was to seek and to save that which was lost, Matth. xviii. 11. and when the sinner that was lost comes home to him by repentance and faith, he obtains the end of his incarnation, life, and death, upon that soul; which cannot but be the day of the gladness of his heart.

If then the day of a king's espousals, or marriage, be a day of joy, and gladness to his soul; if a day of conquest, and dividing the spoils, be a day of joy to the conqueror, after a sharp and bloody fight; if it be a joy to a mother, after long and sore travail, to embrace in her arms, and kiss the child, for whom she endured so many bitter throws; if it be a joy to a father to find and recover a child that was lost, and as dead to him: In a word, if it be high delight and satisfaction to see a great design, on which the heart is intently set, brought at last, by orderly conduct, to the desired happy issue; then let us allow the day of a sinner's coming into Christ by conversion, to be as a coronation-day to a king, the day of his espousals, and the gladness of his heart.

Use I. This point, like a fruitful root, sends forth many branches, and all loaden with diversity of fruits. The first is for information, in several inferences from it.

Inference 1. Be informed from hence, what is the true cause and reason of Satan's rage and spite against the gospel, and the most painful, able, and successful preachers of it in the world. The great design of the gospel, and of all that sincerely preach it, is to win and persuade Satan's subjects to forsake his cruel, unjust, and tyrannical government, and submit to the kingdom and sceptre of the Lord Jesus. What is the preaching of the gospel, but the sounding of a trumpet in the devil's kingdom, to win his subjects from their allegiance to him, to proclaim another king in his territories? Every faithful minister's business, is to gather these wretched vassals of Satan together, and set before them the miserable captivity and bondage they are in, under that tyrant that rules over them, (whose laws, like Draco's, are written in the blood of their souls,) to exaggerate their

sin and misery, and to let them know how willing Christ is to receive and save them, if they will renounce and abandon Satan's government. To set before them the blessed freedom, and glorious privileges of the subjects of Christ; to beseech and persuade them to break away from their old cruel master, and come over to Christ: to answer all their pleas and objections against it, and to denounce the wrath of God against all the refusers of Christ's gracious proclamation. Now Satan is not ignorant of all this; he esteems the loss of one, much more the revolt of many a greater mischief, than a king reckons the loss of a kingdom: and to see them break away from him, and be listed to fight against him; O how it grates that envious spirit, and sharpens his malice against the instruments and agents in this work! 'This, as a * late worthy speaks, torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take away his subjects from him. Hence come persecutions, slanders, &c. in showers, upon Christ's faithful ministers.' He knows his kingdom of darkness must vanish, as the light of the gospel rises, and spreads itself. You read, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. of "an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth." And in ver. 8. you have another angel following him, saying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen! that great city!* No sooner is the two-edged sword of the gospel drawn, but the next voice is, *Victory! victory!* He knows every home-charge made by the gospel, will issue in a rout of his infernal legions. Now ministers coming forth against him as heralds, to proclaim Christ's right, and as captains of the army of Christ, their general; he owes them a particular grudge, and seeks every way to stop their mouths, and destroy their persons. And surely he hath pushed hard at them, and made desperate attempts against them, in our days. No doubt but it was reckoned a great service done him, to shut up the mouths of so many at once; but the time draws nigh, that Babylon must fall, and those that could not lately shew their faces on earth, must fly in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel. The dead witnesses of Christ shall hear shortly a great voice from heaven, saying, *Come up hither;* and they shall ascend in a cloud, their enemies beholding, but not able any more to hinder them.

Inference 2. How causeless, and altogether groundless, are the discouragements and fears of humbled and convinced sinners, that Jesus Christ will reject them, and shut the door of mercy against them, if they should go to him, and cast their poor sinful soul upon him by faith?

Certainly such persons fear, where no fear is. That which is the command of Christ, the earnest desire of his soul, that act which makes his heart glad, as the text speaks; can never meet with such a repulse as you fear. Was ever any king unwilling to have the crown

* Gurnal's first part, p. 59.

set upon his head? Do they use to frown upon their subjects that are upon the knee, tendering their homage and allegiance to them? No, it is the day of the gladness of their hearts. Renounce thy old master Satan, give a bill of divorce to those lusts which have reigned over thy soul, ponder well Christ's terms, and heartily consent to them, and try whether he will not quickly confute these vain fears of thine, and fully make good his gracious, sweet, and most encouraging word, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." A sweet encouragement to a coming soul! And because sense of guilt and unworthiness usually doubles their fears, Christ hath caused a double negative to be put into that text, on purpose to obviate their fears, and discouragements; *ε μη εκβαλω εξω*: I will not, no, I will not; or, as we render, "I will in no wise cast him out." Acts of delight flow freely, and easily, and so doth this.

Inf. 3. What an high and honourable relation doth faith bring the soul of a sinner into! The day of conversion is the day of that soul's espousals to Christ.

A king from heaven makes suit for a poor sinner's heart, woos for union with sinful creatures, rejoices exceedingly, when he wins their consent, and espouses them for ever to himself, when he obtains it; for *contractus* is nothing else, but *consensus explicatus*; a contract is consent explained, in affirmative plain words, *de presenti*. I do disclaim, and for ever renounce all others; and willingly yield up my heart and life to Jesus Christ. Now, *ex contractu oritur vinculum*, an obligation results from this contract with Christ, and a most honourable mystical union with him. "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. The greatest honour that was ever put upon the human nature, was by its assumption into union with the Son of God, hypostatically; and the greatest honour that can be done to our persons, is by our union with Christ, mystically; hereby we become "Members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. the spouse of Christ. O what a preferment is this! What soul feels not itself lifted up far above all earthly honours, in such a relation to Christ as this? The nobles and barons of the kingdoms, think it a preferment to serve the queen; and the angels of heaven do not think themselves degraded, by performing service to the bride, the Lamb's wife. Well might great Constantine prefer the honour of being a member of the church, to that of being head of an empire.

Let all the saints understand their dignity and privileges, by this their honourable union with Christ; and with it let them balance all the reproaches, scorns, and contempts, this vile world loads them with for his sake.

Inference 4. Be informed hence, of the dreadful and damning nature of the sin of unbelief: a sin that questions, yea, denies, Christ's right to rule over the soul; blinds the mind, hardens the heart, stiffens the will, and makes the soul obstinate and inflexible to all the gracious tenders of Christ in the gospel.

Unbelief is the poisonous breath of Satan, whispering jealousies, surmises, and dangerous prejudices against Christ into the ear of the soul, and all tending to this mischievous design and purpose, viz. to hinder or break the treaty of the spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and the soul. Now it will be digging at the very root and foundation of the assenting act, and thus it whispers, how canst thou be sure of the reality of the things reported in the gospel? Is it not possible they may be devised fables, the cunning artifices of men, to keep the world in awe? Thou never sawest Christ, for whose sake thou art so earnestly solicited to renounce all thy real, sweet, and present comforts and enjoyments. Then it dilates rhetorically upon the severe terms of the gospel, advises the soul to think sadly, how hard, grievous, and unreasonable the demands of Christ are, Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

How likest thou this, soul? Here are all thy principal comforts, thy most dear and desirable things in the world, both personal and relative, to be forsaken, yea, hated for Christ's sake: the terms are set so high, that a man must lose his brains and bowels too, saith unbelief, before he can be wrought up to them. Canst thou endure to see all the labours of thy life to become a prey to thine enemies? That which hath cost thee so much study and toil, scattered and destroyed in a day, when it is yet in the power of thine hand to save all; thy habitation to cast thee out, thy pleasant fields possessed by strangers: *Impius has segetes*; hast thou hardiness enough to encounter beggary? to fight with hunger, thirst, and nakedness? to lie in a nasty gaol, to endure a parting pull with nearest relatives, which are as thine own soul? But yet there are harder trials than these. Canst thou endure a tormenting death, by cruel barbarous enemies; Canst thou stand quietly at a stake, and endure the exquisite torments of the fire, and that in the fulness of thy time, whilst thou art in the flower of thine age, fulness of thy senses, and hast so fair a prospect of many pleasant years before thee; and all this for an unseen glory in another world? These are the feeling arguments urged by infidelity, against embracing Christ's overtures in the gospel, or coming under the sceptre of this new Lord: and with how many do they prevail; thus Satan fixes his subjects, and makes them secure to himself.

But sinner, if God have any intention of saving mercy to thy soul, thou shalt feel the more potent principles of divine faith and love overpowering and subacting these carnal reasonings within thy soul. It is admirable to behold the Almighty influences of grace upon nature; how the drawings of the Spirit, his omnipotent pull at the heart, makes the strongest ties this world hath upon it, to give way, and easily to loose. Mark x. 28. 'Lord, we have left all, and followed thee.' If not, but thou be fixedly resolved not to change Satan's government for Christ's; if thou say in thy heart, and stand to that saying, I will never consent to such hard conditions; then hear

thy sentence, read thy mittimus, Luke xix. 27. ‘But those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them; bring hither and slay them before me.’ The sentence is dreadful, the execution sure; thy unbelief will as surely damn thee, as a millstone about thy neck, in the midst of the sea, will drown thee, Mark xiv. 16. ‘He that believeth not, shall be damned.’ Thou hast cast the vilest dishonour upon Christ, thou hast rejected the only way of salvation; and what can the issue of thy final unbelief be, but ruin and destruction?

Use II. My next work will be persuasive work, to gain the consent of the souls to come under the sceptre and government of Christ; to make his heart glad, and yourselves happy for ever, by your espousals to him: And O that I could this day so represent this king in his glory, so discover the miserable thralldom you are in under Satan, and your lusts; so clear up the reasonableness and easiness of Christ’s terms and demands, that there might be as cheerful and hearty (though not so loud and audible) an applause, and acclamations returned to my demand of your consent to Christ, as this day are, or ever were at the coronation of any king.

1. And to this end, first consider the glory and dignity of the person of Christ; he is the Son of God by nature, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. “He is the Prince of the kings of the earth,” Rev. i. 5. The most glorious monarch that ever swayed a sceptre over men, is but as a worm of the earth, or as a despicable insect in the air, compared with Solomon in his glory; the most perfect beauty in the creatures, beneath or above, is blackness and deformity, in comparison with Christ: The beauty of roses, lilies, sun, stars, angels, is not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with Christ: “Thou art fairer (saith his spouse) than the sons of men.” None ever saw him savingly by the eye of faith, but were charmed into his bosom by love. The facial vision of Christ is the feast of blessed souls above.

The king of glory makes suit for your hearts this day; he woos for your consent; he passed by apostate angels, not once making them a tender of reconciliation or union, but comes to you in his red garments, glorious in his apparel: he shed his invaluable blood to redeem you to God; he loved you, and gave himself for you: if there be a drop of love in your hearts, methinks the excellency of Christ should extract and engage it. Write that man a beast, a senseless stock, that hath no love for Christ.

2. Consider, What a blessed state, abounding with glorious and invaluable privileges, your consent to be Christ’s is introductive to: it opens to all privileges, mercies, and blessings, desirable in the eyes of men; it opens into freedom and liberty, from the vassalage of Satan, the servitude of sin, the curse of the law, the danger of wrath to come. John viii. 36. “If the Son, therefore, make you free, then are ye free indeed.” It opens the door into rest and peace; peace with God,

peace in your own consciences, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. The deliciousness of peace you never yet tasted, who are strangers to Christ; nor ever shall, till you consent to be his, Rev. ii. 17. This shall be your support, amidst all the confusions and distractions, hurries and tumults, of this restless and unquiet world, Mic. v. 5. "This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian cometh into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces." Christ hath pitched his standard in the gospel; repair unto it, come under his banner, and list yourselves among his faithful subjects, and the glory of the world to come is yours, if you overcome, and be faithful unto death, Rev. iii. 21. The subjects of Christ, in this kingdom of grace, are shortly to be all translated into the kingdom of glory, Rom. viii. 30.

3. Consider the miserable bondage you are now in, over whom Satan rules, and how your condition still grows worse and worse, till it shall not be capable of any further addition of misery, to make it more absolutely and completely miserable.

You are now without God, without a promise, without peace, without the pardon of one sin, Eph. ii. 12. You have no communion with God, nor title to heaven; slaves to your sordid lusts, Tit. iii. 3. you are under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. condemned already, John iii. 18. and whenever you die out of Christ, you shall die in your sins, John viii. 24. He that was your ruler in the world, is to be both your companion and tormentor in the world to come, Matth. xxv. 41.

Is this a condition to be satisfied in? Can you sleep quietly in your chains? O methinks the poor prisoners of Satan should sigh and cry, through the grates of the prison, especially when they are informed of deliverance at the door.

You have no reason to scare at the terms and conditions propounded to you by Christ; they are equal, necessary, and easy, Matth. xi. 29. "Come unto me; my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. His commands are not grievous," 1 John v. 3. "All his ways are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17. "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength," Neh. viii. 10. If there be repenting work, believing work, sin-mortifying work, or suffering work for you; there is also a suitable provision of divine assistance, to enable and carry you through it all. 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is sufficient for thee." If men cast you out, God will receive you, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. If any sharp trial befall you, there is a door of escape prepared for your outlet, 1 Cor. x. 13. If you meet with trouble in the world, you shall not fail of peace in Christ, John xvi. 33. If you lose any outward enjoyment for Christ's sake, it shall be recompensed an hundred-fold in this world, besides the reward of heaven hereafter, Matth. xix. 29. If you be cast into prison for Christ, the Comforter shall come from heaven, and rest upon you there, 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14. If you suffer with him, you shall reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12.

What think ye, brethren, of Christ's terms now? What is there

here, for men to scare and fright at? Can you mend yourselves elsewhere? O when shall the match be made? When will you come to Christ, and say, "Lord, I heartily consent to take thee for my King: I am pleased with the hardest condition required in thy word?"

4. *Lastly*, Be convinced of the unreasonableness of all that you can pretend against this great duty. If you say, The pains of mortification are hard, you must in reason yield, that the pains of damnation are harder, and that it is better for you to "enter into life, halt and maimed, than having two eyes or hands, to be cast into hell; where the worm dies not, and where the fire is not quenched," Matth. v. 29. If you say, you have no power to come to Christ, your consciences will presently tell you, that you never yet put forth the uttermost power that you have, in striving for your own salvation: It will also tell you, that you suppose you have such a power; else why have you so long delayed repentance and conversion upon this pretence, that you will seriously perform them hereafter? Besides, though your endeavours do not oblige God to do that for you, you cannot do of yourselves; yet it is more probable he will do so, when you strive to your utmost, than when you carelessly neglect those duties, and give yourselves up to the contrary courses. If you say, you would strive, if you were assured of success, and that you should be received and accepted by Christ, if you came unto him, and did cast your poor souls upon him; you can answer yourselves, if you will, that you daily spend your time, pains, and studies, upon lesser things, having no assurance at all of success. The husbandman toils all day at plough, yet is not assured of a good harvest; his corn may die in the seed, or be blasted in the ear. The mariner ventures his estate on the sea, yet hath no assurance of a good return; the ship may miscarry. The miner will dig into the bowels of the earth, and try here and there; yet hath no assurance he shall find that rich vein of ore, that shall recompence his cost and pains. Now if men will labour so hard, and adventure so much upon uncertainties, for a little of the world; doth not your own reason conclude, you ought to do more, and adventure further than any of them, to obtain Christ, and eternal salvation? O strive, strive to make your escape out of Satan's kingdom, to Christ: Sit not with folded hands on the seats of sloth, saying, It is to no purpose.

Suppose yourselves now upon your death-bed, all earthly comforts insipid things to you, conscience presaging the wrath to come, time and hope ending together; would you not then wish, O that we had been ruled and governed by Christ's laws and Spirit, and not by Satan, and our own lusts! Had we been the servants of Christ, we had now been going to Christ; had he governed, he would have saved us: but his servants we are to whom we obey: We have served our lusts, and *the wages of sin is death*.

Or suppose you saw the glory of heaven, or the horrors of hell;

that you heard the hallelujahs of the palm-bearing multitude, or the shrieks of damned cast-aways; would it be so indifferent a thing to you, whether you obey Christ's call, or no? Believe it, these are no devised fables, but do really exist, whether you mind them or not. And why should you not suppose, and forethink things so sure, and so nigh? A sweet voice comes from heaven this day, saying, let all that expect to enjoy the glory that is here, see that they submit heartily to Christ's sceptre: for he saves no more than he rules: And the whole number of the glorified in heaven is made up of such as heartily closed with Christ's terms on earth. A dreadful voice comes up from hell, crying, (as it were) in your ears; as ever you expect to escape the miseries and torments that are here, do not reject Christ's yoke and government as we did: Our yielding up of ourselves to the sway and government of our lusts, was our ruin.

Use III. To conclude: Let all men try their own estates, and examine to what king they do indeed belong, and whose subjects in truth they are, Christ's or Satan's; for these two kingdoms divide the whole world. God hath furnished us with self-reflecting powers; we are able to retire out of the confused noises of the world, and sit retired in the innermost closet of our own souls, where none but God and our consciences shall be privy to our debates; and there solemnly demand of our conscience, and charge it to make plain and faithful answers to such questions and enquiries as these:

Quest. 1. To whom do I yield the most prompt, cheerful and constant obedience? To the commands of Christ, or to the solicitations of Satan and my own lusts? He that hath my obedience, the same is my Lord and King, Rom. vi. 16. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." When God and conscience calls me to pray, and the world calls me off to attend its ensnaring pleasures, and unnecessary employments; which of these calls do I pay obedience to?

Quest. 2. Who governs the secret and unseen part of my life? That every man is, in the account of God, which he is in secret, Rom. ii. 28, 29. Now who is king in the closet? And what rules do my thoughts move by? If Christ bring my thoughts into obedience, so that I dare not indulge to myself a sinful liberty to enjoy the speculative pleasure of the sins I have acted, or would act, had I opportunity for it: And if I am in the fear of God when alone, and make conscience of my secret, as well as public duties; then I am under Christ's government, and he is king of my soul, 2 Cor. x. 5. Mat. vi. 6. But if I make an external shew of obedience to Christ, and secretly obey my lusts; I am really the servant of sin, and belong to another king. O my conscience! what sayest thou to these things?

Quest. 3. Whom do I follow, or heartily resolve to follow, when it comes to a parting-point betwixt Christ and the world; when I must cleave to the one, and forsake the other? Matth. vi. 24. Do I with full purpose of heart cleave to the Lord? Acts xi. 23. Is it my

sincere resolution to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? Rev. xiv. 4. Or have I secret reserves to quit Christ's service, and give religion the slip, when it comes to real distress and difficulty? These are sounding questions, and will discover whose government we are under.

THE CONCLUSION.

Thus I have endeavoured to spiritualize and improve the great and solemn actions of this good day; a day for which (I hope) the children yet unborn shall praise the Lord. How happy will our king and queen be, if they reign over a people that Christ reigneth over; and will conscientiously pay them obedience in, and for the Lord! I believe it will be a greater joy to their souls, to see you set the crown upon Christ's head, in your subjection to his laws, than to see the imperial crown of England set upon their own heads. Religion breeds the best subjects.

Let England praise the Lord for such a day as this! how many sad years are run out, since it saw the crown upon the heads of a Protestant king and queen at once! Let faithful magistrates rejoice they shall never more be put upon the odious and dangerous drudgery of persecuting good men, under such a government as this.

Let ministers rejoice, yea, let them rejoice with double joy to others! they shall no more be driven into corners, nor put to silence, (a silence as bitter as death) whilst the royal sceptre is swayed by such hands, wherein God hath now placed it.

Let all the people rejoice, for these their rulers shall be to them as the light of the morning, and as the clear shining after rain, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. And let us all say, Isa. xxv. 9. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation."