

## SERMON II.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [or in heavenly things] in Christ.—VER. 3.*

THE holy heart of this blessed Apostle was so full in his own person of being blessed by God, that he falls a blessing him as soon as he begins to speak. It is his first word he begins the body of this epistle with, and continues the same course and way of blessing God through the first half of the chapter unto ver. 15. And then he enters upon and opens another view of giving thanks, and pouring out prayers for these Ephesians, although this of blessing God far excels both thanksgiving and prayer, as I shall afterwards shew. But still under one or other of these ways of worshipping God, either prayer or thanksgiving or blessing, which are the highest strains of immediate worship we can perform to God, or at least with the materials for these, he goes on to fill up the rest of the first chapter. Yea, and after that being finished, he still continues matter of thanksgiving and blessing to the end of the second chapter throughout.

And here the occasion that inflamed him to pour forth such a flood of blessings, &c., comes duly to be noticed by us. And oh how abundantly did his heart use to overflow, if he fell but into this argument from that occasion, and entertained but the thoughts of it! You may for an instance thereof, though all his epistles testify it, but read over those passages of his in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, which he begins even as he doth this chapter, Eph. i. 4, 'Knowing their election of God.' How? By the fruits of it throughout his ministry, as the instrument. 'For our gospel,' says he, 'came unto you, not in word only, but in power.' And how exemplarily they turned from idols to wait for Christ from heaven, through that his ministry, which brought forth all these fruits amongst them, as it hath done over the world! And having thus begun and fallen into this argument, as I said, he proves so concerned, as he knows not how to get out or to set bounds to his affections. Read on 1 Thess. ii. 8, 'So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls;' and, chap. iii. 7, the joy hereof was so great, that it swallowed up the afflictions of all his sufferings, 'Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our afflictions and distress by your faith; for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord: for what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?' Thus he, when he took pen to write this Epistle, or otherwise to dictate it, the first thing the Holy Ghost filled him with was the consideration of all these blessings vouchsafed these Ephesians, which he enumerates together with this remembrance conjoined therewith. Thus all these blessings and matters of thanksgiving were all and every one of them the fruits of his own doings; that is, the very fruits of his own ministry and preaching; which, besides the glory

and riches of God's grace towards those persons he writes to, did deeply affect him. Besides this, the memory of what had passed, and he had cause to remember them by a good token, he knew what he had preached, and remembered how they had been wrought upon thereby. For he had afore this Epistle, for three years' space, laboured amongst them night and day, publicly and privately, from house to house, in preaching and that with tears; as in his last farewell sermon to the elders of this very church himself relateth, when he told them they should see his face no more, and so that he should never any more preach to them again; and how much his heart and theirs was affected with that speech, the story of it and that his sermon doth sufficiently inform you.

Now, then, a little observe his speech in that farewell sermon, in which he makes a sum of his forepast ministry in that city, though but in general speeches; as how he had 'not shunned to declare all the counsel of God to them,' Acts xx. 27; and above all thereof to make a display of the grace of God in the gospel, wherewith he saith he had finished 'the ministry which I have received from our Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God,' ver. 24. And then let us but compare the first part of this Epistle, which contains the fruits I speak of; and they do answer to these his declarations of the matter of his preaching, related in that farewell sermon. In the fifth verse of this chapter, he mentions God's having chosen them in Christ, and having predestinated them to the adoption of children, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Whereby it sufficiently appears that the doctrines of election and predestination, in all the points of them, he certainly had in his ministry gone over, and were the points he had instructed them in, and had taught them fully; otherwise had he not declared all the counsel of God, (whereof specially the doctrines of election and predestination do eminently in the New Testament bear that very name of the counsel of the Almighty within himself,) and how could he have said, that He had elected and predestinated them, had he kept back anything that was profitable for them?

Well, he goes on first, 'In which glory and riches of his grace he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of his will,' in which words he tells us here again that this he had preached, 'according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself,' which in the eleventh verse he styles 'the counsel of his own will.' And again, ver. 11, out of which it was 'he had predestinated us to obtain an inheritance according to the purposes of him who worketh (both this, as) all things (else) according to the counsel of his own will.' So that the matter for which he here blesses God, wrought and accomplished in and upon their hearts, will be found answering, as the print does to the seal, that is, of his ministry. His doctrine namely, (as he recapitulates it in that sermon Acts xx., and that it has been the pith and principal sum of all his former sermons,) which had been to testify the grace of God in the gospel, and to open all the counsels of God in and about man's salvation; in which he had concealed nothing that was profitable unto them, (as he professeth,) that might work repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 20, 21. Now behold, what you read, you find here in this Epistle, testified by the Holy Ghost, who had been the master workman of all grace in them, and towards them, to have been left from his preaching impressed upon their souls, verified on their persons; visibly to be read by all men, written in their hearts and lives, and openly avowed professions of themselves. There is no man that shall compare one with the other, but

must say that as face answers to face in water, so those contents specified to have been the subject of his preaching in that sermon in the Acts, to be answerable to these impresses here in their hearts, the effects recorded in this Epistle, and the success of his ministry, answering to the other, as prints do unto their copy. As he had preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as he had declared in that sermon of his there, so answerably here he says that 'the grace of God had abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence;' the genuine meaning of which words is, that God had wrought all that belongs unto true faith, the truest wisdom and repentance, the only prudence accompanied with holiness; which are signified by these, as I shall shew, when I come to open those words. And by what means God had wrought it, he tells you in the 9th verse, that follows in his own words you meet with in that sermon in the Acts, ver. 20, whereby he had set out the matter of his preaching, 'having made known,' says he, 'to us the mystery and secret of his will,' 'the purpose and counsel of his will,' ver. 11, as to the matters namely of their salvation, and all to the 'praise and glory of that grace,' which in his preaching he had so much celebrated, and nowhere hath set forth more than in this paragraph of his blessing God for them.

In fine, as he elsewhere himself spake, so he had preached, and so they had believed, 1 Cor. xv. 11; so as in effect Paul's blessing of God by his enumerating these particular blessings of God bestowed upon them, proves to be indeed a preaching over to them the whole gospel of their salvation anew, the whole gospel in a new mode, in a new dress of thanksgiving, viz., for blessings of grace either shewed to them, and wrought in them, by the matter of his preaching. Instead of the seeds, the corn and grain he had sown, which were since grown up in their hearts, he returns the fruits of them—fruits of their own growth. And withal he doth in a covert manner mind them thereby, and brings fresh to their remembrance the principal materials, which God, by his preaching, and which while he was preaching them, God had wrought in them; and finally he provokes them upon the remembrance hereof afresh to bless God, by observing himself thus affectionately and passionately giving thanks, and praises, and blessing to God for them; that how much more should and ought they to do it anew for themselves? Than which course of proceeding herein held by him, there could not have been a greater artifice invented or used, whereby to affect their own hearts. This for the fitness and justness of the occasion of blessing God.

Nor let any man wonder that I make this kind of enumeration of gospel blessings to be as the preaching of the gospel itself. 'I am ready to preach the gospel to you at Rome also,' says Paul to the Romans, at the beginning of chap. i.; 'and I am sure,' says he, 'that when I come unto you I shall come in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ,' so speaks he at the end of that Epistle. The gospel is made up of blessings, is nothing but blessings, and the fulness of blessings.

Nor will it be out of our way or hinder us, to stand and observe, as touching the form of his blessing God, the vast difference that at this very entrance appears to be between the old dispensation among the Jews, and the dispensation under the New Testament. The form they used is, 'Blessed be the God of Israel.' And Zachary used this at a time when it was so near the expiring of the Old Testament and the approach of the New, at a time when the Messiah himself was conceived and come in the womb, though not yet born, and John the Baptist, that was to be his immediate forerunner, was already born. They all speak in this sort, till Christ were as the sun at his

height, as if they generally knew no higher title to honour God by than the God of the Jews, the Lord God of Israel.

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,' that was the wonted note of old they used in the beginning, otherwhile in the middle, or else conclusion of their songs and worship. So David in the Psalms often, Zachary in his song, Luke i. 68. The difference is that they spake it according to the level of the Old Testament, 'Blessed be the God of Israel;' but the holy apostles Paul and Peter, according to the elevation of the New, the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And this style the two great apostles begin with—our apostle here in the beginning of this Epistle, and Peter in the beginning of his first Epistle; and he used it then when he did write unto Jews, for unto them are his Epistles written, which makes the alteration of the style the more observable, 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Yet the mercies which he there blesses God for are but one or two, 'who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance,' &c. It is a blessing God for the first blessing in execution, regeneration, and the last performed, namely, the inheritance in heaven, as it followeth there.

He begins his doxology no higher than at that first spiritual mercy bestowed in this life, which estates us into that inheritance; but our apostle here prefixeth it before his 'Blessed be God,' and unto all blessings universally, whereof in his subsequent discourse he enumerates the particulars, and he takes the rise of his flight higher, 'according as he hath chosen us afore the world,' even at election; that first, original, and universally fundamental grace of all the other that follow; that vast womb of eternity, in which all blessings were conceived and shaped before the world was, and so from thence descends to redemption, regeneration, seal of the Spirit, glory.

And here in this place, since most interpreters generally have observed a correspondence held with that Jewish doxology in the Old Testament, I shall more specially add this one that appears to me to be the most direct and likeliest correspondent of the Old Testament, that ever the Apostle held intelligence with, in this of his of the New. And it was in a prophecy of the prophet David, Ps. lxxii., where, prophesying of Christ, ver. 17, 'Men shall be blessed in him,' (plainly meaning Christ,) and that 'all nations shall call him blessed,' he breaks forth thereupon, as here the apostle doth, 'Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, (that latter is Old Testament language,) who only doth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen.' Wherein you see that the prophet blesseth God expressly for the times of the gospel, wherein he should bless us Gentiles, as well as Jews, in Christ; in whom, both to Abraham and again to David himself, God had promised to bless all the nations of the world. 'Let the whole earth be filled with his glory;' and this estate our holy apostles together having seen with their own eyes to have been in their days, (and especially Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, through his ministry so gloriously accomplished in these Ephesians and other Gentiles, as well as that other apostle had, on the Jews he wrote to,) the same Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, (in him and both, crowned and confirmed with so visible experience,) did burst out as you see into the same blessing for substance, but more full and explicit, which had been but by way of prophetic foresight uttered by David; thereby most passionately inciting these Ephesians, and with them all Christians in all nations, (so lately converted to Christ,) to join with him in this his manner of blessing God; the whole earth being now filled with his glory, and all nations being now blessed by

God, the God and Father of Christ, with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in him.

The words of this third verse divide themselves into three parts :—

1. A blessing God, as on our parts to be performed : ‘Blessed be God.’

2. The style or titles under which Paul blesseth God : as ‘the God and Father of Jesus Christ.’

3. The matter for which, or blessings bestowed on us : ‘for all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.’

*Blessed be God.*

I. *What it is to bless God.*—Blessing of God is to wish well to, and speak well of God, out of good-will to God himself, and a sense of his goodness unto ourselves.

1. *To wish well to him, and speak well of him.*—There is *benedicere alicui*, which is, to invoke a blessing by prayer to another, as a father blesseth his child, one saint another : thus we are not capable of blessing God, nor God of being blessed by any. But there is *benedicere aliquem*, which is, to speak well of another, and to wish well to (as Ps. cxxix. 8), or to congratulate heartily the happiness of another ; and in this manner God gives us leave to bless him, *εὐλογεῖν τὸν Θεόν*, in *accusativo* Luc. i. 64, Jam. iii. 10. Yea, God loves your good word, that is, to be spoken of well by you, rejoiceth in your well-wishes, and to hear from you expressions of rejoicings in his own independent blessedness. Though God hath an infinite ocean of all blessedness, to which we can add nothing, who is therefore entitled by way of eminency, ‘The Blessed One,’ Mark xiv. 61, a title solely proper and peculiar to him, yet he delights to hear the *amen* of the saints, his creatures, resounding thereto ; that is, our ‘so be it.’ Thus our apostle having entitled him, Rom. i. 25, the ‘God blessed for ever,’ as in himself he is, and such in distinction from, and opposition to his whole creation, which is his scope there, yet he adds his own *amen*, or ‘so be it,’ thereto, ‘God blessed for ever, Amen.’ It is strange, that although so it is already, God is blessed in himself, and so it must be for evermore, that yet our ‘so be it’ is put to it ; we thereby uttering our good-will ; and it is well taken by him. It is not an *amen* set to a blessing of invocation, but it is an *amen* of joyful acclamation and congratulation, as expressing our rejoicing and complacency in his happiness, declaring that so we would have it.

Thus Christ, who is God with the Father, and so acknowledged in that 45th Psalm, (a psalm to his praise,) ‘Thy throne, O God,’ &c., ver. 6, (compare Heb. i. 8,) yet there we find that he is blessed by the Church, his spouse, in these words, ver. 4, ‘Prosper thou, ride thou in thy majesty, or ride prosperously ;’ which is a joyful shout and acclamation, as useth to be to kings, upon his passing by ; the people exulting in that glory and majestic state which they see him go forth in, wishing him prosperity in his expedition and undertakings, to make himself glorious, by doing wondrous things. The old translation expressed the intent of it, rather than the letter : ‘Good luck have thou with thine honour.’ The church there had withal in her eye all those gracious perfections his person was adorned with ; which thus won her heart to him, and drew this from her : for so it follows, ‘Ride and prosper, because of truth, righteousness, and meekness.’ And thus for us to take a view of all the absolute excellencies and perfections that are in God, to behold him crowned with glory and happiness that encircleth him round—a crown of glory made up of justice, truth, holiness, and other attributes ; to take a survey of all his proceedings and dispensations, and goings forth of every kind—his everlasting degrees of justice and mercy—all his ways and deal-

ings in the variety of them, though never so cross to our particular ; and to rejoice heartily in that glory of his, which is the result of them all : and inwardly to say, Oh, let him be thus glorious and blessed for ever, whatever shall become of me ! to be glad of all, congratulate him and wish well to him in all, this is to bless him.

2. *When done out of good-will as the principle of it ;* as indeed where such acts as those forementioned are, there must needs be good-will, the spring of them. And in this respect, blessing God superadds to confessing to his praise, yea or to give glory to him ; it speaks more than either. The devils shall confess to his praise, Phil. ii. 10, 11, ‘ Every knee, and every tongue, even of things under the earth (in hell), shall confess Christ, to the glory of the Father ;’ but theirs is but extorted, although acknowledged by them to be justly his due. Hence if we would speak strictly, blessing God is appropriated properly to the saints, with a difference from praising God ; Ps. cxlv. 10, ‘ All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.’ The saints alone, they bless him, and why ? because they alone bear good-will to him. And they bless the Lord with their whole souls, and all that is within them, Ps. ciii. 1, and this God respects more than your ‘ giving him glory.’ It was his very end in choosing forth a select company of saints ; that he himself first blessing them, they then might bless him again. He could have been glorified however in them, but he loves to be blessed ; he loves our good-will in it, more than the thing.

3. I added, *out of good-will to God himself ;* that is, purely for what he is himself, and not only for what to ourselves ; in this manner our apostle blesseth God here, even for this, that he is the God and Father of Christ. As loving God that ever he begot such a Son, he rejoiceth that so great a Father hath so great a Son ; to the mutual honour of each. How often doth he in his Epistles come in with this, even in the midst or conclusion of a discourse, in which there was an occasion to magnify him, ‘ who is God blessed for ever,’ which is a glorifying God as God, that is, in himself and by himself, thus blessed for ever. Thus Rom. i. 25, Rom. ix. 5, and elsewhere.

Yet, 4. together herewith, *out of a sense of his goodness also to us.* So here, though he blesseth him first for being the God of Christ, yet he withal after blesseth him for having blessed us with all blessings ; and God gives us leave so to do. ‘ If you loved me [purely],’ says Christ, John xiv. 28, ‘ you would rejoice, because I said, I go to my Father :’ you would rejoice in my enjoyment of him, that is, in my blessedness in and through him, ‘ who is greater than I,’ (as it follows,) and so is the fountain of that happiness I have. He takes it unkindly at our hands, if we rejoice not in his personal blessedness primarily, and in the first place. And thus as we love him because he loves us first, so we bless him because he blesseth us first : and yet it must rise higher in the end, (and in heaven it will do so,) *even* purely to bless him for himself, or else we love him not, nor bless him, as the great God is to be loved and blessed by us. A meditation or two :—

#### 1ST MEDITATION.

It is an infinite favour we are admitted to, and privilege vouchsafed to creatures, and indeed the highest, not only to pray to God to obtain all blessings, and to give thanks to him when we have them ; and further to glorify him for the glory that is in him ; but beyond all this, to bless him for all the blessedness that is in him, and for him to take in our *Amen*, our *Euge*, to his own blessedness, as in like manner he doth our faith as a seal

to his truth and faithfulness. Oh, what is it! He was not content to be blessed alone, but he must bless us, and make us partakers thereof. But further, as if not perfect without us, he blesseth himself in our returns and echoes of blessing to his blessedness, that so we in him, and he in us, might be blessed together for evermore. Amen.

## 2D MEDITATION.

You have seen it a peculiar character of the saints, thus out of good-will to bless God, "Thy saints they bless thee." It was his end why he had saints; said he with himself, They will do that which none of my other works will do—they will bless me, for none else have good-will to me: and whoever blesseth him, are first blessed of him. Hast thou, or dost thou find in thy heart, thus to bless God, and findest all within thee rising up in the doing of it? 'Bless God, O my soul, and all that is within me,' Ps. ciii. 1. Go home, thou art a saint I warrant thee. It was Job's grace, 'The Lord hath taken, yet blessed be the name of the Lord.' You will say, that was Old Testament grace: yea, and it is New Testament grace too; you see it in our Apostle, the greatest of saints; so we may write him, however he writes himself the least. His heart was full of this, and so it came out first; he could not hold at the first to utter it; when he was to speak to those he wrote to, he must needs begin to speak by way of blessing God: yea, it is the highest and best grace in heaven itself. The angels, though not themselves, but men only, have benefit by Christ's blood,—he died for men, not angels, and therefore it is only the chorus of men that sing, Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood out of all nations'—yet, ver. 11, the angels are brought in blessing Christ also, and that for this, that he was slain, ver. 11, 12, 'And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, (they mention nothing else of him,) and then blessing comes in at last as the *E, la*, the highest note that heavenly choir can reach to. The like at his birth, their song was to bless him for 'peace on earth, good-will to men,' (they mention not themselves,) but purely for good-will to men; because it brought 'glory to God on high,' (as there,) they heartily rejoiced in that glory God should have in his dispensations towards us.

This for our blessing of God on our parts, 'Blessed be God.'

II. *The person who, and the style under which our Apostle blesseth him—*  
'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

It is not only, Blessed be God the Father, but the God and Father of Christ: nor only the God who is the Father of Christ, but *ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατήρ*, the God and Father of Christ. Otherwise *καὶ, and*, were here redundant; but as conjoined thus between those two, shews that both these titles do speak each of them a several relation of God unto Christ; or what God is unto Christ—he is his God and his Father. The like manner of speech we have, (when elsewhere Christ is spoken of,) two titles of his in the same sort locked together with that *καὶ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ σωτήρ*, 2 Peter i. 1, 'Ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ', speaking to them that believe in the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost intending both those two attributes of Christ. And Titus ii. 13, *Τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the

great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' He speaks in both places of one and the same person, namely, Christ under two titles: and thus here he doth the like of God the Father, 'The God and Father of Christ.' And this parallel speech used to Christ in those places, compared with what the Apostle useth here, those places are strong proofs and assertions apostolical, that Christ is God as well as Saviour, the great God and Saviour; even as it is evident here in the like tenor of speech, that the person of God the Father is both the God and the Father of Christ: for in the very same strain and tenor of speech it is that both these are said of Christ, wherein here both are spoken of God the Father in his relation unto Christ. This for the phraseology; now as to the thing itself.

Two things are here to be apart spoken to for the explanation hereof:—

1. The matter itself: how God the Father is the God and the Father of Christ, and in what respects the one or the other, either of them.

2. The reason why here he singlenth out these relations of God to Christ, and under the respects and considerations thereof he blesseth God here.

1. *The matter itself*, 'The God and Father of Christ.'—That the Father is both the God and Father of Christ, other Scriptures affirm, yea, accord also, in putting both relations thus together as well as here; yea, upon the cross he challengeth his interest in both, 'My God, my God,' Matt. xxvii. 46, and 'Father, into thy hands,' Luke xxiii. 46; and on the other side, when to enter into his glory, he mentions both, John xx. 17, 'I ascend unto my Father, and to my God.' There are both, you see, found in one sentence, only he puts Father first afore being his God; so there; but here the God afore the Father of Jesus Christ.

The difficulty about it is, how these two relations respectively are to be understood.

We all know and acknowledge Christ's person hath two natures. He is God, he is man; and we often find in one and the same sentence several things attributed to the person of Christ, whereof the one is spoken of him in respect of the human nature only, the other in relation to the Divine. I shall mention but one instance, because somewhat akin to this here; Heb. vii. 3, his person is described to be without father, without mother, and both are equally said of this one and the same person; yet the one in respect of one nature only, the other in relation to the other. It is evident the man Jesus had a mother, and yet he is said to be without mother, namely as God. It is evident that he called God his own Father, John v., as also he useth to do upon every occasion everywhere, and yet this person as man is said to be without father. And that both these should be thus attributed to, and said of one and the same person, all the wits in the world cannot otherwise reconcile than by affirming or acknowledging two natures to abide in this one person; and withal what is proper to each, yet to be in common and alike attributed to the person himself, respectively to these two natures. And therefore the Apostle elsewhere is fain to distinguish upon this matter with this or the like distinction: who, according to the flesh or human nature, came of the fathers by his mother Mary; and who, according to the spirit or Divine nature, is the declared Son of God, and God blessed for ever.\* You have these distinctions *in terminis* thus applied, Rom. i. 3, 4, and Rom. ix. 5, and it is the sum of the scope of both places, as also of Acts ii. 30. In like manner here bring but these, the same distinctions tricked up, and insert them to each, and none will question this exposition, that question

\* 'En Deus, et Pater unius et ejusdem Christi; Deus quidem ut incarnati, Pater, ut Dei Verbi.'—*Marlorat*.



not the verity of one of those his natures, that as Son of God, and so God equal with God, God is his Father: and that as Son of man, so the same God that is his Father is his God also. Thus Bishop Davenant expoundeth these words, 'God and Father of Christ.'

*The God.*—The Father is the God of Christ in relation to his being man, and that in these respects more peculiar to him—

1. Because he chose him to that grace and union, 1 Peter i. 20. Christ as man was predestinated as well as we, and so hath God to be his God by predestination and so by free grace, as well as he is our God in that respect.

2. Because God the Father made a covenant with him. Look, as because of that covenant with Abraham, &c., he is termed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so in respect of that covenant made with Christ, which we have specified, Isa. xlix., throughout, where Christ doth call him 'My God,' ver. 4, of which covenant, as also God's being his God, David was his type, Ps. lxxxix. 26.

3. Because God was his only refuge in all times of distress. Thus when hanging on the cross, he cries out to him, 'My God, my God,' Matt. xxvii. 46, compared with Ps. xxii. 1-5.

4. Because God is the author and immediately the matter of Christ's blessedness, (as he is man,) and therefore blessed be he as the God of Christ, who hath blessed our Lord Christ for ever and ever, as Ps. xlv. 2, whereupon, in the 7th verse, it follows, 'God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' The Psalmist satisfieth not himself to say, 'God hath anointed thee,' but with an emphasis, 'God, thy God:' and thy God he is in relation to this effect and fruit of it, 'anointing thee with gladness,' which, ver. 2, is synonymously expressed, 'God hath blessed thee for ever.' And then anointed by God as man he was when glorified, Acts iv. 27. And God thus blessed him by becoming himself his blessedness; which, in the 16th Psalm, Christ exults in, ver. 2, 'My soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' And, ver. 5, it follows, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance;' and, ver. 6, 'I have,' says he, 'a goodly heritage,' that is, in having God to be my God and heritage to live upon for ever; for, as he further speaks in ver. 11, 'in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' The psalm is made in Christ's name, as the Apostle, Acts ii., and he speaks it of his human nature expressly in the 9th verse, 'My flesh,' says he, 'shall rest in hope,' namely this hope, by this my death to be advanced to the right hand of God, (which alone that man Christ Jesus is, for as God he was always at his right hand,) where those pleasures are: so then God is his happiness. Hence, therefore, when Christ was risen, and speaks of ascending, and was shortly to ascend, then it was he calls God his God, John xx. 17, 'I ascend to my God;' that is, to him in whom my happiness I now am going to enjoy consists. And therefore, John xiv. 28, he told his disciples, 'If ye loved me, you would rejoice that I go to my Father:' for I go to him that is able to make me happy, and is my immediate blessedness. For it follows, 'My Father is greater than I,' (namely, as I am a man,) and so I am to be blessed in him, the less being blessed of the greater. The human nature, though glorified, is not blessedness to itself, it is but finite in itself; but God immediately is. Nor is that human nature, though God dwells in it, the utmost blessedness of us; but God immediately also is: yet as to our right thereunto, it is because he is our God and his God first. Thus *his God*, as man.

But whether the Father is termed the God of Christ, as Christ is God, and so in relation to his divine nature, I will not debate it. There are that

read that passage of the 45th Psalm thus : O God (as speaking to Christ as God) thy God, so terming his Father, *Deus de Deo*, God of God, is old : and the Father is *Deus gignens*, the Son *Deus genitus*, and *Deus Dei* is near to these ; the Father is the God of the Son, who is God. But I pass it.

*And the Father.*—This is out of question spoken of Christ, and is true of him, both as God and also man.

1. As God : so he is his Son, his own Son, Rom. viii. 32, and reciprocally the Father, *ἴδιος πατήρ*, his own Father, John v. 18, and therefore ‘equal with God,’ as it is emphatically there said ; for the Jews objected against him, that *πατέρα ἰδίου ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν*, he said God was his own Father, (so in the Greek,) making himself equal with God. All which do imply, that he was such a Son as was begotten of the substance and essence of his Father, even as he that is said to be a man’s own natural son useth to be, and is thereby distinguished from their adopted children ; and in that respect also is Christ said to be God’s only begotten Son, and *ὁ υἱός*, *Dei vivi*, that Son of the living God, Matt. xvi. 16 ; and so discriminated from all other. As from the angels, ‘To which of all the angels did he say, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?’ Heb. i., and so from all creatures. For whereas, John i. 18, he is termed the only-begotten Son, in distinction there from all creatures, which are said to be but made, ver. 1, 3, and believers to have received power from him to be sons, ver. 12. In fine, he is in such a respect the Son of God, and begotten of God, as being man he was the Son of David, because out of his loins. Thus Matt. xxii. 42. And that he was thus the Son of God, is the main and most fundamental point of the gospel, Rom. i. 3, 4, compared ; and therefore is still brought in as the conclusion of all those several discourses of the last evangelist’s Gospel, beginning at the first chapter, ver. 18, 49, chap. iii. 16, and so on to chap. xx. 31, where, in the conclusion of his book, he professeth this to have been the intended scope of the whole, ‘These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing (thus of him) ye might have life through his name ;’ through that name of his that he is the Son of God, and thereby the fountain of life and sonship to us ; for upon this very rock or foundation, Christ told his disciples he would build his Church.

2. As man and Son of man, God was his Father. That forementioned profession and answer in the name of all the rest of his disciples was setly pitched upon this in Christ’s question as punctual thereunto : ‘Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?’ That was Christ’s question. He answers thereupon, ‘The Son of the living God.’ Therefore as man he was the Son of the living God. The like ye have uttered by Christ himself, (for it was that point he died upon,) Mark xiv. 61, 62, compared.

But then as to this last point the question is, How it is to be understood that as man he was the Son of God ; whether only but as other men, or in any transcendent privilege above us ? Or thus, whether as man he was but the adopted son, as the saints are ; or whether not the natural Son of God ? Which is solved by these considerations :—

1. That the subject of this relation as Son to God, or the *terminus* of it, is not either his nature divine or human, but his person ; for sonship is a personal property, not of the nature.

2. Hence, *secondly*, in the person of Christ there are not two Sons, or two sonships or relations of sonship unto God as a Father ; but as God is but one, so the person of the Son but one, and so but one sonship in him.

3. Hence, *thirdly*, Christ as man is but one and the same Son of God ;

that he is as he is God, that is, his style and honour is to be the natural Son of God, even as man. The sonship of the man Christ Jesus doth coalesce into one sonship with the Son of God, even as in like manner the man is taken up into one person with the Son of God, Luke i. 35, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee (speaking of Christ's conception to the Virgin Mary) shall be called the Son of God.' For look as though he was man, yet that man was never a person of itself, but subsisted from the first in the personality of the second Person: so that the Son of man was never called or accounted a Son to God, of himself, as such; but his sonship was that of the person which he was taken up into. Only with this difference, that he is the Son of God as God, in that he was begotten of the Father's substance, but so the Son of man was not; but this Son of man becoming the Son of God, who was begotten of the substance of the Father by personal union, he the man, by being made one person with him, wears that dignity. The one is *per essentialæ communicationem*, the other *per unionem cum personâ*.

4. Hence, *fourthly*, he is not as man the Son of God naturally or essentially, but he is the Son of God personally. If we take *natural* for *essential*, so he is not, as man, God's natural Son; but take *natural* as in opposition to *adoption*, and so he is God's natural Son: and not by adoption, this being the title and honour he had from his conception and birth, and from his union with the person of the natural Son, as you heard from the angel, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,' (and God calls things as they are.) And more distinctly, Gal. iv. 4, 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,' where evidently his sonship and ours are set in these terms of distinction, that ours is the sonship of adoption received from his, and that his is primitive, original, and natural; yea, and this is true of him as he is man, for it is spoken of him that was 'made of a woman, made under the law.'

2. *The reason why under these relations of God and Father to Christ, he blesteth God.*

Although this will easily appear in many of the particulars that follow, yet one reason may be, to unvail the Old Testament and decipher it into the New, and bring forth the gospel in its substantial and real intendments, both of the promise of blessing, as also of God's relation to us men; God's being their God, this of old was typically set forth under this tenure, 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob,' Exod. iii. 6. And before them, 'The Lord God of Shem,' Gen. ix. 26; and in the names of these patriarchs the conveyance of the blessing ran, and answerably their return of praise and blessing unto God again then was, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,' Gen. ix. 26. Thus before Abraham. After, when renewed in Jacob's name, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,' as you heard out of David; and this form the Jews (upon whose hearts, as now in their synagogues, the veil remains, 2 Cor. iii. 14, in token thereof they wear it upon their heads,) in their worship keep to this day; but now that the substance is come, the shadows disappear. Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel are subdued. The days are come, as the prophet in another case speaks, that it shall no more be said, The God of Abraham, &c., but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as Isaiah foretold of the gospel times, Isa. lxxv. 15, 16, look as my servants (or children of God) shall be called by another name, (namely Christians, as first at Antioch, and no longer Jews;) so also the terms of their covenant is altered, and so their form of blessing God, as

was also foresignified there in the following words, 'He that blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth,' namely, when Christ, who is the truth and the life, shall come. Old Zachary, that lived in the expiration or extreme verge of the Old Testament, when Christ was not yet conceived, he then useth that Old Testament form which he found sanctified in the Scriptures of old. But had he stayed half a year longer, (for thereabouts was the distance between Christ's and his son John Baptist's conception,) his 'Blessed be the God of Israel' (which he useth in his song) had been out of date; and 'Blessed be the God and Father of Christ' had come in its room, and been in force.

#### MEDITATION.

Oh, let us, therefore, that live under the knowledge of Christ in the gospel, bless our God as the God and Father of Jesus Christ, which is the highest note of celebrating his praise which our hearts can reach to! For it is the most elevated strain of the gospel language, and of the glory of God, which any man, or all men, can rise up unto. It is said of Christ in the Psalms, Ps. lxxii. 17, 'All nations shall call him blessed.' In like manner it was spoken of and by herself, that was the mother of his human nature only, 'All generations shall call me blessed.' Oh, then, how should we all bless that God that is the Father of him, who in his person also is God blessed together with his Father for ever! Many good souls find this as an eternal evidence of their own future blessedness, that when wanting assurance of God's love to themselves, they can yet bless God for his being good to others in the same condition with themselves, out of their love to God and to the good of others' souls. If thou findest such elevations of spirit in thee, vent and spend them much more in blessing God, that he is the God and Father of Christ. This is high, and most divine.

*Of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—He having thus setly displayed these relations of God to Christ, he interweaves withal *our* special relation to Christ; to wit, his being our Lord; his scope therein being to shew the foundation and descent of those very same relations which God beareth to Christ; and of the same their coming down upon and unto us, namely of his being our God and our Father, which are the groundwork of the conveyance to us of all those particular blessings he doth after enumerate, by and through Jesus Christ's being our Lord or husband.

And it is observable how the Apostle carries on his discourse along. In the second verse he had called God our Father, and Jesus Christ barely the Lord; but then in this verse he styleth this God the Father of Christ, and then subjoins therewith, varying his style, this 'Jesus our Lord.' Thereby to shew the genealogy or descent of our being sons to God, and of God's being our Father, to lie in this, that Christ is our Lord, and so God becomes our Father by being his Father. And then, in the next verse, he answerably proceeds to shew how all other blessings do flow from this relation, first of God to Christ, then this of Christ to us; which in the fifth verse he doth more determinately discover to be his meaning in saying, 'He hath predestinated us by Jesus Christ to the adoption of children;' so that this mention of his being our Lord here, is not merely, as elsewhere, an appellative, or as the ordinary style that is given to the person of Christ, as that whereby he is described when he is spoken of or mentioned, when there is any occasion to name him. Thus frequently his disciples, 'We have seen the Lord,' say they all, John xx. 25. 'It is the Lord,' says he, when he spied him

first, John xxi. 7. Yea, and this appellation of 'our Lord' is often used by the apostles, but barely to decipher his person, as in that speech, Heb. vii. 14, 'It is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah.' These in part are no more than as when men speak of the person of their prince, they say, The king, and, Our lord the king, so designing his person. But here in saying in this coherence, and in saying, 'The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' his intent is to draw the pedigree of our relation to God, as our Father also, even by descent from Christ; and this is the highest improvement, as to us, of this attribute here, 'Christ our Lord.' This for the general scope of these words.

To make good which general scope, two things are now particularly to be explicated :—

1. What special or peculiar relation there is of the saints unto Christ, as to their Lord.

2. That the relation of Christ to us as a Lord, is the foundation of God's being our God and Father, as well as he is Christ's God and Father.

For the first, that our Jesus is the Lord, and that one Lord, in distinction from God the Father; which title fully declareth his office of Mediator, and is attributed to him by way of eminency above and from all other lords; this I have elsewhere shewn upon 1 Cor. viii. 6. That which is more proper here is, that he is our Lord more peculiarly, and how we have these two apart attributed to Christ, both that he is the Lord, and our Lord, as in a special relation and appropriation, in the 4th verse of the Epistle of Jude; where speaking of the heresies of those times, he says, that they denied that only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The question here hath been made by some, as also about the like parallel places, 2 Pet. i. 1, Tit. ii. 13, whether he here should speak of two persons distinct, viz., God and Christ, styling the first, the Lord God, but Christ, in distinction from him, our Lord; or whether that apostle should intend Christ only and alone as one and the same subject of two royal titles or relations; the one more general, namely his being the only Lord God, and then the other of his more special relation unto us, our Lord. Indeed as the English translation carries it, it leans more to that first interpretation, that he should speak of the Father in the one, whom he should signalise, the only Lord God; the other of Christ. But the Greek evidently inclines much rather to the latter, that Christ alone should be intended as the subject of both these styles.

Considering first, that though here be three attributes, 1, the only Lord, 2, God, 3, and our Lord; that yet there is but one article or note of designation affixed, or rather prefixed to all these at first, τὸν μόνον, as meaning evidently but one person pointed at in them all, as the subject of them: which the *Complutensis* copy of the Greek renders more plain, 'That only God and Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ'—Τὸν μόνον Θεὸν καὶ δεσπότην, τὸν Κύριον.

Which, secondly, the counterpart to this Apostle's epistle—namely, the second Epistle of Peter—helps to clear; where, speaking of the same heretics (whom both these apostles aimed to speak of, and do affirm these things of) there, in the latter he mentions Christ only as the person spoken of in these words, 'denying the Lord that bought them;' using there also the same word, δεσπότην, which the other epistle useth when he speaks of the lordship and dominion of Christ, which is in common over wicked men, and but such as over all things else, which Jude manifestly intended in calling him 'the Lord.' And the contradictions of all heretics, that professed Christianity in

those times, were all and only bent against the person of Christ, and also against his being God, and not against the Father, or his being only Lord God.

So then that place of Jude holds forth two things distinctly and apart concerning Christ, which serves to clear the point in hand :—1. What he is absolutely and indeterminately in himself, and in his general relation to all things whatsoever, he is the only God and Lord of all. And, by the way, the word translated Lord in the first part of his style, is a differing word from that which follows in the second part. The first word is *δεσπότην*, supreme, sovereign disposer and governor, as by possession, and natural and more general right ; such as a lord hath of his goods, his chattels, utensils, as 2 Tim. ii. 21. 2. But that other *Κύριον*, the latter word, which is joined with that special relation of his to us, with that addition of ‘our’ Lord ; so noting out in this manifest distinction that sweet and special relation to his spouse and children of the sons of men. So then the meaning is, that besides that Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of all persons and things, (as Acts x. 36,) that he further hath a nearer and dearer relation of *our Lord*, so to us his saints.

So, then, he is the Lord of saints peculiarly, in the like sense and respect as he is called King of saints peculiarly, Rev. xv. 3, in distinction from his being King of nations, as, Jer. x. 7, the prophet had it.

Wicked men, as you have heard, are said to ‘deny the Lord that bought them ;’ so then he is their Lord. And the devils are said to confess that Jesus is the Lord, Phil. ii. 11, but none of these do say, ‘Our Lord.’ The good angels, they come nearer to him, and surely they might say it upon better terms ; he being their head, Col. ii. 10, and they our fellow-servants, Rev. xix. 10. Yet I find not that they speak thus of him, ‘Our Lord,’ but as it were, or would seem in a respect, both to him and us, the Holy Ghost should leave this to be alone said by us, and spoken by us of Christ. There was a full occasion once, if ever, for the good angels themselves to have assumed and uttered it, and said, ‘Our Lord.’ It is in Luke ii. 11, when they proclaimed him in the cradle ; but their words there run thus, ‘To you (speaking of men) is born a Saviour,’ and so ‘Christ the Lord ;’ for though a Saviour only to us men, yet those angels might have said, ‘Our Lord,’ for that their part in him forementioned. No ; but when it did come in a comparison and competition with us men, they forbear to do it ; they only say, Christ *the* Lord, not Christ *our* Lord ; or anywhere else we read of. But believers and saints of the sons of men you find often, upon all occasions of mentioning him as the Lord, to assume the privilege to call him with this sweet additament, My Lord, or, Our Lord. David in the Old Testament, he began it, ‘Jehovah said to my Lord,’ Ps. cx. And he was in spirit when he did it, (as Christ tells us,) possessed with an evangelical spirit more than ordinary. Elizabeth followed him in the first break of day of the New Testament ; she was in spirit, too, Luke i. 41, when she said it : ‘Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost,’ and said, ver. 43, ‘Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord is come ?’ Thomas, at last, for it was after the resurrection, with ravishment cries out, ‘My Lord, and my God.’ And our Apostle goes on, when his heart was as full as it could hold of glorying and rejoicing in this his interest in Christ, Phil. ii. 8, ‘Yea, doubtless,’ I that have known him so long, ‘I do count all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.’ The emphasis this comes in with argues his heart raised up to an infinite valuation of him, and

also of this his spiritual relation unto him, 'My Lord.' These saints in their own persons, as particularly it fell out, first tasting the sweetness of it; but then after it grew, the common voice of all believers speaking in their own and other saints' names. So Paul was careful to observe to do, when he wrote to the Church of Corinth, ascribing and enlarging that title of 'Our Lord' unto all saints, as well as to the church of Corinth, as appears expressly in his inscription to that first epistle to that church, 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Unto the church of God that is at Corinth, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord;' and remarkably adds 'both theirs and ours,' thus appropriating it to the saints of mankind, as he does here, 'our Lord.'

I further only add, that when I thus term it a proper or more special relation with difference from other the sons of men, or the angels, I exemplify my meaning by the like language which the great officers and favourites of kings use, by way of distinction from other subjects, and glory so to do. They rejoice to style him, The king, my master, my lord. And I humbly submit the notion of it, if it appear singular to others. But I shall further add two special appropriate reasons why the saints do the like of Christ:—

1. His saving and redeeming them from sin and wrath. He is their Saviour, not of the angels: and 'to you,' say they, 'a Saviour is born, Christ the Lord;' and so your Lord more peculiarly, because your Saviour, which I insist not on.

2. Besides this obliging interest of redemption, proper to the saints of the sons of men, whereby he is our Lord, (though as a second-hand bargain he bought all the world, 2 Pet. ii. 1,) there is a further, more endearing consideration whereby he is our Lord; even because he is our husband, 'Thy Maker is thy husband,' and so thy Lord. And he is such a husband as did serve a servitude for his wife, yea, and bought her thereby of a slave and captive by the way of redemption, as in ver. 7 of this 1st of Ephesians; and again, Eph. v. 23, 'Even as Christ is head of the church, and Saviour of the body;' and ver. 25, 'He loved his church, and gave himself for her.' These things cannot be spoken of angels. A queen, the wife or spouse of a great king, when she mentions her relation to him, and says, My lord, or calls him her lord, she speaks it in that sense wherein none of her maids of honour or courtiers about her dare, or must take on them to speak it, though he be in other respects their lord also. For he is her lord as he is her husband, and not only as king; and so she imports, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,' whilst she only calls him My lord. Sarah, you know, called Abraham, as her husband, lord, 1 Pet. iii. 6, which is applied to Christ and the church, Eph. v. 22, 23, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body.' And in this conjugal respect it is that God the Father teacheth the Church to call Christ her Lord, Ps. xlv. 11, 'He is thy Lord, worship thou him: so shall the King greatly delight in thy beauty.' He speaks it of his conjugal relation, as that passage, 'delighting in her beauty,' argues. Now, as it is said of Christ's Sonship, 'To which of all the angels did he say, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?' though they are sons of God also, and he their Father, so say I of this lordship, To which of all the angels did he ever say, Christ is thy Lord,—that is, thy husband,—he shall greatly delight in thy beauty, as a husband in his spouse? Though they are the virgins that do attend her, yet that relation is reserved proper

between Christ and us. So, though he be a head to angels. Col. ii. 10, yet in a proper and a peculiar manner a head to his Church, the saints. So, in the 22d of this Eph. i., 'The Father hath given him to be a head over all to his church,' (even over 'all principalities and powers,' ver. 21,) and therefore in such a peculiar manner a head to them, as he is not to all or any else. He being said to be over all things else then, when withal his relation of headship to her is spoken of. And so it is in this.

For the second, I must now shew you, that this peculiar relation of his being our Lord in this near and endearing sense, is the foundation of God's being our God and our Father; even because he is the God and Father of Christ, who is this our Lord and husband.

1. The *first*, that so it is, that the foundation of these relations of God unto us is laid in these same like relations of ours unto Christ, (besides what by induction might be shewn to hold of all other titles or privileges communicated to us, how they all hold of Christ,) that one place afore cited, where Christ at once calls him both his God and his Father, John xx. 17, more fully and pertinently holds forth this to us, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' He speaks at once, as that God is our God, &c., so that our relation of his being our God is founded upon God's being the God of Christ. And our Father, because his first. He says not, as Austin observes, I ascend to our Father, or to our God, as casting his own proper relation into the same common rank with ours. No, but apart, first mine and then yours. Mine primitively, naturally, and originally; yours derivatively by participation, or, as ver. 5 here expreseth it, 'sons of adoption by Jesus Christ;' or, as Gal. iv. 4, 'He sent his Son, (his own Son, as elsewhere,) that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

2. But secondly, if you will see how this doth spring from that special relation of Christ's being our Lord, that is, our Head, Husband, Redeemer, consult that Psalm xlv., which is an epithalamium, or marriage-song of Christ and his Church. God the Father, who gives all that good counsel there to the Church, (for all that come to Christ are taught of God, as Christ says,) in the 11th verse he teacheth her to call him her Lord, and in the 10th verse, to forsake her father's house, as spouses married use to do, and to cleave unto their husbands; and upon all this account, God himself there calls her his daughter, 'Hearken, O daughter,' &c. That is his compellation, (and parallel to this of a wife to her husband, My lord here,) God the Father, in the beginning of his speech to her, speaking as a father-in-law useth to do, who is giving counsel to his daughter new married unto his natural son. So then, from thence I infer that thus it is that we become sons and daughters to God, even by marriage with his natural Son, who in that conjugal respect doth become our Lord, and thereby also receive the adoption of sons, and so God takes on him the relation of Father. Thus Rom. viii. 17, 'heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.'

#### 1ST MEDITATION.

Let him then be Lord and King of saints, and level him not with saints, as some most cursedly in this age have done; even then when we are enjoying the highest advancement even of God himself in heaven, yet still Christ is our Lord, by means of whom God is our God. The Psalmist indeed says, that we are fellows in all with him: 'God, thy God, hath anointed thee above thy fellows,' xlv. 7. But if you would know of the Psalmist how far above his fellows, the Psalmist resolves you, 'He is thy



Lord, worship thou him,' ver II. So as though we are his fellows, yet he hath the deserved honour, this title (and he alone) of being your Lord, yea and of the 'man, God's fellow,' given him by God himself in the prophet. Would you be all Christ's? Set your hearts at rest; there is but one Christ personally, as certainly as that God is but one. It is uttered as a fundamental maxim of Christian profession, universally received, 'To us (Christians namely) there is but one God and one Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Cor. viii. 6, and because there is but one God, therefore God hath ordained but this one Lord; because he therein bears the image of God's sovereignty and oneness, being the brightness of his glory. Neither are we, the saints, considered as sharing with him herein, but himself is that one Lord alone. For it follows, 'And we in him,' we are all in him; and therefore not only reckoned distinct and apart from him, as he is that one Lord, but dependent on him, and not lords or Christs with him, but infinitely distant from him. It is true, we have all that Christ hath derivatively, but not in that kind he hath it. God is our Father as well as his Father, &c., but as Augustine well observes, commenting upon this passage, 'He says not, I ascend to our Father, but my Father and your Father, therefore he is in another respect my Father, and in another respect your Father; my Father by nature, yours by grace.'\*

## 2D MEDITATION.

Let him be thy Lord, and worship thou him: thou hast now in this a greater tender made thee than ever was made to angels. Part with all for him, forsake thy former father's house, Ps. xlv. 10, this world, given to thy father Adam, and all things in it; for he is thy Lord, and thou shalt have by thy relation to him another Father, whose house hath many mansions, John xiv. 1. Account all things dross and dung that thou mayest win Christ, as Phil. iii. 8. Thou canst not win him else; he never becomes thy Lord, unless thou valuest him at the same rate he did thee, and partest in thy affections with all for him. Give thyself up to the Lord, as 2 Cor. viii. 5. Cast thy lot, thy interest together with his. Here thou shalt be sure never to lose thy love, as in cleaving to all else thou wilt. He is and must, however, be a Lord to thee, and thou must one day confess that Jesus is the Lord, whether thou wilt or no; for all must appear afore his judgment-seat. Oh, but if thy judge be become thy Lord and husband, thou art out of danger. And then give thyself up also to worship, and in all things to obey him, else he is not thy Lord, nor thou his lawful spouse, Eph. v. 24, 'As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject to their husbands;' why doth he speak with such an apparent difference? For what he speaks of wives is but as discoursing to them their duty: 'Let wives be subject,' he doth not say they cannot be saved else; but that other passage of the Church is spoken of as a taken for granted qualification, or essential property in the Church, if she be his lawful true spouse. 'As the Church is subject to Christ,' says he, so that it be the duty of both alike; the Church ought to be subject to Christ, as well as wives to their husbands. The reason and difference is perspicuous, because unless souls be subject to Christ, they are not the Church. A man's wife is his wife, though she be never so perverse and disobedient to him; but no soul is one of his Church and spouse, nor owned by Christ as such, unless she become subject to him,

\* 'Non dicit Patrem nostrum, sed Patrem meum et patrem vestrum, aliter ergo meum, aliter vestrum, natura meum, gratia vestrum.'—*Tract. 121, in Joh.*

and subject too in everything, as the comparison there made sheweth. If thou sayest, thou wantest beauty, be not discouraged, he will take thee with all thy deformities, and put beauty on thee; for so the Apostle there goes on,—he washeth and cleanseth his Church, to present her to himself in the end, glorious, and without spot or wrinkle.

And being once married to him, take this for ever along with thee, thou art married to an husband risen from the dead, Rom. vii. 4. And oh, what holiness, heavenliness, should those have that would hold communion and intercourse with such a Lord and husband, the 'Lord from heaven,' and who is now in heaven!

## SERMON III.

*Who hath blessed us with all blessings.*—VER. 3.

III. I COME to the third general head the text was divided into—the matter for which he blesseth God—namely, for his blessing us with all blessings: ‘Who hath blessed us with all blessings.’

*Who.*—God, as he alone is blessed, styled therefore the Blessed One, *ὁ εὐλογητός*, Mark xiv. 61, so he alone blesseth, and is alone able to do it; and others, when they bless, their blessings are but invocations upon him, that he would bless some other person in what they desire for him. So all particular benedictions, made by parents or others, run in Scripture, as Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; which that saying, once for all other, shews, ‘We bless you in the name of the Lord,’ Ps. cxxix. 8. Yea, when man is made an instrument of conveying good things unto us, yet he cannot make them blessings; for this they have recourse to God. And in so doing, all have thereby acknowledged him the fountain of all blessings and blessedness; and so even Balaam himself confessed to Balak, Num. xxii. 38, and chap. xxiii. 8, 20. ‘I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed,’ Num. xxii. 6.

*Who.*—I shewed afore, in general, that the apostle blesseth God under the consideration of being the God and Father of Christ, because thereby he becomes our God, and our Father also. I shall add now, how that under each of these considerations or relations it is that he blesseth us.

That which in general I shall premise, as common to the explication of these two particulars last mentioned, is that notion commonly received among the schoolmen, which I gladly took up from them:\* That one requisite ingredient to move God to love, and to shew mercy unto us intelligent creatures of the sons of men, is an apprehending our misery, *ut suam*, as his own. And again, *Deus non miseretur nisi propter amorem, in quantum amat nos tanquam aliquid sui*. That God hath mercy on us, by apprehending our misery as his own, *quod fit per unionem affectus*, which is done by an union of affection to us; and God is not executively merciful, but for his love, and is so far merciful to us, as he looks at us, *ut aliquid sui*, as we are something of his own, or something of himself.

This I greedily take hold of, to illustrate and carry on the ground and foundation of the special love he bears to his elect, and as agreeing with what the Scriptures say; both that love is in God, (which no man can deny to be in the nature of God to love, for he loves himself, his Son, &c.) and that love is the ground of mercy, and, by the same reason, special electing love the ground of mercy in God to sinners. Thus, Eph. ii. 4, ‘But God, who is rich in mercy,’ (having in the foregoing verses set forth our sinfulness and misery,) ‘for the great love wherewith he loved us,’ &c. And Aquinas’ *tantum in quantum*, is made the measure of the great and infinite difference of his love to creatures. There is a common love to men as creatures, so he loves every man and thing he hath made; but where he shews

\* Aquinas *secunda secundæ* quæst. 30, art. 2, in respon. ad art. prim.

special mercies, as pardon of sin and the like, there is an *in quantum*, by an *how far* he loves, as the foundation of that, a special love. But still the question will be, What should be the ground of a special love in God to some, with such an infinite difference of that love from what it is to others in common? Aquinas resolves that, with this further foundation, to be *aliquid sui*; to make those he specially loves some way his own, and then the consequence of that to be, to look upon their misery as his own; and with that the Scriptures also agree, Isa. lxiii. 9, 'In all their affliction he was afflicted;' the like in Exod. iv. 31.

But then another question, (to drive the matter home to its head,) and that is, What is it in God, or in the creature, makes them to be in so special manner his own, who or what hath put so great a difference? Nothing but election, which follows in the next: 'according as he hath chosen us.' There is Aquinas' *in quantum*, so far as he loved us, so far he hath blessed us, with special blessings appropriate, suitable thereunto. Now the fundamental therefore of all, and of the difference is, he makes us first his own by love, by that special love specially his own. And, which is the head I approach next to, he became our God first, and our Father, and chose us so to be his as none else is. And then we were *aliquid sui*, something of himself and his own indeed, by special propriety. You have this in effect in that 63d of Isa. ver. 8, 9, 'So he was their Saviour,' and so redeemed them. But *in terminis*, in more express words, in the two particular relations specified, he first made himself, and became our God and our Father, and then to be sure we are his own.

1. *God blesseth us, as having first become our God.*—It is true, indeed, that God, as God, is full of blessedness in himself, and that is it which provokes him to communicate blessings to his creatures. God is good and doth good, says the Psalmist, and so God is blessed, (an all-sufficiency of all good,) and so bestoweth blessings; but yet know, that those he communicates himself in blessing unto, he first becomes their God. And then having taken that relation on him, he pours forth all his blessedness and blessings on them, so Ps. lxvii. 6, 'God, even our own God, shall bless us;' and when he is once so become, and hath taken upon him to be our God, he cannot but bless us. There is therefore, besides that emphasis put upon it, a duplicate made of it in the psalm; it is a second time repeated and said, God shall bless us; he cannot but do it, having made himself our God, and our own God to that, 'God, even our own God, shall bless us,' ver. 7. Yea, and they all would not be blessings to us at all, unless God had first become our God, and blessed us with giving himself to us. And whence came that, that he became our God, our own God? Why, by choosing us to be his, which was done by election entirely, both at once together; which is the very import of that speech, 'thine they were,' says Christ; those speeches or clauses, say interpreters, do mutually speak each other: as to say, Thine they were by election, and thou gavest them me; or to say, By election they became thine, thou electedst them. You have the like unto it in the same Isa. lxiii. 8, 'For he (God, namely) said (as within himself of old), Surely they are my people,' and therefore also 'children that will not lie; and so he was their Saviour.' And that which answereth and agrees to this, too, is that other speech of Christ's, Luke xviii. 7, 'His own elect;' and then you have election, by which they are made his own, and all to meet in their being something of his own indeed. This for the first, his becoming our God first, on purpose to bless us. If, therefore, we would have any or all blessings from God, we must first seek of him to be our God; and then, as the Psalmist,

God, even our God, will bless us; he will be sure to do it, upon the same account and for the same end and purpose he became our Father.

2. *God blesseth us under the relation of our Father.*—The first on earth that ever took upon them to bless others, and brought up that custom (or, as I may say, fashion) of blessing, were those that bore the relation of fathers. Their hearts were filled with the greatest love and good-will to their own children, a natural *στέργη*, did bless them, that is, wish well to them; and their hearts being enlarged to wish them more good than they found themselves able to bestow, they had recourse to God to bless them, and perform their desires, as that which was not in their own power to do. So the patriarchs, who blessed their children and posterity, and were the first of men that brought in this way of expressing their good-will which we call blessing,—as Moses termeth God's blessing, a manifestation of good-will borne to him whom he blesses, Deut. xxxiii. 16, in his blessing from God the several tribes: 'And for the good-will,' says he, 'of him that dwelt in the bush,' (which was Christ appearing to Moses, Exod. iii. 2-5; Acts vii. 32-34,) 'let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren,' (as Joseph was,) and thus singularly he blesseth Joseph, as separate from and above all the other tribes,—and thus God blesseth us out of infinite good-will, and thus it is a natural and a kindly act to come from fathers, and thus God blesseth us. It is the first fruit of good-will—that is, of that natural love and care which parents bear their children, it doth all. Love in fathers is that principle that doth of itself provoke them to wish the greatest good to their children, which if any good be in their own power to give, they give it from that principle; and when they have it not in their own power to bestow, if they are holy men, and have an interest in God the fountain of all good, they use that interest, and invoke God to bestow it; which invoking of God for them we use to call blessing a child, which is as much as in them lies to do.

Now, as Christ says of giving good things unto their children, (and parents' blessing is but a giving their children good things, by invoking of God to bestow them, as it is called in Isaac's blessing, Gen. xxvii. 27,) 'If you then being evil,' says Christ, Matt. vii. 11, that is, are full of self-love, that of itself would tempt you to keep and retain to yourselves, and not willingly to give away any good thing, yet ye know how, says Christ,—that is, you have the hearts and the affections by a natural instinct to spy out the best things for your children, which you judge to be such,—and 'if ye know how to give good things to your children, how much more,' says Christ, 'shall your Father which is in heaven,' who to this very end was pleased to become a Father to you, and has all in heaven to bestow, even that God who is styled the Blessed One in Scripture, who is an ocean of all blessedness, which seeks an outlet for itself to communicate to creatures, whom he hath loved and chosen, and hath been pleased to bear that relation towards us to this great end; he hath done all this to pour out his blessedness by and through that relation towards us, upon us his adopted sons; and who, by what he finds to be natural in himself towards his own natural Son, (whom he blesseth every day for ever, Ps. xlv. 2,) he for his sake and relation to us is further pleased to pour forth all blessings also upon us, having become in Christ a Father to us; and so to bear such a good-will to us in Christ, as members of him, and a spouse to him.

*Hath blessed with all blessings.*—You see here both the act of grace on God's part bestowing good on us is expressed by 'blessing,' and the things bestowed are called blessings. He gives one and the same denomination or name to either, which argues this expression of blessing to be full and as

adequate as could be chosen forth. I shall endeavour to explicate both the *name* and *thing* itself—what it is to bless, as on God's part, and what is a blessing, and what it is that truly makes and constitutes good things to be blessings to us.

1. *For the word 'blessing,' or to bless.*—It is evident by that extensive comprehensiveness of speech which the Apostle here useth, that the whole, the total, and all particular good things, which he after enumerates, which God ever means to give, or the gospel promises, even all of them are to the utmost spoken of under and by this word of blessing. And it is worth our consideration that it is that original word under which the promise of the covenant of grace was at the first given to Abraham, the father of all the faithful; as which contained all particular good things, as his loins did that seed to whom that promise was made. And this I mention now at first as a fundamental consideration, that will have a great and necessary influence into the explication of the particulars that follow in this verse. The apostle here framing these words with an eye of allusion to, and comparison between those promises given them, and these promises which the gospel here declares; therefore unto that promise given them we shall have recourse again and again, to make our Apostle's meaning here the more manifest. That before me at the present is, that the sum and substance of gospel-promises began then to be set forth and expressed under this blessed word of *blessing*. 'I will bless thee,' said God to Abraham, 'and in thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed,' Gen. xii. 2, 3. And again, because it could not be better expressed by any other word, God doth but double the same, saying, 'In blessing I will bless thee,' Gen. xxii. 17; that is, I will bless thee and bless thee again, which is equivalent to the expression here, 'with all blessings hath he blessed us.' And what doth or can the great God say more? It is enough.

Now, that in God's intendment the whole total of the gospel was expressed to Abraham, and wrapt up in that term of blessing, the avowed explications and interpretations made thereof by the apostles do undeniably declare. Thus, presently after Christ's ascension, in one of the first made sermons, Acts iii., speaking to the Jews, ver. 25, 'Ye are the children of the covenant God made, saying to Abraham, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed;' which he expounds unto them thus, that first God sent his Son Jesus to bless you, namely the Jews. And yet more expressly, Gal. iii. 8, 'God preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.' So that as Abraham's style was 'the blessed of the Lord,' Gen. xiv. 19, and also the children of God are all said to be blessed with faithful Abraham, in the following ver. 9; and again, Heb. vi. 13, 14, 'For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee,' which, ver. 17, is said to contain the whole of his counsel to the heirs of promise, and that to shew the immutability of that his counsel, he confirmed it by an oath.

Hence therefore, although the gospel in most things speaks greater things than the Old Testament, and in higher terms, yet hath it not altered, nor can it better this. Christ himself, that began to preach this gospel in that his first large sermon that is recorded, it is the first word he therein utters, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' &c. Matt. v. 2, 3; and because he could not add to this, he does but repeat it over and over, as the general that contained in it the kingdom of heaven, ver. 3; comfort here, ver. 4; inheriting the earth, ver. 5; filling with all good, ver. 6; obtaining mercy, ver. 7;

seeing God, ver. 8 ; adoption and being God's children, ver. 9 ; and if there be any other particular, all are summed up in this word 'blessed.' Each and every particle of our salvation or happiness being blessings, as here, all the gospel can say is but blessing ; which is therefore called in the lump of it, the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, Rom. xv. 29, for it cannot speak beyond what this word reacheth. All that Christ could do when he ascended was but to bless ; and after Christ's ascension, the last book of the gospel, the Revelation, doth continually and throughout use the same style, and at the latter day, when heaven doors are to be set open for the righteous to enter in, their everlasting happiness is uttered by it, Come, ye blessed.

II. *For the thing, or what import this word carries with it.*—As you heard what it was for us to bless God, so now I am to shew what it is for God to bless us. God's blessing us, is his bestowing or communicating all good together with himself, with all hearty good-will, out of love to our persons.

1. *It is a bestowing or communicating of good.*—The Jews defined it in general *accessio boni*, grounded upon Psalm cxv., where what in ver. 12, 13 is expressed by blessing, in ver. 14 is *adjiciat super vos*, God add to you, namely, good or well-being, unto your being, or what is already given you. And the Scripture often useth the word blessing for a gift or present bestowed. Gen. xxxiii., that which Jacob calls his present or gift, ver. 10, he calls his blessing bestowed, ver. 11, 'Take, I pray thee, my blessing which is brought thee.' And, 2 Cor. ix. 5, 6, their bountiful gift to the churches he calls their blessing in the margin ; you have the same, 2 Kings v. 15 ; the like, Lev. xxv. 21. And to be sure, whatever man's blessings are, all God's blessings are the giving and accumulation of good to us, or doing us good. And though the word *eulogia* signifies but his good word to and concerning us, yet God's word is his deed. And *Dei benedicere est benefacere*, for by a bare word of command he blesseth ; Ps. cxxxiii. 3, 'there he commands the blessing,' that blessing of blessings, 'even life for evermore ;' like as it is said, 'he commanded, and they were created,' Ps. cxlviii. 5. So he commands and we are blessed. Alas ! when we creatures bless God, we express but our well-wishes or joyful acclamations to that blessedness is in himself already ; but when God blesseth us, he altogether gives, he communicates.

2. *It is the communication of all good, yea of himself.*—God gives and blesseth like himself when he blesseth. He blesseth 'indeed,' as the phrase is, 1 Chron. iv. 10, and will not bless under giving all. He blesseth 'altogether,' as the phrase is, Num. xxiv. 10 ; therefore in the text here, 'with all blessings.' He cannot bless less, for he is God, and hath all to bestow. Thou art God, says David, and do thou bless me, 1 Chron. xvii. 26, 27. He urgeth that, for he knew what it was for God to bless, and that he blesseth as the great God and like himself, both with all that God himself is, and all that God can effect and do for us ; or as he hath created and made all things, he hath all things to bestow ; therefore to make up this total, I have put in both the communication of himself, and all good things with himself.

To this purpose I observe, that in the mention of the evangelical blessings, —Abraham's blessing, as I may call it, —both God's own all-sufficiency in himself, and God's power in his works and to effect all things, are still mentioned ; sometimes the one, sometimes the other, because in blessing us he is considered as both ; he both gives himself and all things else to us, and so we are blessed indeed. Thus to Abraham whom God in blessing blessed, 'I am El-shaddai,' says he, God that am and have all-sufficiency, Gen. xvii. 1. When Isaac would bless Jacob with this blessing of Abraham, he thus speaks, God all-sufficient bless thee, Gen. xxviii. 3, (the same word in both.) And

though in the translation it is restrained to almightiness, yet it also imports God's all-sufficiency and abundance; and so this blessing intends a communication out of that riches and fulness of blessedness which God himself enjoys. This for the first.

*Secondly*, In other places his titles, that import power and sovereignty in making and possessing all in heaven and earth, are prefixed to his blessing. Thus, when Melchisedec pronounces Abraham blessed, Gen. xiv. 19, he calls him the blessed of God under this title, 'the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,' who had therefore all things in heaven and earth to bless him withal. And the Jews used the same, Ps. cxv. 15, 'You are the blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth,' and so is able to do all things for you, by the same power whereby he made the world. The like Ps. cxxxiv.; these have been inferred out of Abraham's blessing.

Now, that not only God doth bless with all other good things, but above all by communicating himself and his own blessedness unto them, the Scriptures are elsewhere express, when this blessing is spoken of. They shall not only not want any good, as the Psalmist, Ps. xxxiv. 10, 'No good thing will he withhold;' as Ps. lxxxiv., but 'give both grace and glory;' but himself will be a sun unto them; as there, ver. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and shield.' The sun doth not only enrich the earth with all good things which by its influence it produceth, (called the 'precious fruits brought forth by the sun,' Deut. xxxiii. 14,) but glads and refreshes all with shedding immediately its own wings of light and warmth, which is so pleasant to behold and enjoy. And thus doth God, and Christ the Sun of righteousness, and accordingly it follows there, 'Blessed is the man that trusts in him;' for in being our sun, himself becomes our blessedness. Thus his promise of blessing Abraham, God himself interprets, Gen. xv. 1, 'I am thy exceeding great and abundant reward;' I, that am El-shaddai,\* that have infinite paps of sweetness for you to suck; breasts of consolation, as the prophet expresseth it; who am the God of all comforts, as 2 Cor. i. 3, lo, I hold them all forth naked to thee, for thee to draw and fetch comfort from. Thou shalt have all my blessedness to make thee blessed, which the Apostle fitly renders, Eph. iii., 'being filled with all the fulness of God;' and indeed all things else without God or besides God could never make us blessed. The Psalmist, after an enumeration of all sorts of blessings, having pronounced them happy that are in such a case or state, by way of correction adds, as not having uttered wherein the top of blessedness lies; he adds, 'yea, blessed is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. 15.

And hence the people of God, as sensible wherein their interest of happiness lies, as they are termed the blessed of the Lord, so they are said to bless themselves in the Lord; which is to rejoice and make their boast in him alone, and how happy they are in him, (as Christ in the 16th Psalm doth,) 'The Lord is my portion, and my lines are fallen in a good ground; I have a goodly heritage.' And that promise of blessing to Abraham, to which I still have recourse, runs thus indifferently, either that in thy seed, that is, Christ, (Gal. iii. 16,) they shall be blessed, so Gen. xii. 3, xxviii. 14; or xxii. 18, they shall bless themselves, or *benedictos se reputent*, account themselves

\* Some derive his name El-shaddai, 'God all-sufficient,' from שֶׁדַּי, *mamma*, quasi *πολύμαστος*, having many paps or dugs to suck, (Rivet. Gen. exerc. 87, *ab initio*;) and as God takes the denomination of רַחֵם, that is, 'most merciful,' from רֶחֶם, 'the womb,' and so bowels, so this name of 'all-sufficient' from breasts or paps, (A Lapide on Gen. xvii. 1;) so at once noting out God's fulness, and also his readiness to communicate to



blessed in him—so Junius upon that place—namely in Christ, who is God blessed for ever, Rom. ix., for else they could not bless themselves in him. And thus Isaiah makes it the top of evangelical perfection, which he prophesied of, chap. lxxv. 16; yea, and of the state of the people of God in the new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, of which ver. 17, 18, that he who should bless himself in the earth, should bless himself in the God of truth; that is, God and Christ, that is alone the truth and the firm substance of all blessedness and happiness; according to that also of the Psalmist, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee, and in earth in comparison of thee?’ That as a wicked man is said to bless himself in his life, Ps. xlix. 18, that is, to applaud his own soul’s happiness, (Soul, take thine ease,) in having goods laid up for many years, for to make him, as he judgeth, happy; so the saints bless themselves in their God, their glory, not in riches or wisdom or strength, but they glory in this, that they understand and know God, Jer. ix. 23, 24, and by knowing him are made happy in him. For that is eternal life, John xvii. 3. And so by having God and Christ for their blessedness, they have all things with them, and so are blessed with all blessings. ‘I will be his God,’ that first; then follows, ‘and he shall inherit all things.’

*Lastly*, God blesseth out of hearty good-will and love to our persons. And this is as the soul or form of blessing, whether ye will take it for the act of blessing in God, or the matter of blessing bestowed upon us. It is the good-will of God that causeth each of these to have the denomination and nature of a blessing.

1. *It is the spring and fountain of that act of blessing*, as that which constitutes it such. To bless is to wish, or, wishing, to bestow all good out of good-will; as when we bless God, it is the good-will we express therein which makes it termed blessing him, and so to differ from praise, as was shewn. So in God’s blessing us, (his blessing us to be sure at least answereth to our blessing of him, and infinitely exceeds it.) In him it is a fatherly act, and so proceeds from mere natural and pure good-will and affection. The Lord first loves, then blesseth; Jehovah thy God will love thee, and so will bless thee, Deut. vii. 12, 13. And so likewise in Ps. v. 12, God’s blessing us is exegetically expressed and explained to be a compassing a man round about with favour and good-will, clasping and accepting him, as with everlasting arms, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Thou Jehovah wilt bless the righteous, thou wilt encompass him round with favour, or favourable acceptance, good-will or gracious good-liking and acceptance, joined with a delight in their persons, and rejoicing to do them good, as the same word (Isa. xl. 1, ‘in whom my soul delights,’ spoken of Christ,) imports. And it is an encompassing round, because that man hath nothing else from God but love and favour coming in upon him on every side and surrounding him, and hence it is that a man is blessed with all blessings. In these terms therefore doth Moses pour forth his prayers of blessing on Joseph’s head, who was separated from his brethren, as the choicest of them all. ‘The good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, let it come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren,’ (Deut. xxxiii. 1, 16, compared.) He invokes the original, the fountain of all blessings; namely the good-will of that God who in the bush had appeared and said, ‘I am the God of Abraham,’ &c., Exod. iii. 2, 6. And surely if God communicates himself to whom he blesseth, his blessing of them must proceed from the deepest good-will; and indeed is the reason why he giveth himself, as in marriage they bestow themselves and all, to whom they bear their special good-will.

And, 2. This good-will of God, accompanying each thing bestowed, is *that*

*which maketh a blessing of it*, and so to be more than merely gifts bestowed. The Hebrews termed their gifts or presents a blessing. Thus 1 Sam. xxv. 27, Abigail to David, 'This blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my Lord;' also 2 Kings v. 15; whereby they would have it understood by the receiver, that they proceeded from their free and most hearty goodwill; and that to be more than the gift. Thou hast given long life to thy king, says David to God, and so blesseth him for that. But because long life in itself was as no blessing to him without God's favour, in another psalm he says, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life,' and all the privileges of it better than the things bestowed. And therefore after that Jacob had wished his Joseph all the precious things, as he terms them, all the dainties heaven or earth afforded, both which he distinctly mentions, Deut. xxxiii., (read ver. 13, 14 afore,) then after all he prays, as without which these would not prove blessings, the good-will of our God, says he, come upon him, &c., so invoking this fountain of all. Thus take any particular outward mercy which hath the name of a blessing, and it is the blessing of God, that is, his favour accompanying it, that maketh it such. It is the blessing of God, as Solomon says, that maketh rich, Prov. x. 22; and so in all other, otherwise their blessings are turned into curses, as Mal. ii. 2.

Out of good-will, good-will to our persons themselves, it is that he blesseth us, as in our blessing of God we heard it imported pure good-will to himself; so in his blessing us. In that short and fervent prayer of Jabez, 'Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!' 1 Chron. iv. 10, this passage follows, 'that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!' I observe from thence, that our God who undertakes to bless us, loves us so well, that he is so moved (such is his love to our persons) with the pleas of self-love in us, when concurring with his own glory. For this holy man, in seeking God's blessing on him to be kept from evil, urgeth this to God, 'that it may not grieve me.' Such free and pure good-will doth God bear to us, that he loves we should love ourselves, and is affected with what proceeds from love to ourselves; for this request God granted; so then it is genuine to the nature of a blessing, and indeed to bless another doth naturally and evidently of all acts else imply a pure and candid aim in wishing and desiring another's good, out of a special love unto their persons. Thus much for what this word to bless, as an act of God's, as also what a blessing as the thing bestowed, holds forth to us.

'Us,—who in and of ourselves are 'by nature children of wrath,' as in chap. ii. 3, and 'cursed children,' 2 Pet. ii. 14, to whom all the curses written and unwritten are due,—are yet rendered blessed in Christ, and blessed not with one sort or kind, but all blessings, termed therefore by way of distinction from other men that remain under the curse, the blessed of the Lord. So Abraham first, Gen. xiv. 19, Melchisedec gives it him as a most royal title for himself and his children to inherit, that it grew to be ordinarily their style and attribute by heathens themselves, who observed the blessing of Jehovah to environ them. Thus Abimelech treats Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 29, 'Thou blessed of the Lord;' yea, this appellation Laban gives Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 31, and so it came to be given to all others of his seed, as Ps. cxv. 15. And as it is their name and denomination, so the end of their calling, even that which they are called unto, unto nothing else but blessing, 1 Pet. iii. 9, 'Ye are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing;' in relation to which it is Christ's own compellation, when they are to possess it, 'Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom,' Matt. xxv. 34. Yea, they are not blessed men only, but men of blessedness, as in the Hebrew it is;

made up of nothing else, ordained to nothing else ; yea, to a surplusage flowing over ; such as to be blessings to others with whom they live, and whom they have relation to ; all they come near, says God to Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, and ushers it with a word of command, ' Be thou,' or thou shalt be, ' a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee ;' which is repeated to Jacob by his father Isaac, and so is true of all the seed, Gen. xxvii. 29, and fulfilled in Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 5, for whose sake God blessed Potiphar and all his house.

#### MEDITATION.

Oh, then, let your hearts be full of nothing but of blessing, both blessing God and blessing others ; and let no cursing or reviling be found in our mouths, which is the Apostle's inference, 1 Pet. iii. 9.

' Us,'—whose persons he loved with a special love, and out of that love hath chosen from the rest of men, as it follows in the next verse ; thus Ps. xxxiii. 12, 13, ' Blessed are the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. The Lord looketh from heaven ; he beholdeth all the sons of men ;' that is, whereas he hath all the sons of men afore him, he loved and chose these out to bless, and it is said he loved and blessed them above all people, as Deut. vii. 14. Which discovered itself in the difference put between Jacob and Esau : Jacob have I loved, and out of love blessed him, peremptorily and unchangeably, for he added, ' Yea, and he shall be blessed,' Gen. xxvii. 33, which old Isaac, the father, spake as in the person of God ; whereas Esau with much difficulty obtains a poor pittance of outward blessings for a season.

' Us.'—But these meditations on this word, though quickening, yet that which is more conjunct with the Apostle's intimate scope, and was the main provocation in his thoughts, with this vehemency of spirit to pour forth this offering of blessing to the Lord, was the fresh and recent experience of God's gracious performance of that great promise made to the patriarchs of blessing in Christ both Jew and Gentile of all nations with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel. And that which induceth me to this is, I consider that he writing to the Ephesians, Gentile converts, in whose hearts, as in other nations, the gospel had taken place, he so carrieth his following discourse, setly and intentionally, as still to involve both Jew and Gentile together in the same spiritual privileges, in making his applications sometimes to the one, sometimes to the other, all along his discourse, in this and the following chapters, which hath been the general observation of interpreters, sometimes speaking of the Jew, which himself was : ' we who first trusted in Christ,' ver. 11, 12 ; sometimes of the other, ' ye also,' ver. 13 ; and so chap. ii. throughout ; and accordingly in this general introduction of blessing God, he wraps them both in one and the same ' us ;' and we as in a community partake of all the same benefits, in ver. 4-9. The access of which Gentiles unto the Church, and to be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham according to the promise and prophecy, was but then effected in his days. Oh, blessed be God, says he, and the Father of Christ, that hath thus blessed us ; and blessed are the ears and eyes of us that live in these days wherein we have and see these things fulfilled : the mystery opened and discovered, which in former ages was not made known, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, as himself, as referring to the things delivered here and the rest of this chapter, speaks, chap. iii. 3, compared with ver. 4-6. This was so vast a prospect, as he falls down at the first and general view and consideration thereof : Blessed be God the Father that hath blessed us, us Jews, and with us, you Gentiles, with the blessings promised Abraham. And so much for the persons blessed.

## 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 effector 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 estated 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, thus

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 οὐρανίοις, 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 foreshadowed, 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 *ἐδράωμα*, 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 ἐπουρανίοις*, 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 high 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, *παράλογίζεσθαι* *ἐαυτοὺς*, 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 says 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.