

SERMON IV.

With all blessings.—VER. 3.

IN that old dispensation, when Jacob blessed his twelve sons, and in them their posterity, the twelve tribes, in the conclusion of his blessing it is said, 'These are the twelve tribes, and every man, according to his blessing, he blessed them.' That is, Joseph had some one eminent earthly blessing bestowed on his tribe, Reuben another, and Naphtali a third, and so the rest. None there are said to be blessed with *all blessings*. But when God comes to open his treasures of blessings in Christ, and to profess to bless indeed and altogether, he blesseth with all blessings. Every child of his he blesseth, even 'with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel,' as, Rom. xv. 29, it is called. For when God gives us Christ, and blesseth us in him, 'how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' Having given you my Son, nay then take all else, and take all freely; having given the greater so willingly, sure you shall have all the rest, which are the lesser, more willingly.

It is observable that when Esau approached his father, to ask the blessing like one that came to glean after another's harvest already reaped, Jacob having been before him, how hard, how difficult he found his father to be, and upon what low terms is Esau fain to beg something, anything of him. 'Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?' that is, hast thou given all away? And ver. 38, 'Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, me also, O my father.' And how doth Isaac his father speak? As having nothing now left he could think of to bestow; with these, and these things, says he, have I blessed him, 'and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?' He casts about with himself to think what should be left ungiven away. This had not been if Jacob had not gone away with all. Now, as our Apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians, of Ishmael and Isaac, 'these things are an allegory;' so expressly the same Apostle affirmeth these also to have been, Heb. xii. 17. The father is God, whom in this dispensation Isaac the father represented; the elect, the 'us' here, are Jacob or Israel, as frequently they are called; whom God endues with all blessings *in solido*, at once makes over all to them alone, as their inheritance; so as for the rest there is not anything left, but things earthly and carnal, which is the superfluity and redundancy of that fulness bestowed on his own, and which they may well spare. Hast thou not reserved one blessing? No, not one. God hath blessed us with all. Oh, infinite goodness and special grace!

With all.—Even each saint with *all*. If with any one blessing, then with all; they hang together and go in a cluster. 'Whom he hath predestinated, them he hath called; whom he hath justified, them he hath glorified,' and not one is wanting. If thou hast one grace, thou hast all, and all gracious privileges together therewith; even all the things that belong to life and godliness; all the promises of this life and that to come.

MEDITATION.

O Christian! see and rejoice in thy lot and portion. God himself hath but all things, and so hast thou.

Sit miser, qui miser esse potest, 'Let him be miserable that can be, for I cannot,' may a believer say to all others in the world. For can that man be ever miserable that is blessed with all blessings? whereof, even to be thus blessed for ever must needs be one, or he hath not all; and to whom all things are turned into blessings, even the evils that befall thee. If men curse and revile thee, God will bless; as David spake, when Shimei cursed him; and if men envy thee for good, this shall turn to thy salvation, as Phil. i. 19. If the devils spite thee, God will bless thee; there is no witchcraft against Israel. He turned Balaam's society and dealing with the devil to curse into a blessing. It is an observation which Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 2, makes upon that passage of Moses' story: Balak 'hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them; howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.' God, who was able and did make that strange change in our persons, of cursed children to be men of blessedness, blessed with all blessings, can much more, as he doth, change and turn all things that befall us, though curses in themselves, into blessings unto us. That man cannot be miserable whom all passages whatever do call, yea make blessed, and who himself is called to nothing else but blessing; and oh, if God thus turneth all things into heavenly blessings unto us, how engaged are we to be heavenly in all things towards him!

Spiritual blessings.—This openeth the mystery of what was even now spoken of; for why should such a limitation and confinement or eminent designation rather be here specified? Hath not godliness all other temporal earthly blessings entailed upon it?

This is spoken in difference from the literal dispensation of the old covenant, (which notion doth still and will all along accompany us,) which ran in the letter, most in promises of blessings earthly and outward.

The Apostle Paul, in the third of the Galatians, treating of the blessings of Abraham, (or promised to Abraham, and in him to all nations, ver. 8, and now come upon them, ver. 14,) doth clearly in the 14th verse explain and declare it to be a spiritual blessing, or the promise of the Spirit: 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' The latter words, 'that we might receive the promise of the Spirit,' is a manifest exegesis or explanation of those former words, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles,' thereby explaining what manner or kind of blessing that was which was intended to Abraham, and comes upon the Gentiles through Christ. It is the Spirit, which if taken of the Holy Ghost that is given us, the promise of the Spirit imports all spiritual blessings, as in the seed, the root, the fountain of them. To say we have the Spirit given us, or promised to us, is all one as to say that we have all spiritual things conveyed. He is the immediate author and effecter in us of all grace and glory. And then what Christ in one Evangelist calleth 'giving of the Spirit to them that ask him,' in another he termeth 'giving good things,' that is, the things which are truly good, which the Spirit brings with him, who is the author of things spiritual, the best of blessings. But Calvin, and Pareus after him, commenting on those words, Gal. iii. 14, are bold to interpret the promise of the Spirit, the promise of spiritual things. He says not, say they, 'the Spirit of promise,' but 'the promise of the Spirit,'

which I take, says he, for spiritual *more Hebraico*; he speaking in opposition, says he, to things outward, and those words, 'through faith,' confirm it. That is, whereof faith is sensible and apprehensive, takes in, and receives, as it doeth all spiritual things, and is a principle suited to them. And so it is one and the same kind of blessing which comes on the Gentiles, who had not the promise of Canaan, and upon the Jews, which is his scope: 'that we Jews might receive,' &c., as well as the Gentiles, and both the same; and also which Abraham himself received, who had not a foot of land in Canaan, Acts vii. 5, and yet is said to have obtained, possessed, the promise, Heb. vi. 15, 'And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise;' which obtaining the promise, or thing promised, is evidently there spoken of as an actual enjoyment, or possession of it, after the making of it; as the word *obtained* implies, and after patient waiting, and it is the very promise of blessing, 'I will bless thee,' ver. 15. The things or blessings then promised to Abraham, consisted in things spiritual; and so the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were capable of them, even all of one and the same blessing.

Thus, also, when Jacob was blessed by Isaac, and with so vast and great a difference put both in God's intention and Isaac's apprehension between him and that of Esau in his blessing of him, which Esau was also sensible of; and yet if we read that whole legacy of blessings bequeathed to Jacob, we find none but outward and earthly in the letter spoken of, Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 'God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.' Yea, if we compare herewith the blessing afterwards stated upon Esau, ver. 39, 40, 'Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck;' this is, as to the point of earthly blessings, well-nigh as full a portion as that of Jacob was, so as, if that the spiritual blessings promised in Christ, the blessed seed, had not been typically and mystically intended and signified by and under those earthly unto Jacob, it could not have been collected by the Apostle from the story of it that Jacob inherited the blessing, and that Esau was rejected, for all such earthly blessings he inherited as well as Jacob; nor had Isaac reason so bitterly to lament that he had, as it were, nothing left of blessing to bestow upon Esau, 'What shall I do for thee, my son?' Nor could there be supposed any other ground why, notwithstanding the equality of these blessings for ought was visible, the difference between them should yet be held up at so high a disproportion.

This, therefore, evidently argues that there was another sort of blessings, which were latent and hid, even a substantial, spiritual, invisible kind of blessings for evermore, whereof these things were but the shadows, as that which put that difference. And so the Apostle expressly interprets it in the fore-cited Heb. xii. 17, 'Ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected,' or denied. Mark it, that which Jacob obtained is called the blessing, eminently such, or it was the 'blessing indeed,' 1 Chron. iv. 10, which was in Jabez' eye under all those veils; 'the blessing, even life for evermore,' as the Psalmist speaks by way of exposition, Ps. cxxxiii. 3. And, indeed, when Isaac afterwards with such vehemency doubles it, 'I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed,' Gen. xxvii. 33, this

imports a blessing indeed to have been contained and involved in that blessing; and therein Isaac also shewed that the same blessing that was promised to Abraham, which was spiritual, as I have shewn, was it that was made over by inheritance to Jacob. The words of Abraham's blessing have the same emphatical duplication that we find in Jacob's, 'In blessing, I will bless thee,' Gen. xxii. 17. Further, the last words in that blessing of Jacob's, ver. 29, which are left out in Esau's, manifestly refer to the blessing made to Abraham, 'Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee;' being part of the words that are used in Abraham's, Gen. xii. 2, 3, 'I will make thee a blessing, and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.'

And in this like strain of outward blessings Moses afterwards goes on. Thus speaks the old covenant, 'Blessed art thou in thy store, blessed in thy basket, in the field,' &c. And so on the contrary, the curses, Deut. xxviii. throughout. Now, then, our Apostle comes, and, as became the gospel, which is the new spiritual covenant established upon better promises, shadowed forth by these, he overlooks all these things; his eye being, as the gospel intention is, not upon things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, as all these are, but the things which are not seen are eternal; and therefore, instead of things temporal and earthly, he writes and sets down spiritual and heavenly. Instead of 'Blessed art thou in the fields,' write down, 'Blessed art thou in the assemblies of the saints, under the enjoyment of spiritual ordinances and communion of saints.' 'There the Lord commands,' and, commanding, communicates, 'the blessing, even life for evermore,' Ps. cxxxiii. 3. Instead of 'Blessed art thou in thy store,' set down, 'Blessed are the rich in good works;' and others accursed that are rich, and not towards God, as James and our Saviour speak. And thus the gospel throughout carries it, and as if those kind of outward blessings had utterly now ceased, passeth them over as not worth the naming or the intention of those that live under the bare and naked discovery of spiritual and heavenly, as the Apostle sets them forth in their native, real glory; and thus Christ and his apostles carry it all along in their publications of the gospel, even as in his celebration of praise here. When the Apostle preached the gospel to the Jews, Acts iii., he pitcheth upon opening this very blessing of Abraham. Read the words, ver. 25. And how doth he expound it? It follows, ver. 26, 'Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities.'

How low doth this fall in the expectations of a carnal Jew, whose eyes are veiled with the outward letter of promises earthly, to hear that Jesus the Messiah was sent to bless them in turning them from their iniquities! They look for a kingdom in glory and pomp, to be brought with their Messiah; and for him to turn them from iniquities is so poor, and low, and mean a thing with them; whereas, indeed, to be converted to God and turned from iniquity is a greater blessing (spiritual) than if God should make every one of you kings and rulers of worlds, and create variety and multiplicity of them for each of you; for this is a spiritual and heavenly blessing. Peter, therefore, mentions but this one for all the rest, to shew what a sort they are all of; as also, because this is the first and foundation of all other, and all other the concomitants or consequents of this; even as, in correspondency to this very speech of his, the same Apostle makes mention of regeneration, or being born again, in his first Epistle to the converted Jews, cast out, for

their cleaving to the gospel, of their land given them to inherit, entitling it, therefore, 'To the strangers,' namely, Jews, (for the Gentile Christians there were natives,) 'scattered throughout Asia;' notwithstanding, (to comfort their hearts,) 'Blessed be the God and Father of Christ, that hath begotten you again,' or turned them from their iniquities, 'to an inheritance immortal, reserved in the heavens for you,' better than Canaan; and this is the blessing of Abraham.

Now, as Christ in another case, all the rest of gospel blessings are like to this, spiritual all. If you will have David's description, says Paul, of the blessedness of his blessed man he so often speaks of, Rom. iv., 'even as David describeth the blessedness of the man,' &c., ver. 6, 'Blessed is the man whose sin is pardoned,' ver. 7, out of Ps. xxxii.; 'Blessed is the man that is poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart,' Matt. v. The blessedness, you see, lies in and is made unto spiritual graces and dispositions of holiness. As also blessed is he that walks holily, he is 'blessed in his deed,' James i. 25; yea, 'blessed is he that endures temptation,' ver. 12. And after this account and rule are we now blessed under and by the gospel; the gospel, not deigning so much as to mention any one earthly, carnal blessing as here, slips them over, and takes no notice of them, as not worthy to come into the catalogue of those more choice and divine blessings it makes promise of. Yea, it professeth to all its followers, that in this life we are of all men most miserable, the offscouring of the world; which carnal men observing, will be ready to say, as in another case our Apostle speaks, Where is the blessedness you speak of? It lies in a higher sort of things you wot not of, and therefore with the same breath pronounceth us most blessed when most miserable. 'Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, both say and do all manner of evil against you,' says our Saviour; 'rejoice and be exceeding glad,' for as these are multiplied and enlarged, your treasures in those things, which are the real blessings, are increased, as it follows, 'for great is your reward in heaven:' greater, as the proportions of your persecutions are. Which hath brought me to the next word:—

1. *In heavenly places, or things.*—The phrase in the original is barely ἐν ἐπουρανίοις, 'in the heavenlies,' without this addition of either places or things. And it is a speech proper to this epistle, and nowhere else used, and four or five times used therein; and according as the context requires, we may add places or things, sometimes the one, sometimes the other; and perhaps in this place, which is so general and comprehensive, we may take in both, to fill up the Apostle's meaning:—

1. *In heavenly places.*—So twice in this and the ensuing chapter. Speaking of Christ, 'God hath set him at his right hand in heavenly,' ver. 20; here *places* must be added; the correspondency with the words 'set him' calls for it. So likewise, chap. ii. 6, he speaketh the same of us in a conformity to Christ our head, 'hath set us together in heavenly;' here *places* is to be added, as suited to 'setting.' The like he speaks of the good angels, the inhabitants of the heavenly world, to whom we being thus advanced, we are made like unto; as Christ says, chap. iii. 10, 'principalities and powers' that are constituted and set 'in heavenly places.'

2. *In heavenly things.*—Thus, chap. vi. 12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' It is translated 'high places' in your margin. According to the Greek, it is 'in heavenlies,' the same word that is here, and *places* is added, but not genuinely, but *things* rather should there be supplied. For this being spoken

concerning our contention with the devils, this passage, 'in heavenly,' is not an additional to note out the places wherein the devils are set, and have their station, as of the good angels, chap. iii. 10, you hear it spoken. Their place is designed and set out, chap. ii. 2, to be but the air or lower heavens. But the word reacheth there higher, far higher than is the air. It is not *ἐν οὐρανόις*, simply 'in heavenly;' but in 'above-the-heavens,' *ἐν ἐπουρανίοις*, where Christ also sits at the right hand of God, and we with him, as you heard, *ἐν ἐπουρανίοις*, in supercelestial thrones, in the highest heavens. And as it must not be thought that the devils came up to the heaven of heavens at any time since they fell from thence, for no unclean thing enters thereinto; much less do they possess them for their place or station, which Jude, ver. 6, says they kept not; so it is hard to think that the Apostle using this phrase but in this epistle only, and everywhere else of Christ and us and the good angels, as advanced to heaven and the highest heavens, that in this one place at last it should be taken of that air, the habitation and seat of devils, and come in, too, but as a mere additional barely to express the place where these are with whom we contend. That phrase therefore there used, *ἐν ἐπουρανίοις*, refers to set out to us (the more to intend our spirits in this conflict against them) the infinite moment and weight of the things themselves, in or about which we are taken up or exercised in this our opposition against them; even things supercelestial, and that are all purely heavenly, is the matter of this strife, which they endeavour to spoil us of, and to cause us to lose in. Of no less value (more precious than diamonds and rubies) are the things that lie at the stake of this vying between them and us, which they strive with us about, to keep us or beat us off from them, and through their envy endeavouring to cause us to lose the things we may or have gained herein. To which sense the particle *ἐν*, translated *in*, fitly and properly serves, being often put for *about* or *concerning*, and denoting forth the direct matter about which we are conversant. 'Blessed,' says Christ, 'is he that is not offended *in me*;' that is, about or concerning me and my condition, as noting out the stone of stumbling, occasion, and matter of the offence. This for the phrase or speech itself; whether of these or both are to be taken in here, will appear in opening the thing itself.

II. *The thing itself*.—And here more specially why 'in heavenly' should be added to 'spiritual,' when these gospel blessings are spoken of; and so that all and every one of those blessings should be affirmed to be in heavenlies; not some spiritual, and some heavenly, but all both spiritual and also in heavenlies. That it is not a synonymous addition, as expressing the quality of these blessings by two words that signify one and the same, is evident, because he doth not say spiritual *and, or,* heavenly, but spiritual *in* heavenly. His scope must therefore be to carry our thoughts further than barely to consider the spirituality of those blessings, (so to set a value on them,) but further that they are heavenly also, and what heavenly import further than spiritual, that comes also to be the question.

1. In a further and more plain distinction from the tenure of the blessings promised in that old dispensation which in the letter, as they were in themselves outward and fleshly, so in giving forth the promises of them it is still added, 'in the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee,' so before their coming into Canaan; or 'in the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee,' after; as a land, partly from its own fertility, as also by reason of its situation and neighbourhood, flowing with all good blessings whatsoever, more than any other land, which God, that views from heaven all the plots and corners of earth below, is therefore said to have 'spied out for them,

flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands,' as God by the prophet speaks, Ezek. xx. 6. Now, the New Testament tells us that by this in the promise was foresignified, and in the expectation of the patriarchs to whom the promise was made, understood and apprehended, another country. They desired or expected, Heb. xi. 16, 'a better country, that is, a heavenly;' and such a city or country, says Paul there, was the import of God's styling himself in so vast a difference from other the sons of men, the God of Abraham, &c. For God being so great a God, so full of blessedness in himself, would never have appropriated or bestowed himself in so near a relation and style of being their God, their portion, and their inheritance, upon so low and mean conditions, so far below himself, as to give them only earthly things, and no other habitation than that one poor corner of the earth, Canaan, although never so abounding with all good things.

God, says the Apostle, would have been ashamed to have been called their God upon such terms only; as if that were all the great all-sufficient God, that is possessor of heaven and earth, as Melchisedec said to Abraham, was able to give, or had to bestow on them of whom he gloried to be called their God, and owned them as his eminently beloved ones. God therefore had prepared for them another manner of city or country than Jerusalem or Canaan; even an heavenly, where his own throne and glory is; and hath therefore appointed to take them up to himself, and to pay forth and give to them all good blessings in pure heavenlies; which the Psalmist clearly intimates, when he says, Ps. cxv. 15, 16, 'Blessed are ye of the Lord who hath made heaven and earth;' and accordingly hath given in common to all the children of men the earth, and the things therein, reserving heaven, which is his own peculiar habitation, to bestow upon these his blessedness, as it there follows, 'The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men;' and therefore the Jews Peter wrote to are, as was observed, comforted with this by that holy apostle, that they were begotten to an inheritance reserved in the heaven for them, as in distinction from that given their fathers in Canaan, where the communication of God himself is so worthy, so suitable to and like himself, as the Apostle is bold to say of it: 'Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city,' namely this heavenly one, as he had termed it in the words just afore, and so there is an answerable communication of himself and all blessings given forth in heavenlies. And unto this notion will fitly suit that supplied addition, *places*—'in heavenly places.'

In heavenly places,—to make this intended opposition between these two full and complete, that look as Canaan of old was the designed seat, the place, the country, where all those fleshly outward blessings were enjoyed, and many of them grew, and so the promise thereof is made the additional unto all those promised blessings, (which is so frequently done throughout the Old Testament, as I need not quote any one testimony.) Now in like manner is heaven the *ἐδράσιμα*, the city, where both all these spiritual blessings have their full maturity and perfection, and is the place appointed to enjoy them in; where there is room and variety enough for all God's holy ones; 'heavenly places,' in the plural.

Places enough, 'many mansions,' John xiv. 1, &c. And in the meantime, till ye arrive there, those spiritual blessings we here partake in the first-fruits belong to, and come forth out of that country, all of them, where our conversation is said to be, even in this life, so far as we are made spiritual men. And in the type itself, when God did give forth the promise of blessing to Abraham, it is said, 'God called to Abraham from heaven,' Gen. xxii.

15-17, whereas he conferred with Adam but on earth, signifying that place from whence that blessing was to come, and in which to be enjoyed. Even as, in the like mystical intendment, heaven is said to have opened, when that voice came to Christ at his baptism, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Matt. iii. 17, as from whence that blessed seed, in whom all are blessed, was to come,—Christ 'the Lord from heaven,' 1 Cor. xv. 47,—and so he to raise us to the same state and place.

2. *In heavenlies*, was added to spiritual, in a further distinction yet of the blessings wherewith in Christ we are blessed, from those wherewith in Adam in our first creation we and all his posterity were blessed of God; for blessed we are in him, as you read, Gen. i. 27, 28. Adam being made, as there, ver. 26, according to the image of God, which was the foundation of that charter of blessing him and his posterity, he was in that respect a spiritual man, for such is the image of God; his graces were all spiritual, and his life and communion with God was spiritual; and so of him it might be said, that he was blessed with spiritual blessings, as well as in those earthly, and so in respect thereof we in him, that were to come of him, being all to receive the same spiritual image from him; but yet still he, and so we in him, but blessed with all these as a man that was to live on earth only, and to enjoy God, though in a spiritual way, yet but as flesh and blood can in an earthly condition be capable of, which, whilst remaining such, cannot see or enjoy God, as in heaven he is to be seen or enjoyed, and live.

For Adam when in his best condition was but flesh and blood, and an earthly man, as he is termed in distinction from Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 47. And such as that earthly man was, such should we that are of him that was of earthly generation have been, and neither he nor we advanced higher, ver. 48. But our Lord Christ being the Lord from heaven, ver. 47, a heavenly man, ver. 48, therefore we being blessed in and together with him, we are blessed in heavenly things, or with heavenly blessings, and raised up to heavenly places with him; for as is the heavenly man Christ, such are (and is the condition) of those in him; even heavenly as himself is. Heaven is his native country, he is the Lord of it; and we being married to him, and he our Lord in that respect, as was said, the spouse must be where the husband is, and partake of the same good things which he is partaker of, and therefore he takes us, and carries us to his own home, to his Father's house, which being heaven, we thereby come to be blessed in Christ with all heavenly blessings, and not spiritual only, which Adam in his primitive condition was.

And this notion will fitly bring in that other supplement which interpreters have added, 'in heavenly things,' as that other took into itself 'in heavenly places.' All the graces we have are not only spiritual, to fit us for communion with God as on earth, but they are preparations, and making us more fit for the inheritance in light, to see God face to face. And they all tend to lead us in the way to heaven, and to bring us to heaven at last; and have all the promises of things heavenly annexed to and entailed upon them. 'Follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' says Christ, and 'a more enduring substance in the heavens,' as Paul speaks, Heb. x. 34; even all things whatever that are in heaven, and are found growing there, are ours, and we have an interest in them, as they in Canaan had to all the earthly things that country afforded and abounded with; and for the enjoyment of those things there in that world, our very bodies at the resurrection will be made spiritual and heavenly, which Adam's was not. So in that 1 Cor. xv., 'it is raised a spiritual body.' 'There is a spiritual body,' namely,

that received at the resurrection, 'and there is a natural body,' that which Adam was created in, ver. 44, alleging for proof of it, in ver. 45, 'and so it is written, The first Adam was made a living soul,' an earthly man, ver. 45, but Christ and his saints are made spiritual, heavenly, so ver. 48, and he evidently there applies this to the state of the body.

And accordingly, look as that natural body of Adam was framed with such inlets and capacities of outward senses as were suited to take in all the good things that God had made and provided in this world on purpose for him,—meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, 1 Cor. vi. 13, fitted each to other,—so he having provided and filled that other heavenly world, both with variety of heavenly places and of heavenly things in those habitations, (as, *more nostro*, the Scriptures express it,) which are called in the plural *τὰ ἄνω*, 'things above,' in answerable opposition unto *τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, 'things on earth,' Col. iii. 2, and *αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια*, the 'supercelstial things themselves,' Heb. ix. 23,—which opposition shews that, as on earth there is a plurality and a variety of things, so in heaven also there are,—and to the end we may be capable of like comfort from these things heavenly, though far more transcendent, as the things themselves are in goodness to afford it to us, our very bodies shall be fitted and suited thereunto, and made heavenly and spiritual, with inlets and capacities heavenly and spiritual. Even our bodies shall be made capable of pleasure in those created excellencies there, in the framing or contriving of which God hath shewed so much of his art and skill; (as those words, *τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς*, Heb. xi. 10, import;) and particularly our bodies to receive a glory and happiness in and from the presence of that heavenly body of Christ, these being in an heavenly manner and way suited each to other; which the following words of that 1 Cor. vi. 13, 14 clearly insinuate, of which I have elsewhere spoken.* And if our bodies, to how much more heavenly state and glorious capacity shall the soul be raised, to take in those pleasures which flow immediately from the face of God and the Godhead, whose fulness dwells in that human nature, the body and soul of Christ, 'in whose presence are rivers of pleasure for evermore!'

So then, to conclude, all in heaven, both places and things, God hath blessed us withal in the real donation of them hereafter to be enjoyed; and in the meantime furnished us with those graces and dispositions as in themselves are heavenly, and of an higher strain than Adam's,† though his were spiritual. Which graces God hath endued with a right unto all those things to be enjoyed in heaven, and entailed all upon them, and which will in the end bring us thither, and do render us meet for the enjoyment of them. There is a third reason of this addition of heavenly to spiritual, which will come in more fitly in the meditation that follows. And so much for the nature and condition of the blessings themselves.

Obs.—We may from hence at once learn to judge and discern, both what are the true and choicest and most desirable blessings, and by what rule to judge of God's dealings with us in this world; as also of our hearts and spirits, whether evangelised and made spiritual, yea or no.

1. *What are the choicest blessings.*—Take for this the true rate and estimate and price which the gospel sets upon things. It mentions not, you see, riches, honours, beauty, pleasures; it passeth these over in silence, which yet the Old Testament everywhere makes promise of. They were then children, as Gal. iv. 1–3, and God pleased them with the promise of these toys and rattles, as taking with them. But in the gospel hath shewn he hath 'provided some better things for us,' things spiritual and heavenly;

* Upon 1 Cor. xv. 45.

† See my Sermons on Adam's State in Innocency.

both gracious and heavenly dispositions of spirit, that carry the soul to 'seek the things that are above, where Christ is;' and together therewith, those things themselves above that are the objects and inquest of them. You may judge of the superexcelling value of these blessings by what the devils, that are spiritual wickednesses, and so full both of envy and malice to us, do contend with us about. Now, what things are they which they oppose you in, and do make the ball of their contention with us, but these things spiritual and heavenly? As you heard, they malign you not, nor will they hinder you from being rich, honourable, to increase in and attain to a fullness of things worldly, or outward. Yea, all these sometimes he is used, as an instrument by God, to help men unto, as snares and baits to undo their souls. But as the devils themselves are spiritual wickednesses, so their envy, which sin is purely a spiritual wickedness, and which always hath for its object what is the chiefest excellency or good belonging to another, whom one envies or hates, is at and against you for none other things but spiritual good things, which therefore are, by this manifest acknowledgment of your greatest adversaries, the best things. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.* If he knew any that were better, he would be sure to turn your opposite therein; and he knows the worth of them, by having fallen from them. These are, therefore, the best, yea, and the only true blessings indeed.

Yea further, there are a sort of things that are spiritual, which of themselves taken or found apart, severed from graces, are not spiritual blessings, though called spiritual gifts; as faith of miracles, gifts of tongues, and divine knowledge in the knowledge of the Scriptures, which yet are a fruit of Christ's ascending, Eph. iv. These the gospel condescends to commend to the Corinthians, as the objects of our desires, 'Desire spiritual gifts, yea, covet earnestly the best gifts,' 1 Cor. xii. 31; and these, chap. xiv. 1, as infinitely more desirable than all other earthly excellencies whatever, as being of immediate use in edifying the Church of God. Yet if you will have the Apostle speak his own heart, he undervalues all these but as toys which, when children, even under the gospel men are taken with, but in themselves are nothing in comparison of the least degree of true spiritual heavenly graces: as faith unfeigned and lively hope, which do entitle us to, and do accompany and carry us unto the very door of heaven; and sincere love, which goes in with us, and abides with us for ever. These other gifts, though spiritual, yet they are not of themselves spiritual blessings in heavenlies, if love and faith be wanting; for they interest not the person in whom they are in heavenlies, but men may go to hell with a rich portion had of them here. Here the Apostle himself speaks forth his own sense herein, 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' These, when a man is a child in Christianity, he may for a while value, (ver. 1, 'When I was a child, I spake as a child,' &c.) but after he is grown up, these other come in esteem with him.

To the like purpose we find him speaking, Heb. vi., of all those enlightenings and tastings of the heavenly gifts, which men that fall away do partake of, ver. 4, 5, preferring infinitely the least grain of true heavenly grace, such as sincere love to the saints, unto the greatest abundance of those other, as better things, infinitely better, upon the same account that here in the text, that they accompany salvation. So, ver. 9, 'We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation,' instancing, ver. 10, in that

of love to the saints: 'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Even those elevations of the powers and principles in corrupt nature unto a tasting the heavenly gift, as also of the powers of the world to come, as the object of them, yet are they not in themselves spiritual blessings in heavenlies. Nor are they ordained as such, to bring the persons that have them thither, which true spiritual graces, that are the image of God and the new creature renewed in us, by our being begotten again, are ordained unto.

To distinguish, therefore, even these, though spiritual gifts, from those graces that are spiritual in heavenlies, and that appertain to and belong unto salvation, doth this addition, 'in heavenlies,' as pertinently and properly serve as either of the other two forementioned. And although they are from heaven as in respect of the giver, which is Christ as ascended into heaven, and the Holy Ghost who is from heaven; yet are they not *ἐπουράνια*, gifts supercelestial, in themselves or in the persons, so as to raise their hearts up unto things above the heavens,—that is, make their hearts heavenly,—nor will ever carry their persons thither. They are *ἐκ*, from heaven, not *ἐν ἐπουρανίους*, not seated in, or constituted of heavenlies. But they are in the receivers of them, if their hearts be not renewed, but earthly, because they are but the stirrings of self-love in them (which is a corrupt member upon earth, as well as any other lust) by heavenly enlightenings; though elevating self to objects heavenly, so far as there is any consideration in them that suiteth self, as the greatest notion of joy, happiness, and blessedness doth; yet not unto *τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπουράνια*, 'to the heavenly things themselves,' Heb. ix. 23, in their spiritual nature considered, as the Apostle distinguisheth, 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. And so the products of them in the spirits and affections of them in the receivers are heavenly no otherwise than the vapours and clouds or meteors that are exhaled by the sunbeams out of the earth and water may be said to be heavenly, because the light and influence of heaven extracts and elevates them above that sphere which otherwise they would not rise up unto. And so those are but *ex una parte*, but of one part heavenly, and so imperfectly; such merely *ex parte illuminantis et donantis*, on the part of the donor, because he is in heaven that gives them, and from heaven lets them down; as also, because they have a remoter tendency towards heaven and salvation. 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven,' said Christ to one more than ordinarily enlightened among the Jews. But heavenly they are not, *ex parte recipientis*, the hearts of the receivers of them remaining still corrupt, as, whilst self remains the predominant agent and principle, a man must needs still remain, whatever his objects which self pursues be. They are earthly, as the affections themselves are that are stirred thereby in them; for if the root or soil be earthly, though the rain that falls on it and causeth it to sprout and bud be from heaven, yet the fruit must needs still be esteemed such; which comparison the Apostle hath an allusion to in Heb. vi. 7, 8, 'For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.'

And perhaps to put this or the like distinction between these spiritual gifts, thus imperfectly heavenly, from those graces of true regeneration, might be one great part of the Apostle's aim in that speech, James i. 16–18, 'Do not err, my beloved brethren,' (he speaks to the whole bulk and herd of professors and hearers of the word, in respect that many mistook imperfect

workings on men, and actings by men from hearing the gospel, for true heavenly grace, and so by false reasonings deceived themselves, *παράλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτοῦς*, as ver. 22.)—‘Do not err, my beloved brethren,’ says he: ‘every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.’ So making the distinction between true professors and false to consist in an innate difference in the gifts themselves; the one good and perfect, as regeneration is, which he instanceth in, and which alone brings forth fruit to perfection, as Christ sayeth in the parable of the sower, which is every way good and perfect, both *ex parte dantis*, from above, and *ex parte recipientis*, changing the heart into an heavenly nature, as the ‘engrafted word,’ ver. 21, useth to do, so making the man holy and heavenly, as the Word and Spirit itself is. And that which confirms this is, that James’s scope is evidently to distinguish seemingly true professors from true professors indeed. ‘If any seem to be religious,’ ver. 26; ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God,’ &c., ver. 27. Oh, therefore, let us all be moved to seek earnestly after these good and perfect gifts of true holiness and regeneration, and things that accompany salvation; to be blessed with these spiritual blessings in heavenlies, the possessors of which James twice in that chapter termeth blessed, and them alone!

2. Learn hence likewise, how to judge rightly of God’s dealings with thee in this world, and to put a right and true interpretation thereupon, and of his heart towards thee therein. God often drives a clean contrary design to our expectations, desires, yea our very prayers, which perhaps have been drawn out and laid forth much upon things outward and earthly, which we have judged meet for us. But God perhaps hath broken thee in these, denied thy prayers, yea taken all away from thee, and done the clean contrary. But withal consider, what he hath been a doing all that while upon thy spirit in order to spiritual things in heavenlies. Hath God increased thee in faith, patience, submission to his will, humbling thyself under his mighty hand, keeping thee from sin? Hath he enlarged thy coast in joy in the Holy Ghost, communion with himself, and steady and close walking with him; and will not let thy heart go forth far after anything vain and carnal, but he comes upon thee with some cross, hedgeth up thy way, narrows thee in such comforts that would draw forth and increase thy lusts; but makes an open door, an enlarged abundant entrance into his own bosom, in accesses to him and converses with him? Or if not therein, yet increaseth thy secret store of gracious dispositions and holy compliances of spirit towards himself, such as his dealings with thee call for? Thy heart is kept in awe to sin, fearful to omit holy duties, dependent on him in all, loving of him, eyeing of him, walking with him, and aiming at him in all thy ways. So as whatever he doth to thee, as in relation to this world, and to thy worldly ends and desires, yet in relation to that other world and the things thereof thou observest that he still is sure to carry on that design strongly and hotly, and pursues it hard, to make thee more spiritual, and to bring thee nearer to himself. Oh, consider that even this is to bless thee, to bless thee indeed, to bless thee according to the tenure and dispensation of blessing men under the gospel! This is to bless thee in Christ, and with Christ, and the blessings of Christ, who was sent to bless us in things spiritual in heavenlies; and in these is the special good-will and love of God, as thy God and Father, and as the God and Father of Christ, laid forth and seen.

Thus he blessed Job, when he took all outward things from him. ‘Blessed be the name of the Lord,’ said he then, when all was gone. He could

not have blessed God so heartily as he then did, if he had not found God blessing him most of all at that very time. Yea, with these he blessed his Son Christ himself, of whom it is said God 'blessed him for ever,' and yet had not a hole to hide his head in. With these [he blessed] the apostles, who had neither house nor home; suffered nakedness, hunger, and were at last appointed and set forth to death, as Paul expresseth it; when as other Christians in those times, less beloved and less blessed of him, as the Corinthians, babes in Christ, carnal, yet in a great measure were full, reigned, abounded in all earthly comforts. God allowed them these rattles then being as children: but take Paul's judgment, what though our outward man perish,—that is, our bodies, and the outward state and condition of the whole man, as we are men of this world,—what though we suffer loss in the things belonging thereto, so in lieu thereof our inward man be renewed daily? and the things belonging to this inward man are these spiritual blessings in things heavenly. Yea, we may well suffer the spoiling of our goods, as the Hebrews did, if instead thereof an enduring substance in the heaven be added unto us; as, if we obtain one degree of grace, (the least,) there is for certain withal such an addition, to an infinite disproportion, in heavenlies made.

The primitive Christians being possessed with such principles as these, cared not what they were to this world. If thou beest a servant, care not; yea, if thou wast of servants a slave, as some then that were called were, (for Paul says, 'whether bond or free in Christ,' &c., Col. iii., there were therefore such in Christ then;) and the condition of servants, especially slaves, in those times and places was hard and outwardly most miserable, their lords having power of life and death and to use them as they listed; yet how slightly doth the Apostle speak of that condition, and but in one short word: 'care not,' says he, 1 Cor. vii. 21; he spends no more words about it, nor no higher, as a thing so much taken for granted, not to be minded in comparison upon this consideration which follows, ver. 22, 'For he that is called in the Lord is the Lord's free man.' That is, Thy relation unto, and condition in, and privileges by Christ, are of such transcendent value in comparison of this other, as this should have no weight with thee to be regarded. Thou art blessed in Christ with all blessings in another world, so that it is no matter what thy condition be in this world. Only because outward things, joined with the favour of God, are in their kind blessings from God not to be contemned, yet so small as they come not into the gospel's inventory, therefore he there adds, that if such a one could be free, he should use it rather. And so if riches, or honours, or power be cast upon thee, use them rather. Yet still he speaks so slenderly of the difference between these, as if so little, and that which is, whether it be the good of the one, and evil that is in the other, so much swallowed up by that state and condition we have in Christ, as neither is much worth considering.

O my brethren, these men that talked and lived at this rate, as the apostles and Christians then did, how strangely and mightily must their minds be supposed to have been filled and possessed with the valuation and admiration of spiritual and heavenly blessings! Yea, insomuch as when they saw any man suffer much, they esteemed it a happiness, an addition of blessedness to that man. 'Behold, we account them happy that endure or suffer,' saith the Apostle James, chap. v. 11. He speaks it as the common thoughts and principle of '*us all*,' that are, or then were Christians, and speaks it in opposition to the thoughts of the world. They account them happy that have riches, have beautiful wives, fair houses, &c.; but, behold, we account them happy that endure. And if temptations of several kinds

befell them, they aforehand were prepared and instructed to account it all joy. For their faith and experience prompted them that now God was about to bless them with an increase in such spiritual graces of faith and patience, &c., the least trial of which hereby, much more addition unto which, they accounted 'more precious than gold,' 1 Peter i. 6, 7; and 'blessed is the man that endures temptation;' and the more or greater these are, the more blessed he is.

Thus, God often makes but an advantage of a man's outward condition; sets up a man or woman that hath all affluences and accomplishments of riches, honours, abilities, pleasures, beauty, wit, &c., and bestows them on them but as it were only to afford but so many crosses and afflictions in the spoil of them, and to heighten these afflictions the more; when yet God's design in and by the loss or ruin of all these, is to make that man or woman great and rich and glorious in and unto this heavenly world, unto the higher and greater proportion, as he was in all these outward things in this world. Doth God greatly chastise and afflict thee, and withal teach thee out of his law, further instructing thee in thy duty, and framing thy heart thereunto? Hear David, Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest out of thy law.' Doth a great loss of a child, a wife, put thee upon making one more fervent prayer than otherwise thou shouldst have made? God hath really and more abundantly blessed thee thereby, than in the continuance of that outward enjoyment to thee. God often blesseth us when we are not aware of it. God lets thee fall into a sin perhaps, and that drives thee to the throne of grace, with outcries for help, Heb. iv. 16, *βοήθειαν*, as the Apostle's word is, as a man undone utterly and for ever, if God pity thee not. This prayer, though in itself a less good than thy sin was evil, yet unto thee is turned a far greater blessing than thy sin hath evil in it (as to thee :) such is his goodness. Thy sin shall be pardoned, and though it be a loss in itself, yet to thee, having this so great a consequent and effect of it, thou comest off a gainer. And, lo, God hath blessed thee by occasion of it with a further increase in heavenlies, which do abide for ever, and shall never be taken from thee.

3. Hereby also we may judge of our own spirits, whether yea or no at all made spiritual and heavenly, or to what degree; and so whether in this state of gospel blessedness, or the contrary. What blessings are they thy heart is drawn out to seek, when thy soul is in nearest approaches unto God, and thou findest thou hast hold of him in wrestling with him, as Jacob had usually at such times? What are the choicest desires of a man's soul he pours forth to him, and says, as Jacob there did, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me' thus or thus? And what are the blessings thy heart then with highest contention affecteth? Sometimes perhaps that God would communicate himself to thee, which, as you heard, was the sum and substance of all blessings and blessedness. Oh, bless me with thyself, thyself, Lord! And thy heart is so filled, and overpowered, and swallowed up with this, is so adequately filled and environed about with this, that thou canst not find in thy heart wherewith at that time to ask anything else; but the utmost sole intention of thy mind and soul are held up, fixed and united unto this, and this alone. Another time, or presently thereupon, as violently carried forth to be blessed in holiness and unblameableness in love towards this God. 'Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and keep me from the evil!' So we find Jabez broke forth, 1 Chron. iv. 10, and his prayer is recorded for the eminent zeal and holiness of heart in it; and it stands there alone, like to a small fertile spot of earth in the midst of a long

tract of ground, that bears nothing but names and genealogies round about it. Oh, keep me from the evil, says he, that evil of evils, sin, (as Christ in the Lord's Prayer also expresseth it,) that it may not grieve me : for, Lord, to sin against thee would be to my spirit the greatest cross and affliction ; though otherwise I abounded in all earthly blessings, and thou didst never so much enlarge my coast, as he had there also prayed ; and to be kept from it is in my esteem and desire the greatest mercy I have to desire of thee,—to bless me ; bless me, O Lord, ' by turning me from mine iniquities,' as Peter, Acts iii. 36, by enabling me to keep thy commandments, which is the greatest blessedness, as Rev. xxii. 14. Are these, and such as these, the top desires of thy soul ? Thou art blessed in thy deeds, as James says. Go, and for thy comfort carry home with thee all the blessings which heaven itself affords thee therewith, and fall down on thy knees, and with the Apostle here bless thy God, who hath thus blessed thee with all (whilst thou hast thus a heart to prefer any one that is truly spiritual) blessings in heavenly things in Christ.

In Christ.—1. We before observed that God blesses us, as having taken upon him to bear the relation of our God, and of a Father unto us.

2. These two relations of God unto us are founded originally and firstly upon his said relations unto Christ—viz., of being his God and his Father first, and that in a transcendant manner higher than unto us ; but descending down, and imparted to us in a lower, though true real degree.

3. Christ's bearing the title of being *Our Lord*, being joined to the last foregoing particular, do (both put together) become a joint foundation, both of God the Father's becoming our God and our Father also ; and so upon those double relations of God the Father to us doth bring down a legally formal right, upon which the Father, according to that legal right, should bestow all sorts of blessings upon us, which his grace makes him willing to bestow. And this right is harmoniously and rationally grounded, though God the Father must be acknowledged original of all, on the superadded constitution last mentioned—viz., That God the Father did also therewith make and ordain his Son Christ to bear the relation of our Lord. Which relation Jesus Christ hath also taken upon him that he is indeed our husband, a Lord and husband of us the elect, by the Father given unto Christ to that end, so to be constituted his Church universal of men, to be his lawful spouse. And this is such a privilege as the good angels have not, although in respect of his dominion and their service to him Christ is said to be their Lord also ; yet this more near conjugal relation and band of us to him is not communicated unto angels, but imported in these words, ' Our Lord.' Which words have this further emphasis, that God hath made his Christ to be our Lord and husband ; that is, he hath made us sons and daughters in law by adoption to himself, which is expressed in the next verse, and Christ also doth thereupon bless us. So as, in fine, we are both the legal children of God the Father and rightful spouse of Christ, which is a sense and interpretation of the words ' Our Lord,' which, as far as I yet know of, has not been given to any mere creatures besides ourselves. And this is therefore a consideration of great weight and endearment both of God and Christ to us ; besides that it is one of the architectonical pillars and buttresses of this fabric, and of all the particulars of this model.