

CHRIST'S MOURNFUL VISIT TO OBSTINATE SINNERS

Luke xix. 41, 42—And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

There are two great and wonderful mysteries which may occasion much divine admiration and holy astonishment to angels and men; there is that unsearchable mystery of the condescending grace of Christ, that He should expose Himself to so much toil and labour, even to the pouring out of His soul, that He may purchase our love, which is but a small thing when it is purchased: and that He should entertain peace betwixt sinners and Himself.

But there is a second mystery which is no less mysterious, and it is, man's impertinent refusal of these precious offers that grace doth propose to us, and casting them behind our backs, and embracing the offers of idols: and that which does aggravate this sin is this, that even after frequent convictions of the vanity of our idols, we will embrace them, and solace ourselves in them. It is a question difficult to determine, whether the first or second of these be most mysterious; but they both make up a matchless mystery. The first is His doing; and the second

is our doing, which ought to be detestable to us. Heaven and earth may wonder at such folly as this, that we refuse that delicious feast of the gospel, which is full of marrow and fatness. Ought we to reject the counsels of him that is wise? Yet we have rejected the counsels of Jesus Christ, of Him who is wiser than any among the sons of men. O how have we rejected Jesus Christ, and set His counsels at nought, and cast Him behind our back! And O what a dreadful indignity is that which we put upon Him! But, O Christians, while yet it is today, harden not your hearts, but embrace this offer of Jesus Christ, which is freely offered to you.

Now all of you suppose, that if Jesus Christ Himself would come and preach this doctrine unto you, "Come unto me, and have life": yea, conceive, would there be any so impudent as would not receive His offer? Yet I suppose, if Jesus Christ himself would preach that doctrine to us, thorns and briers would arise after His preaching. He preached this to them among whom He was in the days of Isaiah, chapter xlix. 4, and yet what is His report of them? "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for that which is nought." And in John's time see what report He gives, chapter i.11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He could not persuade them, because of their impenitency and hardness of heart.

No doubt ye will condemn this refusal for impenitency,

the offer being offered by so excellent a messenger, even by Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, whose feet bring "glad tidings of great joy." Oh, I fear, Christ has often times laboured in vain amongst us, who have had the offers of this blessed gospel presented to us, and we would not; then woe eternally shall be unto us. O ye who slight the precious offers of Jesus Christ in this blessed gospel, and who still continue slighers of it, are ye not afraid that Christ shall depart from you, and shall also remove His blessed ordinances from you, and ye shall be made to seek Him and shall not find Him, nor yet know where to seek Him? O slighers and cursed undervaluers of Jesus Christ, stand in awe to slight Him any more, lest He consume you from heaven. O slighers of Jesus Christ, what shall be the latter end of this? I am persuaded that it shall be bitterness to you at last.

What would you answer to God if He were pleased to call you at this very hour? What would you answer to Him for all these dreadful abominations of yours? Would ye be able to answer to these sad challenges of your conscience that ye shall have in that day? O be persuaded, that it is a sad thing to live and die slighers of these blessed offers. If ye will not embrace them now, know that it is not long when God shall cease to be a reprovor unto you, "and these things which now belong to your peace, shall then be hid from your eyes." O then embrace precious Christ, and delay not any longer.

Now to come to the words: Although Christ be so precious, yet here is a people refusing Him; but as He goes away from them, He weeps. He began to weep, desiring an invitation to stay. O did ever angels or men behold such a spectacle, that Christ should weep for the destruction of sinners, and especially that He should weep for the destruction of those sinners who would have destroyed Him! O saw ye ever such a wonder! Sure we are, Christ did not walk after the rule of men in so doing, but after the rule of His infinite love. O wonderful is that love of His, that He should have wept for the destruction of those who had delivered Him up to be crucified! But here He gives us a blessed confirmation of the everlasting covenant of redemption, that He delights not in the death of sinners, but rather that they would live, and repent, and turn to Him; "O if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!"

Certainly they might have sung here that blessed song, that He dealt not with them as they deserved, or according to their iniquities. I am persuaded of it, that Christ weeps more for the ruin of men than they do for themselves. If Christ had done with us according to our iniquities, or according to our merits and deservings, surely we had been long ago in that pit without any redemption. Now we have here the infinite compassion of Christ, that when he drew near the city, beholding such a multitude of persons posting to destruction, He was necessitated to

weep for them. And O what a sight was it, to see Christ weeping for sinners, who were not weeping for themselves! And he expresses His grief in the 42nd verse, wishing that they "had known the things that belonged to their peace."

In this verse there are three things to take notice of:

(1) That they would know their infinite obligation to the glory of God; in short, that they would be convinced of their misery, and things which belong to their peace.

(2) That they would be convinced of their utter inability to satisfy the justice of God of their own selves.

(3) That they would have recourse to Him, who is that blessed Lamb of God who saves the elect world from all their iniquities. Now these three things, to be convinced of our own misery, of our own inability to save ourselves and satisfy the justice of God, and of the remedy how to satisfy the justice of God, are the whole substance of the law and of the gospel; for the law is of the first and second, and in the third is comprehended the gospel. I confess, we shall never be able to tell our obligation to God. O, if our understandings were enlightened, that we might see how much we are bound and obliged to God for this very ordinance of His! Might He not have given it to another people, who would have made better use of it, and profited more by it, than we have done? Might He not

have suffered you to have gone the way that ye were going, even the way to your own destruction? And is not this a great and matchless wonder, that seeing Christ hath given us His ordinances, and invited us to receive His offers that are freely offered to us in the gospel? And if ye will not at all receive the gospel, or embrace this offer of Jesus Christ, the day is coming when ye shall know, that it was a work of soul- concern ment to have embraced the offers of salvation that were offered to you in the gospel, when ye shall curse the day that ever ye were born.

Therefore, O, study to make the law of God your meditation, and the rule of your walk. No doubt it were certainly for our advantage to be conversing betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the law and the gospel; to have our walk and conversation mixed with the law and gospel. O, but Christ rejoices that we would come unto Him. Therefore, O Christians, come and embrace this offer of your eternal salvation. We confess, if the joys of heaven were founded on that word, Luke xv. 7, on the repentance of sinners, we are constrained to say that there would not be much joy in heaven these many days. O Christians, when was there a song sung in heaven for the conversion of a sinner in this city? I fear there be many days of thanksgiving kept by the devil and his angels, for the success of his kingdom in this city. Now there are these considerations which render His compassion most mysterious.

First. Consider the person who did thus weep and lament. It was Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, and is not that a mystery? O how may we be astonished, that the second person of the blessed Trinity should weep and lament for the destruction of sinners! If an angel or a saint in heaven had done this, it had not been, so wonderful; but that He who is equal with the Father, that He who is infinitely exalted above the creatures goodness or evil, should weep for our ruin and destruction, certainly this is a wonder which shall never be enough wondered at! Christ rejoices as much at our conversion as if there were some profit redounding to Him by it; and also, He weeps as much for our ruin and destruction as if He had a disadvantage or prejudice by it. He is so infinite a Being, and all-sufficient of Himself, that by all the honour and glory we can give unto Him, nothing can be added unto His glory; and that by all the dishonour He receives from us, there can be nothing diminished from His glory. O what a wonder and matchless mystery is it, that even He who is so infinite and self-sufficient should ever have stooped so far beneath Himself, as to take on Him our nature, and undergo our punishment which was due and just to us for sin! O that the thoughts of this may be wonderful to us! We may wonder when we look over these pains that He has taken upon Him for our cause; we may wonder what it was that moved Him to it; and certainly it was nothing in us, but His own free love which put Him to it.

The second consideration which renders Christ's compassion more mysterious is this - Consider the time when He wept for them; it was after He was so much honoured, and garments spread on the ground before Him, and when his disciples sang that song, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And is it not then a great mystery, that then Christ should have fallen a-weeping for the destruction of sinners, in the time when people were all applauding and honouring Him? Certainly His compassion under that consideration is most mysterious and Wonderful. O Christians, will ye consider your own vileness, miserableness and wretchedness, that Jesus Christ who is altogether holy, and wholly free of all the pollutions of the world, should have wept at our destruction!

There is this third consideration which renders Christ's compassion most mysterious, that it was, as some conclude, fifteen days before He was to encounter with devils, principalities and powers. Now then ye may conceive, that the thoughts of that approaching death might have so taken Him up, that He might have forgotten the pitying any other body, and He might rather have pitied Himself than us, so to speak. But this is a mystery, and matchless wonder of the love of Christ, that He should not only have pitied such, but that He should have wept over their destruction, especially over the destruction of them who were to cry out "Crucify him, crucify him." O admire this infinite, patient and boundless love of Christ

towards the most wretched and miserable of mankind! O what a wonder may it be to men and angels, that ever our redemption and eternal salvation was after such a way brought about, that by His stripes we should be healed, and that He should have born the iniquity of us all upon His blessed back! O Christians, let this make you to have all your love and delight set and fixed upon Him! Let not your idols of the world or any other, be your delight any longer, but let God have the pre-eminence in all things you go about.

Now that which we shall next speak unto shall be this.- We shall propose the reason of this lamentation and weeping that Christ has because of their destruction; and it is, that contempt of the gospel, and of Him who was that glorious messenger of peace; and that is clearly holden forth in these words, "but now they are hid from your eyes." We confess, all sins, in comparison of this, are but as if they were little sins; and it may be a wonder to us, that there should be so much access to preach upon that subject, the contempt of the gospel, and of that glorious messenger, Jesus Christ, who publisheth peace, and whose feet bring glad tidings of great joy.

Now we shall sum up the contemnners of the gospel in these two sorts.

(1) There are some that do condemn the gospel with civility, Luke xiv. 1.8, 19, 20, all of them have that, "have me excused; I have married a wife, I cannot come; I have

bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it." O what necessity can there be that should hinder us from the receiving of Jesus Christ? There are many of us who pretend an impossibility; we have married our idols, and after them we will go, and so we cannot come.

(2) There are some that do refuse Him more absolutely and absurdly, Matt. xxii 6, "They stoned and slew the messengers." It had been some reason if they had come to denounce wrath against them, but coming to pronounce peace and salvation to them, O it is a most irrational thing.

Now we shall speak to the impediments of their not embracing the gospel:

The 1st impediment is, the want of the faith of the truth of the gospel; 1 Cor. 1.18, the gospel was a real thing, and not a fancy, therefore says the apostle, "that he did not preach any devised fable," 2 Peter, 1.16.

The 2nd impediment obstructing our embracing the offers of the gospel is the want of the solid faith of these unspeakable dignities that come to any by embracing the offers of the gospel. We are not only advanced to a communion and fellowship with God, which indeed is a thing of most excellent nature; but we are made the adopted children of God; and O what can be desired more than that?

The 3rd impediment is, the want of a solid conviction of our misery and desperate estate wherein we are by nature. Sure we are, were we studying the law more, the gospel should get better employment by us.

The 4th impediment is, want of solid conviction of our inability to satisfy the justice of God; yet we, with the Jews, "go about to establish our own righteousness," Rom. x 3, being ignorant of the justice of God.

The 5th impediment is, there are some who, out of the strong conviction of their own unworthiness, have found themselves transgressors from the womb; who think it presumption to receive these offers; and that hinders them. I would propose these things to you:

(1) We would have you convinced how great a sin the sin of misbelief is. We conceive the want of the strong convictions of the sin of unbelief makes us be so fruitless.

(2) We would have you knowing that unbelief is a thing that hinders our liberty in conversing with God.

(3) There is this third thing that we would say, that when we set about the exercise of faith with unbelief, we find many trials. We would say this to them that find these trials, if they obtain victory over them, they will find great joy, and deep root in the Holy Ghost.

(4) There is this fourth thing that we would say - be much

in the consideration of these excellent things that unbelief causes us to quit; it causes us greatly to quit our interest in and love to God.

There is this last thing that ye would be much in studying, viz., the free proposals of the gospel, Rev. xxii. 17, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Now we shall shut up our discourse with this: We conceive, If Christ would come down, He would no doubt preach to you on this text, and desire you to know the things that belong to your peace. Surely if Christ were coming here today, as He drew near and beheld the Jews, He might weep over Glasgow. Certainly the despisers of this gospel shall be in that row that shall be summoned to depart from Him; and no doubt this shall aggravate both their condemnation and their pain, that there was a way found out how to be saved, "and they would not"; and except, "in this your day, ye know the things that belong to your peace," in this your day, the day is not long when these things "shall be hid from your eyes." O when will ye beware and know your own misery? O when shall that day come? O Christians, ye are like these that sleep on a top-mast, and are not aware. "O be not deceived, for God is not mocked; and that which ye have sown, that shall ye also reap." O beware, and stand in awe to sin any more, lest God with His justice pursue you, and also shall overtake you. Be persuaded, if ye have sown iniquity, ye

shall also reap the whirlwind; but if ye have sown your seed with tears, be comforted in this, ye have a joyful harvest-day approaching, when ye shall go forth to gather your vintage, and shall return with great joy and gladness, and your sheaves on your shoulders; and O what a joyful harvest-day shall that be to those who have waited on their Redeemer! We confess it shall be a day of joyfulness and great mirth. Now we shall say no more to you at this time; but let your soul wait with expectation until that day shall spring, and let that blessed and most excellent harvest-day come, and let all other harvest-days pass away. AMEN.

CHRIST'S ROYAL PRIESTHOOD SUFFICIENT ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FAITH

Heb. iv. 14 - Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Our blessed High Priest has the names of believers engraven on these three parts of His precious person: He has them engraven in His heart; which points out His infinite love and boundless condescension. This is to answer that which was typified of Him by the high priests under the law, who had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven on their breast-plates of onyx-stones. And Christ has the names of believers engraven on His shoulders; which holds out His strengthening and supporting them in all their temptations and assaults of the devil that they meet with. This is to answer that which was typified of Him by the high priest under the law, of having the names of the twelve tribes engraven on their shoulders, to be a memorial before the Lord. Christ has the names of believers engraven on the palms of His hands; which points out His everlasting remembrance of them. No doubt this respect ought to engage our hearts, when Christ cannot catch by force, He will catch us by deceit. Christ's love has not only an omnipotency, but also a divine deceit and guile: "Therefore, behold I will allure her into the wilderness"; or, as the word may be

rendered, "I will deceive her in the wilderness."

There are these three parts of Christ's office, His kingly, priestly and prophetic office. His kingly office points out His absolute dominion, and infinite sovereignty. His prophetic office points out His infinite wisdom in teaching sinners; amid His priestly office points out His boundless compassion and goodwill towards us. There is a great difference betwixt our high priest and the high priest under the law, betwixt the high priest under the New Testament and the Old Testament; for our High Priest was both the sacrifice and the sacrificer. You know that Christ got and bought all the lives of the believers, on His promise and bond, before God dealt so with them, that He should suffer for them. Justice suffered Him a little, but at last He perfected His work. Is there any difference betwixt them that were born under the law and them that are born under the gospel? For ye know that, under the law, there were sacrifices in Adam's time, in Noah's and Abraham's times; and for four thousand years there were sacrifices, and the fire upon the altar drank up the blood of lambs and goats; yet divine justice was never satisfied till that spotless Lamb sacrificed Himself. Justice fristed [postponed] Christ four thousand years; but at length He came and perfected the work of our redemption.

There is a great difference betwixt man's first and second creation. We confess there was much love and wisdom

manifested in man's first creation; but that was all accomplished by a word of command. In the second creation, however, there was not only infinite love, and wisdom, and power, but much suffering and acting in this creation. But blessed be His name, He has now perfected our redemption, and is now requiring that all these, for whom He has laid down His life, and paid that ransom, may be in heaven with Himself.

But to come to that one thing which we intend to speak to, which is, Christ's priestly office, we are not intending to prosecute these words any further, but as they give us ground to speak to this part of Christ's office, which I may say is the foundation of religion. And we shall speak to these things:

First, what Christ's priestly office does comprehend, and how He executes it.

Secondly, we shall speak to this. What are the properties of this our great high priest Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, what advantage follows to a Christian from Christ's priestly office.

And, lastly, we shall speak a little to the properties and qualifications of Christ's priesthood.

And as for the first. His priestly office comprehends these two things;

first, His offering up Himself a spotless sacrifice for our sins. This part is pointed at, Heb. x, 4, 5, 6, 7. “Then said I, lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O Lord.” Heb. v, 7, “Who in the days of his flesh offered up strong prayers and supplications to him who was able to save him from death.”

The second thing, His offering up Himself for us imports, that He has taken upon Him the office of high priest, blameless and harmless, and is made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii, 16, “Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” And it is from this that Christ is called the Prince of Peace, in purchasing that precious peace betwixt God and sinners; for in that day that there was a woeful diversion made betwixt God and sinners, Christ did then begin His peace and reconciliation betwixt God and us.

Now that which we shall speak to from this shall be to some considerations, that may make this act of Christ most mysterious to you. And there are more mysteries in this one act than we could well explain, though we had eternity to make a commentary on it. The first consideration is this, to look on that divine harmony and sweet consent that was among all the persons of the blessed Trinity, that Christ should accomplish this work of dying for sinners; there was not one negative to this. Was not the Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity, most willing for this? Hence it is called the Father’s will,

Psalm xl, 8, “I delight to do thy will, O my God”; and in Heb. x, 7, 9, “Then said he, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O Lord.”

There are these three things that may evidence the Father’s consent to this blessed work.

First, that God the Father manifested much love to His Son, because of His doing this work, John x, 17, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life”: as if Christ would have said, “The Father loved me; and the reason why He loved me is, because I lay down my life for my sheep.”

There is this second thing that speaks the Father’s consent to the work, viz., these great promises were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, if He would lay down His life an offering for sin, as Isa. liii, 10, “He should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.”

And there is this, lastly, that points out the Father’s consent to this work; and it is this, the great reward that He gave to the Son after the accomplishment of this great work. Phil. ii, 9, 10, “Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and in earth.” As likewise it is clear from Heb. ii, 9, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.”

And was not the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, most willing to accomplish this work? We hope none will dispute His willingness, for oftentimes He says, speaking about this work, "I delight to do thy will." And Luke xii, 50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished?" As it were, He could not tell the pain He was in till He was in pain; He longed to be lifted up between heaven and earth, and to have that said, "It is finished." And was not the third Person of the blessed Trinity most willing and content? Which He doth evidence, not only in that He furnished Christ with all gifts for this work, Isa. xlii, 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him:"; but likewise He manifested His will in this, that when Christ was under His sorest exercises, He was comforted by the consolation of the Spirit of God.

There is this second consideration to point out the mysteriousness of this act of offering up Himself for us, and it is this - Consider the highness of this person, and the deepness of His sufferings. Put these two together, and this will make you fall into a sea of wondering. O beloved, was not this mighty condescension, that He who was clothed with light as with a robe, and that He who was clothed with the garments of immortal glory, that He should have clothed Himself with that clothing of the nature of man? That He who was dwelling in light inaccessible, that He should now dwell in the tents of mortality?

And is not this a mystery, that He should descend into hell that we might ascend into heaven? And that He lay three days in the grave, that we might live with Himself in heaven through all the ages of eternity? And is not that a mystery, that the Ancient of Days, and Father of Eternity should become a child, and know an end of life and beginning of days? O Christians, bathe yourselves in the sweet thoughts of God incarnate; and if any of you come to plumb this deep, ye shall be like the shipmen, Acts xxvii, 28, the more and the farther ye go into this deep, ye shall see the more wonders there.

Then there is this last consideration that makes this act of Christ more mysterious, and it is this - What was the end of Christ's coming into the world, and of offering Himself up for us a sacrifice? It is set down in Rom. viii, 3, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Might not Christ have come to condemn sinners? But, O, here is infinite love! He came to condemn that which condemned us. And I would only say this to you, shall neither the conquering grace of Christ, the restraining grace of Christ, nor the pardoning grace of Christ, provoke you to love Him?

Now that which secondly we shall speak to shall be this, to point out these advantages that flow to a Christian from this part, viz., Christ's priestly office, His dying for us. And there is this first advantage, Christ's death is the

evidence of our justification, and the cause of our sanctification, and the pledge of our glorification, and the hope of our eternal and complete victory, and the door of hope that shall make you sing, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” There are these four streams whereby we are brought to paradise. There is His justification, whereby He justifies us; there is His sanctification, whereby we that lay among the pots are made white as a dove; and His wisdom, whereby we are conducted to heaven; and His redemption, by His complete victory. And for the first, is it not clear that Christ’s death was an evidence of our justification? Heb. ix, 12, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” And in verse 26, “But now once in the end of the world, hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” By the solid faith of Christ’s death we may answer all objections. If ye could multiply objections throughout eternity, ye could have no answer but this, Christ hath died and is risen again. His resurrection is a great pillar of justifying faith; Rom. v. 1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” All objections are answered in this, Christ has died and, risen again, Rom. viii, 34, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.” Chapter v, 10, “For while we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death.” Faith’s great pillar, whereon it

is founded, is Christ's resurrection. And is not the death of Christ that which is the cause of our glorification? ITch. ix, 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" And Gal. vi, 14, where, speaking of the cross of Christ, he says, "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Also 1 Peter, i, 18, 19, "For as much as ye know, that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ," and 2 Cor, v. 14, 15, "For if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto God." Likewise is not Christ's death the pledge of your glorification? Did not Christ wear a crown of thorns, that ye might wear a crown of immortal glory? And did He not wear a purple robe, that ye might wear that robe of His righteousness? If Christ ascended up, then certainly He will draw all His members after Him. And likewise, Christ's death is the door of hope that ye have, to overcome your lusts. There is this that speaks Christ's victory, that He has in His person overcome principalities and powers, and has made an open shew of them. He has likewise overcome death and the grave; and that is an evidence of your victory and overcoming; for there is a great correspondence betwixt the head and the members.

There is this second advantage that comes to a person from Christ's death, and it is this - It may be a strong

argument to embrace and entertain Christ. It may stir us up to that duty, Song v. 2, “Open to me, my sister, my spouse, for my head is filled with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” If Christ has died and now risen again, will not that persuade you to love Him? O what arguments will do with you? Does not the five wounds of His blessed body preach this doctrine to love Him?

There is this third advantage, that if the sufferings of Christ were believed, it were a compendious way to bring your souls under the constraining power of His love, 2 Cor., v. 14, “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” There is a sweet constraint of His love that it layeth upon the judgment, and that it lays on the affections: Christ’s love lays a constraint on a Christian’s judgment, that he thinks Him alone excellent; and it lays a constraint on his affections, and makes them burn within him, for love to enjoy the person loved.

There is this fourth advantage, that the way to heaven is now made manifest through the sufferings of Christ, Heb., viii, 8, 9, “I will make a new covenant with them, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers.” Believe it, there was a greater difficulty for Christians to go to heaven under the Old Testament dispensation than under the New. Christ is now crucified before your eyes; so that we are not to exercise faith in Christ as yet to come, but as already come; and certainly the sin

against the gospel shall be greater than it was under the law.

The fifth advantage is this, that if once ye believed that Christ died for sinners, then your unbelief would be put to an end. 1 Tim., 1, 15, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and then he subjoins, “of whom I am chief.” And the great ground on which we say this is one of these two: If once you believe that Christ came over that infinite distance that was betwixt Him and man, how easily, think ye, that He will come over that infinite distance that is between you and Him? And there is this ground likewise, that Christ’s love is that which will bring your souls to the necessity of this love, and the impression of the preciousness of Christ, of Him who has perfected the work of your redemption.

The last advantage that comes to the person from Christ’s death is, it is an excellent way for a Christian to bring his soul to a divine detestation and hatred of sin, 2 Cor. v. 15, “That we should not live unto ourselves,” “For as Christ hath suffered for us, let us arm ourselves with the same mind, to cease from sin.” And there are these two things in Christ’s death to make sin most hateful to you: First, if ye look to the burden of sin, think ye not that it was a heavy burden that made Him cry out, “I am troubled, and exceeding sorrowful”? And was it not an infinite weight that made Him say, “If it be possible, let this

cup pass from me”? And the second thing which may make sin hateful to you is, to look on these sufferings because of sin. May ye not suppose that the justice of God was highly offended? Isa. liii, 10, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.”

Now, to shut up our discourse, we shall say to you these things: First, that Christ,s dying, is the immediate object of justifying faith. And the grounds of this assertion are these: That which formally justifies a sinner, must be the proper object of faith; therefore, it is Christ considered as dying. And there is this ground likewise, that Christ, as dying, is the proper object of justifying faith, and it is, that Christ, as in His relative excellencies, is the object of faith more than in His absolute excellencies; that is, Christ as He is God to us in these excellencies, more than the excellencies in Himself.

There is this second thing that I would say, and it is this, that a Christian should be much in the consideration of the eternity of this design of Christ’s dying, to be much in the consideration of the depth, and height, and length, and breadth of this design, that, ere ever the mountains were brought forth, this was decreed in heaven, that Christ behoved to die. And would ye know what was Christ’s exercise before the world was made? Ye may see it in Prov. viii, 30-31, “Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth; and his delights were with the sons of men.” O! the believing of this would bring us to the faith of

these two things; to the faith of the infiniteness of His love, and the freeness of His love.

Likewise consider the height of His love, and the depth of His love; and that shews itself in this, in fixing such desires of His on such wretches as we are. Do ye not think, that if Christ should come a-suiting, He should have wooed such as were more fit than we were? But that He should have pitched His love on us who were clothed with sinfulness and necessity, having only these two ornaments to commend us to Him, who were wallowing in the mire; Ezek. xvi, 7, 8, “Thou has increased and waxen great, and art come to excellent ornaments, whereas thou wast naked and bare; and when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness.”

Then consider the breadth of His love, which vents itself in this, that He should have chosen us of all nations to be His first-born, and to set His delight upon us.

And now we shall shut up all with these three words:

(1) Were ye ever, through the consideration of His death, constrained to sit down and put your mouth in the dust?

(2) Were ye ever, on consideration of His death, constrained to love him, and cry out, “His love to us has been wonderfully great, passing the love of women!”

(3) Were ye never constrained to wonder at that union betwixt Him and us? Was never the death of Christ an effectual means to unite you to Christ by these two chains, faith and love?

And now I would point out the difference betwixt faith and love uniting to Christ.

And, first, faith is as the nail that unites the soul of a Christian to the soul of Christ, and love is the hammer that rooves [drives home] that nail, and fastens it.

The second difference is this; faith does draw the first lineaments and image of Christ upon a soul, but love perfects this image.

The third difference is, faith is that grace that is most sober in its actings; but love is most impatient in its actings. And faith may be called a rational grace. Believe it, it is no blind bargain to take Christ upon implicit faith. We shall give you this description of love. Love sets the soul in a sweet travelling towards God, as the centre and sweet rest of all. Love can find no rest in anything besides God.

And the last difference is, faith is that grace that first discovers the excellency of Christ to a Christian; but love solaces itself in these discoveries. Loves is born blind, and it knows nothing of itself, but when faith has discovered the excellencies of Christ, and cries forth, "It is good

for me to be here, and to make a tabernacle,” then love subscribes and seals that with an oath. Love has two idols, impatience and desire; it is impatient till it enjoy, and desires when it is enjoyed. Love is like the horse-leech, it cries, Give, give. It knows not what it is to be satisfied.

And would ye know when shall the first day of love’s satisfaction be? Certainly it shall be in that day when we shall be standing within the gates of the new Jerusalem. That day shall be the first day of love’s satisfaction. This is clear from Psalm xvii, 15, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” And that shall be when faith passes into possession, and hope into fruition and enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and faith and hope shall flee away and be no more; when we shall be made to walk by sight and vision, and not by faith. Christ was content to live thirty-three years amongst us, that we might live an eternity with Him. When they were going to make Christ a king, John vi, 15, He fled unto the mountains; but when they were going to put acrown of thorns upon His head, O how willing was He to that! And with what a divine submission and delight took He it! And yet how is Christ undervalued and slighted by us! Is He not wonderfully undervalued when He is sold for thirty pieces of silver! I fear there are many here that would sell Him for thirty pieces; yea, I fear, many would sell Him for less; only I would say to such, let them beware and stand in awe any

more to slight Jesus Christ. O slighers and under- valuers of God, beware lest your destruction and everlasting desolation be suddenly approaching and drawing near. O Christians, shall never Christ be accounted precious by us? Blessed be the person whose portion and lot Christ is, and let all the congregation say, Amen. But cursed be that person by whom Christ is not accounted precious, and let all the congregation say, Amen.

CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE - THE WAY OF ATTAINING COMFORTABLE ASSURANCE

2 Peter i. 10—Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

It is certain, that, when Christians do reflect upon these woeful and impious actions of that mystery of iniquity that is within them, they may be constrained to put on their mourning apparel, and to walk with the spirit of heaviness. We confess, it is a great mystery, that we can walk with so much peace and contentment under the chains of our iniquity, as if they were chains of gold and fetters of fine gold. It is certain, that that which darkens a Christian's hope and obscures his interest in Christ, is his entertaining a body of death in his company. However, we would say this to those, that it is suitable for a Christian to assent to the assertions of misbelief [to what unbelief says] concerning our iniquities [that they are very great and deserve eternal death], but they must deny the conclusion from such assertions drawn by sense [that therefore there is no hope for us]. We confess this is not good logic, but precious divinity: Psalm lxy, 3, "Iniquities prevail against me"; but there is a sweet conclusion in answer to such an assertion, "but as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." And we would say this to these that are under the power and dominion of

their lusts, that they may make an argument with God from the multitude of their iniquities to obtain pardon from God, Psalm xl, 11, 12, "Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord; let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me." (And his argument is) "For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me - they are more than the hairs of mine head." We confess, this argument would not hold in schools; but we may make it our argument to plead for pardon from God. And withal, we conceive it is suitable, that one that is dwelling under the convictions of a body of sin and death would be thus in proposing that desire, that He whose hands are soft as oil, and will not bruise your head, may reprove you, and cause you to walk in the paths of righteousness.

But to come to the words: ye may remember that we were speaking concerning the advantages that a Christian has by living under the solid faith and certain persuasion of his interest in God. Now, we shall propose to you these disadvantages that flow to a Christian from his walking under the uncertainty of his interest, and of his calling and election being made sure.

And the first disadvantage is this, for one that is much under the exercise of misbelief, and walking under the uncertainty of his interest in God, it is the compendious way to attain that woeful evil of hardness of heart and stupidity: Heb. iii, 12, 13, "Take heed brethren lest there

be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” And the deceit of unbelief is most singular, not only because it is so spiritual, but likewise because it walks under the visor of the holiness of God. But be persuaded, that, if unbelief be entertained it will procure hardness of heart, and likewise it will entertain it; and the reason is, because unbelief is that sin which interrupts the lively actings of the grace of prayer. The unbelieving Christian cannot at all be a diligent Christian in duties. It is impossible that diligence and unbelief can be two companions together; and is not that a notable disadvantage and prejudice?

There is this second disadvantage that comes to a Christian by his living under the uncertainty of his interest in God, and it is this, that such a Christian can much less mourn for the absence of Christ than these that are under the exercise of faith. This is clear, not only from Song iii, 2, where the spouse is said still to seek Him, though she could not find Him (where the bride’s faith and anxiety are conjoined together: He was absent, and she sought Him; but she could not find Him), hut it is likewise clear from John xx, 12, 13, where Mary misseth Christ, and she saw two angels standing, and they say unto her, “Why weepest thou? She saith unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Certainly it must be so, that faith does

put a Christian to the pursuit after Jesus when He is away; for it is this grace that makes known to him these visible perfections that are in Christ. Faith is a most intelligent grace, and therefore it is called “understanding,” CoL ii, 2, “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding.” And likewise it must be so; because such a one that has that grace of faith does take up that infinite solace and advantage which is to be found in conversing with God. Faith cries out, “One day with Christ is better than a thousand elsewhere!” and love comes in, and seals that assertion with an oath, and it says, ‘That is most true; it is better to be a door-keeper in the house of God, than dwell in tents of sin.’ Love lays hold on the heart of Christ, and Christ’s heart, as it were, melts in the hands of love, and faith lays hold on the word of promise.

The third disadvantage that comes to a Christian by not living under the certainty of his interest in God is, that such a one lays an impediment in the way betwixt him and the enjoyment of Jesus Christ. O Christians, what makes us so oft- times cry out, Why art thou as a sojourner, and a way-faring man, to turn in but for a night? It is the want of the exercise of the grace of faith, this is clear, Eph. iii, 17, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” It is likewise clear from 1 Pet. i, 8, “In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” It is the exercise of

the grace of faith that makes a Christian rejoice with unspeakable joy, and likewise it may be comprehended under that word, Matth. xiii, at the close, etc did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. O suppose, or think ye, that Christ can rest with you that have so many jealousies and suspicions of Him?

There is this fourth disadvantage that a Christian has by his living under the uncertainty of his interest in Jesus Christ, and it is this: Such an one cannot be much in the exercise of love, because, though Christ give never so many signs of His favour, unbelief calls them all delusions. Unbelief is an evil thing. Nothing puts so great a price on precious Christ as faith does; and it is certain, that unbelief keeps love at a right low exercise; and likewise, unbelief hinders the grace of mortification. I can hardly believe that a Christian under the fit of unbelief, can attain the mortification of any lust, because he cannot take hold of Him by whom only he can mortify his lusts.

There is this last disadvantage that comes to a Christian by his living under the uncertainty of his interest in Jesus Christ, and it is this; unbelief does exceedingly impede that grace of repentance. I would have these that take such delight in this evil of unbelief be persuaded, that it hindereth that divine sorrow for sin, and their contrition of spirit; therefore, it is a folly, when Christians lose their feet, that they should lose their hands also. Be persuaded, that the point of conviction is away, when the grace of

faith is out of exercise. Therefore a Christian, in condemning himself, does speak these words, “If it had been an enemy that had done this evil, thou mightest have suffered it; but it is by one whom thou dealt familiarly with, and with whom thou hadst sweet fellowship; that he should rise up against thee, that is a transgression that cannot be soon done away.” And so the Lord, when He presses repentance, holds out Himself in the meanest degree, Jer. iii, 22, “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” O when did the conviction of your sins make you go in your mourning apparel and clothe yourselves with sack-cloth, and weep seven days in the bitterness of your souls, and to put your mouths in the dust?

Now, the second thing we shall speak to is this, what is the most compendious way by which one that is endeavouring at this certainty and assurance of their interest, may attain it. And, we conceive, the best way to get our calling and election made sure, is some of these things. And

first, a Christian that would attain to this, would be much in the exercise of the grace of prayer. We conceive, that prayer is that grace wherein the most part of Christians get their assurance, and the intimation of their interest in God. When was it that Daniel got (we shall not say intimation, but) confirmation? It was when he was a-praying, Daniel ix, 23, the angel said unto him, “I am come

to shew thee; for thou art a man greatly beloved of the Lord.” And there is this

second thing, in which a Christian gets intimation and assurance of his interest in God, and it is this; one that would attain this, would be much in the exercise of fear, Psalm xxv, 14, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” By the secret of the Lord here, we conceive, is for one to have the intimation of their election; and the following words say, “He will shew them his covenant,” which is but explicatory to the former; this does comprehend high thoughts and apprehensions of the majesty of God. There is this

third thing in which a Christian gets intimation and assurance of his peace and interest with God, and it is this: One that would attain to this would be much in the mortification of iniquity; Psalm lxxxv, 8, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: But let them not turn again to folly.” This is likewise clear, 1 John iii, 3, “He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Their hope and mortification is linked together. But the most ordinary way how folk attain to this assurance and intimation of their interest and peace with God, is, either by sense, or by holy reason, or by the grace of faith. They attain to this assurance by sense when Christ condescends to let them taste of that sweetness; and on the

communication of His signal love, or signal tokens of His love, faith then begins to grow. We think faith that is built upon sense may be compared to a house that is built on the sand, which will fall by the wind; therefore, it will be your advantage to build upon the word of promise. And they that attain to assurance of their interest in God by holy reason are those who are comparing some characters of grace with their own way; and, finding some of those characters in themselves, they presently conclude that they are passed from death to life. And they that attain to their assurance by faith is, when theres no place to fly unto; but when a sinner is convicted so that he knows not where to go to, then faith, the forlorn hope, comes in and strengthens the Christian, saying “Why art thou cast down, O my soul; still hope in God.” Faith has a holy magnanimity and courageousness, and will stand to that which it asserts. There is this

third thing that we would speak to, and it is this, that there is a difference betwixt the actings of faith on a promise, and faith’s resting on a promise. for we conceive, that one may believe the truth of a promise, as likewise, with some conviction, of the believing of the promise, and yet not rest upon the promise, it being certainly a work of His own Spirit that must bring one to quietness in resting on the promises. And the reason we conceive why promises, even of our eternal salvation, when believed, do not quiet our consciences is:

(1) It either proceeds from this, that a Christian believes not the truth of these promises, as he ought to do; and therefore a Christian would retire and turn back, and mourn over his believing.

(2) And there is this also that we would say, that a Christian who believes a promise, and finds no satisfaction in it, would learn this, that it is not an easy thing to quit unbelief, and to cast it away from us. It is that which will take us as much mortification as any other sin.

(3) And there is this, lastly, that we would say, and it is this. When a Christian can believe a promise, and yet not find quietness in it, we conceive it proceeds from this, that a Christian is not convinced of that absolute necessity of closing with such a promise. And that which we used to say is true here, 'necessity has no law'; for if we were brought to a necessity, we would not wait on these ceremonies. Or, lastly it proceeds from this; they have no knowledge of the freedom of the promise. And we would only say this, that free grace is the rule of the necessity of the promise, and our Christ is the rule for application to the promises. There is this last thing that we would speak to, and it is this. What is the most fit and compendious way for a Christian to maintain his interest in God, when he has attained it? It is true that is said, "it is no less art, or virtue, to keep the things that are purchased, than to purchase them." But the best way for a Christian to maintain his interest, when it is attained, is to be much

in entertaining communion and fellowship with God. That is a great mean to preserve our faith, and keep it in exercise. This is clear from Psalm cxix, 168, 169, “I have kept thy precepts, therefore let my cry come near before thee; and give me understanding”: For it is certain, that our communion and correspondence with God, is a most effectual mean to preserve our interest in Jesus Christ; because a Christian, that is much in conversing with God by prayer, receives most sweet and precious manifestations of His love, by which faith is kept in exercise.

And that faith that is without communion, and without being entertained and kept in exercise thereby, I say, that faith is but a golden dream, and a night vision, that quickly passes away and is gone; but where communion and fellowship with God is entertained and kept in exercise, sense gets leave then to read love in Christ’s face, and also in His hands, and faith is admitted to read love in Christ’s heart.

The second way how a Christian would study and endeavour to entertain and maintain his interest in Jesus Christ, when he has attained it, is, he would be much in studying and endeavouring to keep his conscience unspotted and without blemish, and offence towards God and man. That excellent and precious grace of faith can lie on no bed, but in the bed of a pure conscience. A challenging conscience and the grace of faith cannot continue together, and live in one another’s company; for when a

Christian is challenged in his conscience, then the grace of faith begins to languish and decay.

The third way how a Christian would study and endeavour to maintain his interest in Christ, when attained, is this; he would be much in strengthening the grace of experience. This is clear from Rom. v, 4, 5, "For patience worketh experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." And it were certainly for your advantage to be concluding the reality, and maintaining these enjoyments, that, when temptations or unbelief would call them in question, ye may have a decree passed on them already.

There is this fourth way that we would prescribe to you that would entertain the reality of your hope : - Ye would be much in the spirit of tenderness. We conceive, that one that has a holy reluctancy to put out his hand to any forbidden fruit, is that Christian who will maintain his interest longest. Ye would look on every difficulty and impediment that lies in the way of the exercise of your faith, to remove it. It would teach you to maintain the exercise of the grace of your faith, and the reality and certainty of your interest in Jesus Christ, and your peace with God. O Christians, study to bind up this design in all your actions, to have your peace made with God. and to make your calling and election sure. O be persuaded no longer to delay this excellent and most soul-concerning business. Know it, that it is not long before all these shadows

shall flee away, and the voice of the archangel, with the sound of his trumpet, shall be heard in Heaven, "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment." O do ye not think that ye shall have a sad entering into the possession of eternity, if ye pass the borders of this span-length of time with an uncertainty of your interest and peace with Jesus Christ? And I am afraid, that there are many who live in this generation, who are under an exceeding woeful and dangerous delusion; who suppose that they are going to heaven, and that they are in the high way that leads to that blessed and precious city, and yet they are going to hell and eternal torments, and posting to their own destruction, and are in the broad way to it.

O try and examine your own estates and condition, lest ye go to the grave with a lie in your right hand, and to hell with a delusion in your bosom; and woe eternally shall be to you if so be! "O be not deceived, God is not mocked; for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And, O Christians, what may the most of us expect to reap of the most of all our labours, to the wearying of our souls? Have we not sown iniquity, and shall we not then reap the whirlwind? O Christians, study to walk answerably to your calling and election. O what infinite love appears in this, that He should have put His desires on you, before that ye desired Him! Isa. lxv, 1, "I am found of them that sought me not: I said behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." O! know it, that the first offer did come on His part and side, and

not on our side; for when we were sleeping as on the top of a mast, he then did sweetly plead for our souls. I think a Christian that does seriously meditate on the freedom of the infinite love manifested in making a difference betwixt you and others, might provoke you to a holy admiration and astonishment, to consider this, how ye were chosen in His election, and so many thousands passed by. Surely there is no cause or reason of love, but love. And I would say this to them that are yet strangers to Him, let them be persuaded of this, ye that never knew what it was to embrace this precious offer and exhortation, "Come unto me," etc., the day is coming, when Christ shall with equity retaliate, or render unto you as ye did unto Him; ye shall call upon Him to open, but He will not hear. And to others of us, we would exhort you, that, since the beauty of Christ has overcome us, to long for that day, when He shall be admired and glorified of all His saints, and of all them that believe in Him. Amen.

FOR JESUS CHRIST IS PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS

1 Peter ii. 7 - Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.

O Beloved of the Lord, how long will ye halt between these two opinions? If Christ be precious (as He is), then let the soul embrace Him; and if your idols be precious, then may your souls embrace them, and delight in them. But this we may say of precious Christ, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive and take up these endless and precious perfections that are in precious Christ. We shall never be able to comprehend that excellency, and transcendent comeliness and beauty that is in the face of Him: "He is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand; yea, he is altogether lovely." And O but He be precious. Certainly if this question were asked of them above, "What think ye of Christ?" the angels, and all the saints that are about the throne, would venture this answer to the question, Christ is excellent and exceeding precious, and rather a subject to admiration than to speech. And I shall say these six things, all of which, no doubt, do preach this doctrine, that Christ is precious.

And, first, do not all these excellent graces of the Spirit, preach this, that Christ is precious? Does not that noble

grace of faith preach this doctrine, that Christ is precious? For by it we must be partakers of communion and fellowship with Him. And does not that excellent grace of love preach that doctrine? For love is that grace that unites the soul of a Christian to Christ. And does not the grace of mortification and the grace of patience preach this, that Christ is precious?

Secondly. Ye may read His preciousness from these senses of the enjoyment of God that the saints in former times have had. Does not their enjoyment say that Christ is precious? And to be brought under the shadow of the Tree of Life, and to be dandled on His knees; for what are all enjoyments that a Christian meets with, but streams of sweetness that flow from that ocean and fountain of everlasting pleasure? And do not all these enjoyments preach this, that Christ is precious?

But, Thirdly. Do not these love-sicknesses that the saints of old have had under absence and distance from Christ preach this doctrine to you, that Christ is precious? (tho' we confess these diseases are rare in these days); then, O must He not be precious, whose absence for an hour is as an eternity, and whose presence for a thousand years is but as a little moment? O deserted Christians, did ye ever see Him whom your soul loveth? But I fear presence and communion with God is a mystery, and an unknown thing to the most of us.

Fourthly. Ye may read the preciousness of Christ from

that unspeakable sorrow and grief that the saints have had under their absence and distance from Christ, their souls refusing to be comforted, and putting on their mourning apparel, and eating their bread with ashes in the heaviness of their spirits. I would ask this question of you - Why is Christ so little precious to you? Is He less precious in Himself now than He was under the dark Mo-saic dispensation of the gospel? No certainly; He is no less precious now than He was then.

And, fifthly, we may read Christ's preciousness from these blessed names that are given to Him in the scriptures; whose name is "the Desire of all nations"; whose name is that "Plant of Renown," and "the Light of that city above," and the "express Image of the Father's person"; He is that "bright and morning star," and that "flower of the tribe of Jesse." And do not all these blessed names of His preach this blessed doctrine, that Christ is precious?

Sixthly. There is this, lastly, that preaches Christ's preciousness, and it is this - -that the most unpleasant thing in Christ (if so we may say), is more joyful and precious than the choicest of all created comforts. This is clear, Heb. xi, 26, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." And, O, if His reproaches be so excellent and precious, what must His blessings and favourable manifestations be! O Christians, were ye never constrained to desire the tongue of

an angel, that ye might be fit to express the praises of that Plant of Renown, even Jesus Christ? O Christians, were ye never constrained, under the sense of your enjoyment of God, to cry out, “It is good for me to be here: let me make tabernacles, and a place of abode?” O therefore account Christ precious.

But to come to the words: In them we have three things to be considered.

First, we have a Christian described from that which is his noble and cardinal excellency, believing; he is a believer.

Secondly, we have the precious advantage that flows to a Christian from the excellency of that noble and excellent grace of faith. And there are these two advantages:

(1) It makes Christ precious unto the soul.

(2) It will keep a soul under the impression of Christ’s preciousness: the believing soul will always account Christ exceeding precious.

The third thing in the words is, that divine reasonableness that faith keeps in its exercise. It is not blind; it looks to the former verse, that because He is a corner-stone, it counts Christ precious, which is imported in that word “therefore.” As for the first thing in the words, the description of a Christian, he is a believer. Having spoken

of faith before, we shall not now much insist on it; only we shall propose these three considerations to enforce your pursuit after this noble grace of faith.

First. Faith is that grace that gives a Christian a most broad and comprehensive sight of Christ. It draws aside the veil off the face of Christ, and presents His beauty to the soul. This is clear, Heb. xi, 27, "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." It gives as clear a sight of the invisible God to the soul (in a manner) as if he did visibly behold Him. And there are these four principal parts of Christ's body that faith lets a Christian see.

(1) It will let the Christian see Christ's heart. Sense will say of Him, and to Him, thou hast the heart of an enemy; but faith will cry out, I know the thoughts of His heart to be good towards me, to give me an expected and blessed end.

(2) Faith (if so I may speak) looks to Christ's feet. It takes notice of the actings and motions of Christ; it will cry out, "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold."

(3) Faith beholds the smilings of Christ's countenance. When sense can read nothing in His face but wrath and displeasure, then faith draws aside the vail from His countenance, and reads love.

(4) Faith lets a Christian see the hands of Christ. It beholds all His dispensations; it sees infinite love shining in all the actions of Christ. Faith is an intelligent grace. This is clear, Col. ii, 2, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God."

The second consideration to enforce your pursuit after this noble grace of faith is this: Faith is that grace by which a Christian keeps most communion and fellowship with God; Eph. iii, 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," as if He had said, "By the exercise of all other graces, Christ is to you as a sojourner, that turns in to you but to remain for a night; but, by the exercise of faith, Christ becomes an indweller in your house." Faith will entertain communion with God in crosses, in promises, and in all duties. The believing Christian can keep fellowship with God under his most sad and bitter afflictions.

The third consideration is this, that faith is the mother of a Christian's fruitfulness. This is clear, John xv., 5, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"; that is, he that believeth in me, etc. It is likewise clear, 2 Pet. i., 5, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to your virtue knowledge"; there He puts faith in the first place; faith is always fruitful, and never barren. I would say these two

words concerning it; first, I confess, though there be a great and marvellous barrenness amongst us, there is not great barrenness in gifts, but in fruitfulness. O what can be the reason of this our unfruitfulness? Surely it is because of the much abounding of that evil of misbelief.

Secondly, I would say, that a Christian may have much visible fruitfulness, when there is much unfruitfulness in his soul, and so may be a barren Christian. By visible fruitfulness, we mean or understand, the going about the exercise of outward duties, when within there is nothing but barrenness in the exercise of inward duties. And there are these four words that I would say to you concerning a natural conscience.

(1) A natural conscience will challenge more for the want of outward sanctification, than for the want of inward sanctification. It will challenge more for pollution in the outward man than for the pollution of the inward man.

(2) It will challenge more for the neglect of the outside of a duty, than for the neglect of secret prayer.

(3) A natural conscience will challenge more for the commission of sin, than for the omission of duty. If he swear, it will challenge him more for that than if he had neglected secret prayer ten times.

(4) A natural conscience will challenge a person more for

the want of sanctification, than for the want of justification.

Now for shutting up our discourse upon this, I would, first, say this to you, O Christians. Can ye read the scriptures and not be constrained to blush? I say, are ye not made to blush when we read of holy Enoch, and of Abraham, David, Paul, and of patient Job? When ye look unto their holy walk and conversation, are ye not made to blush, O Christians? What! think ye the way to heaven more easy then, when they lived, than it is now in our days, under the glorious manifestation of the gospel? No, certainly it was not. It is reported of the heathens, when reflecting upon the famous acts of their predecessors, it bereaved them of their night's rest; and ought not the famous acts of our predecessors bereave us of our sleep also? I must say, if Christ bring many of the Christians of this generation to heaven, surely there must be a stronger exercise of His power exercised towards us than it was before.

There is this secondly that I would say, and it is this, that faith is the predominant grace of a Christian while he is here below, and love shall be the predominant grace when he shall be above. Faith and hope fight the battle, and love divides the spoil. Faith may be called Asher, that is, royal dainties; and it may be called Joseph, in respect of its mother, that is, fruitfulness.

There is this, thirdly, I would say, that there are three idols that are a great difficulty for a Christian to be mortified to:

(1) It is a difficulty for him to be mortified to the applause of the world.

(2) It is a difficulty for a Christian to be mortified to the pleasures of the world.

(3) It is a great difficulty to be mortified to the reproaches of the world. But applause is so far from being a blessing, that it is a woe, Luke vi, 26, “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!” Applause of the world is an unconstant thing. It will cry “Hosanna” today, and “Crucify Him” tomorrow.

Now, to speak to the second part of the words, the advantages that come to one from the exercise of faith. We told you that there were two advantages, and now we shall first speak to this, what it is to have Christ precious to our souls. And, we conceive, it comprehends these things:

(1) It imports this for a Christian to have an high account and estimation of Christ above all things in the world, and to cry out, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, or in the earth that I desire besides thee.”

(2) It imports this, for the soul to be much in the exercise

of love to Christ, and that is, to have Christ precious.

(3) To have Christ precious is to have communion and fellowship with Him.

But, secondly, we shall speak to this, how faith makes Christ precious to the soul. And the first way is, faith is the spy of the soul; it takes a sight of the comeliness and beauty of Christ, and it cries out, “Thou art all fair, my love, and altogether lovely”; and presently on the back of that, Christ is precious. The second way how faith makes the soul take up Christ to be precious, is this; faith is that grace that makes up our interest and communion with Christ. It is the believing Christian that has most communion and fellowship with Christ. There is this third way whereby faith makes Christ precious to the soul, and it is this; faith is that grace that believes the promises which God hath made to the soul, and that makes Christ precious to the soul. When a Christian shall read I John iii, 2, and faith believes it sweetly, ye shall be constrained to cry out, “O what a matchless one is Christ.” We shall be constrained to wonder at the love that He has had towards us. There is this fourth way how faith makes Christ precious to the soul. It presents to the Christian the crown of glory, and lets him see all the joys and excellencies of heaven. O believe it, a broad sight of that crown, even of that glorious and immortal crown, would exceedingly commend Christ to your souls. And there is, fifthly, this last way how faith describes and

makes Christ precious to the soul. It discovers and presents to you the absolute necessity of embracing Jesus Christ, and that makes Christ precious to the soul.

There is this, thirdly, that we would speak to, and it is this, to propose some evidences and marks whereby ye may know whether Christ be precious unto you.

There is this first evidence whereby ye may try it. These to whom Christ is precious will have a desire to His image, that is, they will have a desire after holiness. Psalm li, 10, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.’ O Christians, do you not desire to bear the image of the second Adam, as ye have borne the image of the first Adam?

There is this second evidence. These, to whom Christ is precious, will desire to make a continual and constant use of Christ for justification, that they may be purged, and have the precious lineaments of Christ drawn upon them; and they will make use of Him for wisdom, that they may be directed aright through this wilderness; and they will make use of Him for redemption, that they may be set free from their spiritual enemies. O Christians, durst ye ever say, that ever an idol did assault you, that ye did not embrace? Oh! I fear there are many that may assent unto this truth.

There is this third evidence of those to whom Christ is precious. They will have a desire after more fellowship

and communion with God; Song i, 2, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.” And verse 4, “Draw me, we will run after thee.” Think ye absence from Christ, though never so short, an eternity? If so, it is an evidence that Christ is precious unto you.

There is this fourth evidence of those to whom Christ is precious. They are exceedingly burdened under Christ’s absence and withdrawing from them. The spouse vented her respect to Christ, Song iii, where she sought him whom her soul loved; she sought him, but she found him not; and she continued seeking until she found him. The spouse vented her respect to Christ in these three things:

(1) That she should have undervalued angels, as John xx, 13, “They say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” She, as it were, turned her back on the angels, because there was none for her but Christ. The happiness of a Christian lies in these words, My Lord, Him have they taken away.

(2) A Christian’s anxiety vents itself in this, there will be an unsatisfaction with all the graces, if he is without Christ. This is clear, Song iii, 1, 2, 3. There she had the grace of faith, love, diligence, patience and submission; yet notwithstanding, there is a Him absent that she wishes for.

(3) There is this in which a Christian's anxiety should vent itself, to have a low esteem of all things under Christ; according to that, Psalm lxxvii, 3, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted."

There is the fifth evidence of those to whom Christ is precious, they have a spiritual observance and Christian record of the motions of Christ under absence, so far as they can; and when He is present they take notice when they are admitted to taste of the apples of the tree of life, whereof if once ye shall eat, ye shall be as gods, as the devil (or serpent) said to Eve.

And there is this sixth evidence of those to whom Christ is precious. They will be less or more in some measure grieved for grieving and offending Him. I fear I may say this, to the confusion and shame of most of us, that sin was never our burden. O Christians, can Christ be precious to you and yet ye do not hesitate to offend Him?

There is this seventh evidence of those to whom Christ is precious. They will have a high estimation and account of union and fellowship with Christ. O what do the hearts of Christians most run upon? I fear it is not after Christ. There are some whose hearts are upon the world; there are others whose hearts are upon the pleasures of the world; there are some whose hearts are upon the applause of the world; and there are others whose hearts are on the covetousness of the things of the world. This is

clear, from Ezek. xxxiii, 31, “For with their mouths they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” O, therefore, strive to embrace Jesus Christ. The devil will let you give all your members to Jesus Christ, but he says, Give me thy heart.’ He will let you give your eyes, ears, hands, and feet to Christ, but says he, ‘Give me thy heart.’ I shall rank out these three sorts of persons to you that are not right in heart.

(1) There are some that have a divided heart. Certainly the devil has the hearts of such; James iv, 8. Read the last words, “Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.”

(2) There are some whose hearts are not divided, namely, atheists. Their hearts are wholly given to the devil. This is clear, Hosea iv, 17, “Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone”; or, as the word is, he is “married to his idols.” Then surely Christ is not precious to one of these persons. O Christians, has not the world your first thoughts when ye rise in the morning, and your last thoughts when ye go to bed at night! So that I fear our idols have always more of our thoughts than Christ.

(3) There are some whose hearts are wrestling against their predominant lust (although I may say, there are not many such amongst us, who make and count it their main design and business to wrestle against the devil and his temptations), and yet not right, but falling under them.

I shall add this last evidence of one to whom Christ is

precious. They will have some delight in duties by which communion and fellowship with God may be attained; Song iii, 1, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not." She seeks Him from a principle of delight, of faith, of necessity. O Christians, why go ye to prayer thus? I think most of us go to prayer only from this principle to satisfy a natural conscience. I would shut up our discourse at this time; only I say, this is an evidence of one that has real delight to duty, he has a low estimation and account of all things below Christ, and he has a high esteem only of Christ Himself.

Now, before I close, I would ask the atheists of this congregation these four things.

And first, atheists, is Christ precious to you? Yes, say ye. How is it then that ye hate the saints and people of God, if Christ be precious to you? For surely we may be persuaded of this, that you cannot love God, if ye have not love to His people; 1 John iv, 20, "If any man say he loves God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Secondly, atheists, think ye Christ precious to you, when the exercise of religion is your greatest cross and affliction that you have in the world? Do ye not cry out in the morning, prayer is our greatest burden; and in the evening, it is our greatest cross? And surely there are these

two evils that follow such in their prayers; they speak to God as to one of their companions, but they lack that divine reverence that they ought to have in their approaches to God; and the other evil is this, they count that time that is exercised and spent in prayer an exceeding long time; they tire in God's company; and may not many of us apply to ourselves these two?

There is this thirdly, that I would say. Think ye that Christ is precious to you whose sins were never your burden? Ye may be persuaded of it, He is not precious to you!

The fourth question I would ask is this. Think ye that Christ is precious to you who never knew what it was to distinguish betwixt absence and presence with God in prayer? O Christians, are there not many here who never knew what it was to distinguish the absence of Christ from His presence? Are there not some here who have an unchangeable communion with God which never alters, but still is the same? But surely such may question the reality of their communion. O atheists and traitors to the Son of God, study in this your day to make peace with Him! and ye that desire your eternal well-being, study to have Christ precious to you, otherwise He will be exceedingly terrible. O Christians, what will ye answer to this, has not Christ been offered to you, and have not many of you rejected Him and His offer? O know that matchless fulness and excellency that is in Jesus Christ. What can you desire that is not in Christ? And what can

you lack who are in Him, and have Him? He is altogether lovely; He is all desires; He is all-sufficient; He is all in all. O be persuaded to fall in love with Christ and His offer; with Him who is the Desire of nations, the Flower of the tribe of Jesse, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. O what can we say to persuade you to embrace Christ, to lay hold on His offer? Sure we are, when we shall be brought before the tribunal of God, to receive our sentence of perpetual condemnation, that then it shall be thought that our everlasting concernment was to have embraced Christ. We shall say no more; but know this of certainty, that above the clouds Christ is precious, and that there is not one there but who is crying Hallelujah to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. Amen.

FOR JESUS CHRIST IS PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS

1 Peter ii, 7 - Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious.

Such is the universal stupidity and hardness of heart that has overtaken the people of this generation, that if Christ should come from heaven, as being there glorified with majesty, and should invite us to partake of that promised land, there are that would stop their ears, as with their finger, lest they should be overcome and led captive there, and lest they should be charmed with the enchanting voice of that blessed charmer. We shall say to these that sell Christ at so low a rate, that word, Lev. xiii, 46, "All the days wherein the plague shall be in them, they shall be defiled; they are unclean; they shall dwell alone, without the camp shall their habitation be." When we consider the contrary practice that is betwixt the higher house and the lower house, how may we blush and be ashamed! The practice of the higher house is still to be singing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts"; our practice in this lower house is to undervalue Him. The reproaching of Him should be our complaint. If prayer could be exercised in heaven, the first prayer that we would put up when our feet were within the New Jerusalem would be, O precious Christ, pardon our undervaluings of Thee while we were below.

Have ye never been constrained to say, Who can show forth His Praise? David summoned all the angels in heaven, the souls of men, sun, moon, stars, beasts, birds, etc., to shew forth his praise. Did ye never know what it was to be convinced of the remissness of that duty, and the coldness of your love? The love of Christ involves an everlasting obligation on angels to praise Him. The grace of love in a Christian is under a twofold sweet mistake; it conceives every hour's absence from Christ to be an eternity, and an eternal presence to be but an hour. "How long wilt thou Forget me, O Lord, for ever?" says David. And if we may allude unto these words, Psalm xc, 4, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday." You have in the words a Christian described. He has a dignity that is of more value than if he did derive his pedigree from a thousand kings, without an interrupted line. The word 'therefore' in the text relates to the preceeding verse.

There be two sweet proofs and advantages of faith that make Christ precious to the believer; it is not said unto you He was precious. It is said He is precious. There is a relative preciousness of Christ; it is to the believer He is precious; yet although ye be not a believer, it is bad divinity to conclude that ye are not within the compass of the decree of election. Christ's preciousness to the believer is the foundation of our faith.

I shall not dwell long on this excellent and royal dignity of a Christian, only there is that one excellency, faith

keeps a soul in most constant communion with Christ; Eph. iii, i7, ‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.’ By the exercise of the grace of faith Christ becomes our husband, our householder, and indweller with us. It is a most sweet and desirable thing to have Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, and our souls dwelling with Christ by love; that is a sweet connection. Faith renders Christ more precious to a Christian than sense. This may be shown from faith’s estimation of Christ; it is built on his person. Sense looks to Christ’s feet and hands, and his outward parts, but faith looks to His person. Faith looks to what Christ was before the world began, or a cornerstone thereof was laid; sense alone looks to what Christ is at the present time. The grace of faith looks to the love that is in Christ’s heart: sense alone looks to the smiles of His face. The estimation of faith is more constant than the estimation of sense; when Christ withdraws, sense loses its opinion. When faith would have wisdom, it consults with Christ, whose name is Wonderful. Counsellor. Faith is as a sinew, that being cut, all our strength goes from us. Faith is an heroic grace; the crown of martyrdom is set upon the head of faith. A Christian that is under the excellency of this grace, is a most humble Christian.

By what law was boasting excluded? By the law of faith. Paul presseth this doctrine upon a Christian. Faith discovers to a Christian the excellency of God, and makes

him take up his dwelling in the dust. Faith makes a Christian to have two contrary motions, one to ascend, another to descend, so to speak; it keeps all the graces of the Spirit in motion. Faith is the messenger of the soul, and discovers what Christ is; who being discovered, faith cries out, "It is good for me to be here," and then love cries out, "Let us make a tabernacle." Faith likewise mortifies corruption. Faith has a sweet influence on the work of mortification in a Christian. When Christ is discovered to a soul, it will cast away its idols as a menstruous cloth, and will cry out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The soul is more where it loseth than where it liveth. Being justified by faith, we glory in tribulation. Faith holds out the crown on the right hand to a Christian. having this motto written on it, "He that persevereth to the end shall be saved." Moses was never at patience till he was at the top of the mount, where he did see the promised land. Faith makes out the promises to a Christian. Faith is a life-sanctifying grace. When faith goes abroad in the world, good works are the handmaids that accompany the queen. Faith has Rachel's eye and Leah's womb. Faith has a sweet influence on our fruitfulness to Christ; John xv, 5, "He that abides in me shall bring forth much fruit." See also 1 Pet. ii, 5. Faith is that spouse-like grace that marries Christ; and good works are the children which faith beareth. Faith is that superior grace, which, at the motion thereof, all the rest go. Faith is an intelligent grace; it is called the "mystery of godliness," Col. ii, 2. Faith raiseth the soul to the highest pitch of

reason. Faith is an heart-pacifying grace; peace is the daughter of faith, Faith is the dove that brings the olive branch of peace in its mouth. Faith is an empty hand that receives the precious alms out of Christ's merits, and it is the instrument, or the channel, through which the blessed streams of life flow to us from Him. Faith is an heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure heart. Faith is an heart-purifying grace, Acts xv, 9. it is a virgin grace of a pure and heavenly soil.

Now, for the use of the point - is it so that faith is such an excellent grace? O be pursuing after it. There is more guilt in the sin of unbelief, than in the sin of murder; Matt. xi, 24, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom," etc. Luke x, 13. There is no sin made mention of there, but the sin of unbelief. If once ye had that divine plant Faith ingrafted in your souls, it would have a kind of onmipotency. Unbelief passeth under the veil of humility, and so we embrace it, rather than decline it as a sin. Now, the effects of the grace of faith make Christ precious to a soul. It discovers to a sinner the extract [copy] of his pardon, and that he hath been loved from all eternity; "She loved much, because much was forgiven her." A Christian that believes shall see Christ as He is. Faith lets a Christian see the accomplishment of the promises. Faith is a sister grace; hope is patient, love is impatient. Faith and hope are two sisters, but they differ thus; hope looks at the excellency of the promise, faith at the certainty of it. Faith can suspend fruition, but love cannot. When

Christ and a Christian are trysted together, faith and love grow apace. The best way to improve your necessity, is to believe, although your faith be but in the swaddling-clothes or bands; be content to wait a while, till you have gotten such a vigorous faith as will carry you with full sails to heaven. We have the reversion (future possession) in heaven, when the lease of life is run out. A weak faith may be fruitful; the thief upon the cross had but a weak faith, yet how many precious clusters grew upon that vine? Luke xxiii, 43. Here was a young plant, but very fruitful. Faith is a grace that puts a commentary upon all the actings of Christ. When Christ seems to frown, faith will cry out, I know the thoughts of His heart are not war, but grace to me. Faith can prophesy at midnight. Let a Christian yield to the premises of unbelief, but deny its conclusions. This is bad logic, but it is Christian divinity.

Sirs, did ye never know what it was to use this medium for pardon, “Lord, pardon our iniquities, because they are great?” Christ strengthens love by the discoveries of Himself. Faith discovers the period of our afflictions. Love is written in illegible characters upon the cross; but if ye consult with faith, you may read it. Faith and love, they are pleasant in their lives, and in their death they are not divided. Faith and love are the jewels wherewith Christ’s bride is adorned. Love never ceaseth, 1 Cor. xiii, 8. In our sense, love is more excellent than faith. The spouse when she goes to heaven, shall put off her jewel

of faith, but shall never put off her jewel of love. In heaven the smoke of desire shall he ever bathing itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of glory. That which makes the higher house have such a smell is, the floor and windows are all strewed over with the leaves of the Rose of Sharon. What joy shall there be when Christ shall take us to His banqueting-house, and kiss us with the kisses of His mouth!

When we shall come to heaven, we shall not know which of our senses shall be most taken up.

Firstly: The eye. What joy to see there the orient brightness in the face of Christ; there you may see the lily and the rose mixed, white and ruddy, Cant. v. 10.

Secondly: The ear shall be filled with melody; what joy to the spouse to hear Christ's voice, to hear Him say, "My love, my dove, my undefiled!"

Thirdly: The smell shall be filled with sweet savour; what joy to smell that fragraney and perfume that comes from Christ! All His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; the sweet breath of His spirit blowing on thee, and giving forth His scent as the wine of Lebanon.

Fourthly: The taste shall be filled; O what joy is there to be drinking in the fountain of Christ, that is the water of life!

Fifthly: The touch shall be filled; the saints shall be ever in the embraces of Christ! "Behold my hands and my feet - handle me, and see," etc. Luke xxiv, 39. That will be our work in heaven, when we shall arrive betwixt these sweet arms that were once stretched out upon the cross; there shall be no such inhibition as that to Mary, "Touch me not." If Christ's sufferings are so full of joy, what are His embraces? What joy will there be at the saints' coronation, when they shall be eternally united to Christ Jesus! When we are in the glorious inheritance, what joy, what glory there in the chambers of His presence! If the streets of this inheritance are of pure gold, what are the furniture and hangings? What is the cabinet of jewels? What are all the rarities of the world, the cost of pearls, yea, what are all things to this place! What a rich place must this needs be, where God will lay out all this cost? This is a purchase worth the getting. What spring will that be, which will never dry up? I think I see the morning-star appear; it is break of day already; who would, for the indulging of a lust, forfeit so glorious an inheritance? Lay the whole world in the scales with it, it is lighter than vanity. There is the vine flourishing, there are the pomegranates budding, Cant. vi, 11.

While we are sitting at the table, Christ's spikenard will send forth his smell, Cant. i, 12, There is the bed of love, there are the curtains of Solomon; there is the mountain of spices, and streams from Lebanon; there are the cherubims, not to keep out, but to welcome into paradise;

there shall the saints be adorned as a bride with pearls of glory; there God will give us abundance of all that we can ask or think, Eph. iii, 20. Such is the excellency of that celestial paradise, that if the angels would take up their responsals to delineate it, they would stain and eclipse the glory of it. When thou wast sailing to hell, for we have both wind and tide to carry us thither, hath the north wind and south wind awakened thee? Have the gales of the Spirit blown upon thee, and turned thy course? Art thou sailing to a new port? Then I am speaking to thee all this while, this glorious inheritance shall be given to thee; but if thou art an old sinner, be assured Christ will never put the new wine of glory into old bottles. We shall add no more. Now, unto the King, eternal, immortal, and invisible, be everlasting praise. Amen.

THE BREVITY OF LIFE. . . A CALL TO IMPROVE IT

Psalm xxxix, 5 - Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

It is a great point of Christianity for a man to examine himself. Surely it is an unpleasant exercise to accomplish a diligent search in that duty, so as to study it in such a way that we find no cause for boasting in ourselves, but much reason for lying in sackcloth and ashes. O how suitable and how convenient were it for all men to be keeping correspondence and fellowship with Him, with God, who is all-sufficient and self-sufficient! And, among the many things that a Christian should know, he should know this main and advantageous thing, the brevity of his life, and of his appointed time upon the earth. O study to know this more.

David, in the former verse of this psalm, was praying and sending up his supplication unto God, to know the brevity and shortness of his life. "Lord (says he), make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am." And here, in these words, he receives a return and answer to that prayer, and it is, "Behold thou hast made my days as an handbreadth." We conceive this handbreadth is the breadth of one of our hands; it is one of the measures we carry about with us;

it is the breadth of four fingers, which relates to these four times of man's life, his infancy, his youth, his mid-age, and his old age; or it may relate to these four times, his morning, fore-noon, mid-day, and his evening, all of which but amounts to one day. Eccl. i, 4, "One generation cometh, and another passeth; but the earth abideth for ever." And from that, David draws to this conclusion, that "every man, in his best estate" (whether in high degree, or low degree) "is altogether vanity," and that every man is more in appearance, than in reality; and this he asserts, and he puts a note of assertion to it, "Selah," that he may let us see how great a concerning business this is to us, to know the brevity and shortness of our times.

And ye would take this first observation from the words, and it is from the scope, viz., that David falls a studying the brevity of his life upon the earth; and the observation is this, that the distinct knowledge of our time that we have upon the earth is a strong encouragement to us for the bearing of the cross and afflicting dispensations that we meet with, with much patience and submission unto God. We must walk with Him, as it were, one hour, and have tribulation ten days, Rev. 11, 10; Heb. xiii, 14, 15. 'For here we have no continuing city, but we look for one to come. By, him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.'

And there are these two reasons why the consideration

of the brevity of our life puts us to the patient bearing of the cross. And the

first reason is this, the consideration of the drawing near of our everlasting life and eternal happiness, when we shall remember that ere long we shall be admitted to sit down under the blessed shadow of the Tree of Life, where all that blessed company of holy angels are, and where all the redeemed of the Lord are, and shall be eternally. There we shall perfectly enjoy all manner of soul-comforting pleasures and satisfying delights. All delights shall be enjoyed there; certainly the hope of this will make the Christian sit down under his saddest afflictions and crosses, and bear them with exceeding great patience and soul-submission. He will comfort himself in his darkest night. O Christians, the day is coming, and the time is approaching, when all these fetters shall fall from your hands, and these chains of iniquity shall fall from your feet, and ye shall be set free and shall be bidden come and enjoy these soul-ravishing pleasures and delights that are above. There is this

second reason why the consideration of the brevity of our time is an help and encouragement to us to bear our crosses and afflictions with much patience. The distinct knowledge of the brevity of our time will encourage us to bear our crosses with patience, because a man that sees the shortness of his time, and the brevity of afflictions that he is now under, will look to that precious day when

his sun shall rise and shall never go down again, but shall evermore have a perpetual and everlasting day. And may not this encourage a Christian to bear his afflictions with much patience, seeing that he can look through them all to that blessed day, when he shall be afflicted no more, but shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and shall no more be under darkness at all, but shall dwell in light inaccessible? Then we would only say this unto you, be not impatient under your sad afflictions and cross dispensations; for believe it, and, O, if ye were also persuaded of it, the day is approaching, and at hand, when all your afflictions shall cease to be, and shall vanish and disappear. O what a day shall it be, when all these shadows shall be gone, and ye shall be admitted to see God as He is, face to face! When all your mourning and sorrowing for sin shall be no more heard; and instead of the voice of mourning, shall be heard the voice of joy and gladness. O Christians, prisoners of hope, and expectants of the crown, comfort yourselves under your saddest crosses and afflictions with the hope and expectation of the approaching and drawing near of that day, even of that blessed day, in which morning ye shall be far exalted above the reach of your unbelief, and all hypocrites shall be depressed low under the reach of their faith, and the natural man shall be depressed low beneath the reach of his presumptions. O, then let your desires be set upon, and longing for that day. O Christians, be persuaded of this, that though all your days should be spent in heaviness, and in the bitterness of your spirits, yet

there is a day coming that shall make up all our losses, and then there shall be a cup of everlasting joy and gladness presented to thee, and put in thy hand. And O, shall not that day be an excellent day! Certainly the joy of that day shall be unspeakable.

There is this second observation that ye would take notice of from the words, that there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while here, as the knowledge of the brevity of his Life. This is clear in David here, and it is likewise clear from Moses' practice, Psalm xc, 3, 6, "Thou turnest man to destruction," and what is he? "He is as the grass of the field, which in the morning flourisheth, and at even is cut down and withereth." It is likewise clear from Jacob's practice, Gen. xlvii, 9. But perhaps some will say, what need is there to press that so much? For who does not know that their days upon the earth are short? Yet I say, Oh, if the thoughts of it were deeply engraven on our hearts, as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, that they might rise with us in the morning, and lie down with us at night, and be continually with us; for, if we had the thoughts of the brevity of our time engraven on our hearts, no doubt, it would be a spur in our side, putting us to the working out of that work that is of our everlasting and soul-concernment.

But we shall shortly propose to you these advantages that come to a Christian by the carrying about with him the thoughts of the brevity of his life.

The first advantage is this, it would provoke and stir up the Christian to a heavenly-mindedness, minding those things that are above. It is clear, Heb. xiii, 14, 15, says the apostle, ‘We have here no continuing city’; and what is the effect that that wrought? “Therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, giving thanks to his name.” And certainly the consideration of the brevity of our life were good for this very same respect, if there were no other consideration to mind us of eternity; it were more than sufficient to prove that the thoughts of the brevity and shortness of our time were good. And, therefore, since it is so, we should be longing and setting our affections and desires on these things that are above, and to be setting our whole hearts upon that glorious and precious pearl of our crown that shines so bright; as in 1 Thess., iv., 17, “When we shall meet Christ in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” O long for that day, and let your hearts covet more these excellent things that are above in heaven.

There is this second advantage that comes to one by bearing about with him the thoughts of the brevity and shortness of his time, and it is this - it will cause exceeding much sobriety and moderation in his pursuit after the worldly pleasures and delights of this present life. This is clear from that command given, 1 Thess. v, 8, “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salva-

tion.” If the thoughts of the brevity of our life were engraven upon our hearts, why then should we vex ourselves with the torturing cares of this life, that does not at all profit us? O why do we weary ourselves in the fire, which is but vexation of spirit and surely vanity? O Christians, let now your moderation in the pursuit of the things in this world be made known to all men; for behold! the Lord is at hand, to take vengeance and revenge on the wicked, with furious rebukes of flaming fire, and eternal excommunication from the righteous Judge.

There is this third advantage that comes to a Christian by having the distinct thoughts and apprehensions of the brevity of his life; it provokes him to much seriousness and diligence in going about duties; it makes him to be diligent and watchful in his going towards that blessed rest that is prepared for all the redeemed of the Lord. It was the argument of our blessed Lord Jesus, John ix, 4, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.” Then, O Christians, while it is called today, stir up yourselves for the working out of the work of your salvation. We do not know how suddenly the shadows of that everlasting evening may be stretched out over us, and we receive that summons from God, to remove hence and be gone. And, oh, are ye not afraid lest ye be banished? Lest the night approach before your work be perfected? Yea, I am afraid that many shall have that great work of their soul’s

salvation to begin when death shall summon them to appear before God's terrible tribunal and judgment-seat. And, O be afraid, and stand in awe, lest the night be hard by and at hand. Then, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die," say the Epicures, who make use of this argument to stir up their delights after their lusts; but let us be watchful and diligent, for we know not but tomorrow we must die.

And we would give you this direction, be more in consideration of the things that are before you, than of these things that are behind already, and by your hand. Think more on what is before, than what is past, "and press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high-calling of God, in Christ Jesus,"

There is this fourth advantage that comes to one by the consideration of the brevity of his life; he comes to the knowledge of that state wherein man was once created. Surely he was created after a most glorious image, and noble pattern and copy, even according to the most blessed and glorious image of God; but man having a woeful and cursed design to be as God, and like to Him, fell from that blessed estate, and all his posterity in him, and he made us and himself subject to God's wrath and eternal indignation for evermore. But blessed be He eternally, that has found out that new and living way, how we may escape that curse that has lain upon all mankind for sin.

There is this fifth advantage that comes to the person that has the thoughts of the brevity of his life engraven upon his heart. It is a great help to mortify these three great idols that we are so much under the power of:

(1) It is an excellent help to mortify that great idol of faith.

(2) It will help you to mortify that idol of love that rules in you.

(3) It is a help to mortify the idol of fear. The idol of faith is, when we trust in anything more than in God; Psalm cxlvi, 3, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no stay," in whom there is no help. And the idol of love is, when we love anything more than God; Isa. ii, 22, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." And the idol of fear is, when we fear anything more than God; Isa. li, 12, "Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?"

Now the thoughts of the brevity of our life and appointed time would mortify these great idols.

There is this sixth advantage that attends one who has thoughts of the brevity of his time engraven upon his heart. He may win a holy admiration and divine astonishment at the condescending love of Jesus Christ; Job xiv, 1, "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and

full of trouble.” O what a wonder is it to see God delighting Himself in the dust of His feet, and making them the object of His love, who dwell in the dust! Surely this is a mystery which we cannot comprehend nor take up.

The seventh advantage that flows to a person from the bearing about with him the thoughts of the brevity of his life is this, that God makes use of this argument to provoke him to have compassion and mercy upon the person. Surely this is God’s way, and we must rather wonder at it, than inquire and debate why it is so. This is clear from Psalm lxxviii, 39, compared with, “But being full of compassion, he forgave their iniquities, and turned away his anger; for he remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”

There is this third observation that ye would take notice of from these words, and it is this, that the brevity and shortness of our days and appointed time are surely determined from God, so that we cannot at all go beyond our time that is appointed for us. This is clear, Job xiv, 14, compared with verse 16. “All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. For thou numberest my steps, dost thou not watch over my sin?” and this says, that the brevity of our time is a great advantage unto us; for who can charge their Maker with folly? For surely He does all things well, and to purpose. And though this dispensation be questioned now by us, yet believe it, the day is coming when we shall subscribe

this to them all “He has done all things well.” O long for that day, when that shall come to pass. Certainly there are now none at all before His throne but they desire to justify Him, and acknowledge that He has done all things well. And, O, that we could learn to be silent and acquiesce ourselves in the performance of all His dispensations. O that we could learn to put our mouths in the dust, whatsoever God doth to us; for we may be persuaded of this, “that all things work together for good, to them that love God,” and delight themselves in Him.

Secondly, the brevity and shortness of our life speaks the great love and matchless delight that God has to sinners. He is longing for the day when all the redeemed of the Lord shall be with Him, there to remain for ever and ever to enjoy all delights, and all manner of soul-pleasures. O when shall that day come, when we shall be brought out from this earthly tabernacle of clay, and shall enter our possessions in that blessed tabernacle not made with hands? O long for that day, And yet we should be submissive unto God’s dispensation and good pleasure, and we should not challenge Him for the brevity and shortness of our lifetime here. Many of us may say, that we have not received a short life-time from the Lord, but that we have made a short life unto ourselves; for it is said that, “wicked men shall not live half their days.” And certainly these may think their life and appointed time short, whose heaven and joy is ended when their life is ended. But believe it, those who have made use of their

life for this end and use, to entertain communion and fellowship with God, surely these shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, we shall desire to have our eyes failing with looking up, till that day shall come, when our blessed Lord Jesus shall come in the clouds. O remember the excellency of the exercise of that precious and blessed day, when we shall be exalted above all our infirmities, where there shall be no misbelief following us. And let the thoughts of that precious and blessed day comfort your hearts under all your afflictions, and wait with patience for your eternal redemption. Amen.

THE BELIEVER'S LOVE TO AN UNSEEN CHRIST

I Peter i. 5 - Who having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Amongst all the debates and controversies in these days, this is without all debate and controversy, that godliness is a great mystery; and we conceive that it were your advantage to take up a mystery in it. We think the truths of the gospel are not only mysteries to our judgments, but much more mysteries to our practices. We conceive they are so elevated above sense and reason, that these depths of the gospel are not easily taken up. A natural man, who, in things human, hath his knowledge and understanding enlarged as the sand by the sea-shore, who hath attained unto an eminent pitch of knowledge of things natural and moral, above even those that are endued with a more divine light in things that are more sublime in their nature and useful in their knowledge; yet bring him to search out the mysterious truths in the gospel, and there he is as an infant of days, and without understanding in these things, they being spiritually discerned.

O what a mystery it is, for flesh and blood to love him whom they never saw. The first words of our text are a riddle which we cannot take up, to love an invisible object, but he that is spiritually enlightened, to embrace that

precious object Jesus Christ, by these two glorious arms, faith and love, can easily unfold it. Though He be now entered into the holiest of all, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and exalted out of our sight; yet faith doth travail above the clouds, to embrace and encircle that invisible object, whose name is Immanuel.

There are two great riddles and mysteries in the words which we have read, which, though a natural man had seven days to unfold them, he should be as wise at the close of these seven days, as he was at the beginning, these mysteries being above his sense and experience. O what a mystery is this, for a natural man to see Christians exercising themselves in the grace of love, about Him whom they never saw, and to be beholding Him whose bodily face they never did behold! This holds forth, no doubt, that divine and sublime acting of a Christian soul that is elevated above sense, and all outward appearance. that glorious and excellent piece the soul of man, which is of a divine offspring, deriving its generation from the Ancient of Days and that which must return unto him again, God being the first immediate cause, and last immediate end of this noble piece of the creation. What subtil abstraction and divine speculation will it have upon every subject? Yea more, it will be raised up by an attractive virtue of an eminent object, to exercise eminent acts of love and joy, as here we may see in the words. O that we were persuaded to be more in the exercise of that first and great commandment, "To love the

Lord your God with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your heart, and with all your mind."

Did you ever see him? It were impossible for you but to love Him, if once ye had beheld him: but, however, though ye see Him not, yet love him; it is no blind bargain to take Christ upon implicit faith. O when had ye such a glorious and excellent discovery of that noble Plant of Renown, that ye were content to take Him alone, tho He should bring none of these great and comprehensive donations that He used to give unto his own? If such a supposition had been possible, ye would have condescended rather to be in hell with Christ, than to be in heaven without Him, as one piously once spake. O but want of the exercise of the grace of love is a great want. Other sins have slain their thousands; but, no doubt, this sin hath slain its ten thousands. O, when shall Christ have dominion, and sit as king in the temple of our hearts. commanding the powers and faculties of our souls, saying to one, Go and it goeth; and to another, Do this, and it doeth it. What conceive ye could be the reason that moved Christians, in primitive times, so closely to adhere to the owning of a crucified Christ, tho not seen, that all torments imaginable could not break these precious cords of love and faith? They were twist'd about by an unseen Christ; "They loved not their lives unto the death - the bonds of their afflictions could not break these precious bonds of love. And no doubt they received that precious reward, though their souls went up in the flame of

that sacrifice, which they offered up to God, by giving their bodies to be burnt; and they went to heaven in a fiery chariot, and are now resting above the reach and noise of all these toils and miseries wherewith we are now encompassed. They have spent more than a thousand years in that blessed contemplation of Him whom they did not see while they were here below, and yet they love him; but now they both see him and love him.

We shall come and speak a little more particularly to the words. You have in them the apostle Peter setting forth the excellency of these two cardinal graces, from the object about which they were exercised which was Christ not seen; that in wise and glorious Majesty, "Whom having not seen, yet we love": where there is a sweet emphasis in that word yet, that notwithstanding the love was at such a disadvantage, as not to see Him, yet love overcame it; and the object of faith likewise is Christ not seen, in "whom, tho ye see him not, yet believe."

He doth commend these two graces from that precious fruit and effect which they had accompanying them, that it made the Christian "to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," that is, with joy that could not be made language of; the most divine orator could not tell what this joy was. As likewise, it is a "joy full of glory", which we do conceive doth point at the constancy of that joy that floweth to a Christian, from the exercise of faith and love about this invisible object; and where these two are

joined and knit together, unspeakable joy and permanent delight, what do they lack? These are those two sweet flowers that flow and spring out from the root of faith and love, permanent joy and unspeakable delight; and these shall remain eternally green throughout all the ages of long eternity.

And we shall only say this by the way, that if the joy of a Christian, while he is here below, be a joy unspeakable and full of glory, what must that joy be that saints that are now made perfect have, in the immediate contemplation of Jesus Christ? If the love of Christ not seen did produce such precious effects, how much more now when they are admitted to the immediate beholding of Him, shall they rejoice? And if ye would ask the name of that joy that the souls of just men now made perfect have with God, we would give it in no term so suitable as this, it is a joy without a name, it is a nameless joy; not because it is not, but because it is what it is. And we are persuaded that if ye had liberty granted unto you to possess or propose this question to any who are now above, what is now your joy that ye have in Christ now seen? I believe they would give you no other answer but that which is in 1 Cor. ii, 9, where the apostle Paul, by an excellent gradation, doth hold forth the excellency of that blessed and glorious estate of life that the saints have while they are above, when he says, The eye, that most comprehensive sense, that can take up many various and different objects, and can see such things at a distance;

yet it cannot take up nor behold the invisible glory of that estate of life: yea more, the ear, that is a more comprehensive sense than the eye, cannot take up the blessedness of that estate; for the "ear (says the apostle) hath not heard"; yea, the mind of man, which is more comprehensive than the eye or the ear, and can take up many more things than both the eye and the ear, which can in one moment of time run through all the four cardinal points of heaven, west, east, north and south; "yet it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive", and understand that blessed and glorious estate of life. Sense and fruition shall best resolve that question, and we must delay the answer of it till we shall have the enjoyment of it; but ye may know what these upper springs must be, since the lower springs are such. If a Christian doth rejoice here below "with joy unspeakable and full of glory", O how shall they rejoice in him. when all these vails that are betwixt Christ and them shall be rent from the top to the bottom?

We shall not stand long in debating this, why love here doth get the precedency and first place of faith. We think indeed faith is first in order to the begetting of love in the heart, and that which goeth forth and discovereth the invisible things of God; and love sits down and solaces itself in the discoveries of faith. Faith cries forth, it is good for us to be here, and love cries forth, let us make tabernacles here; but we shall not speak upon the priorities of the graces of the Spirit. Sure we are, the Spirit of grace

doth keep a divine and wise method, in putting one line of scripture before another, though oft times we be ignorant of the causes of it; neither shall we stand long in speaking of this unto you, that divine and pleasant confession that is betwixt these two graces, love and faith, how each one of these doth help another in their exercise. We think the grace of faith does only help the grace of love in its exercise, in this respect, that it doth discover unto love, objects for it to exercise itself about. Faith is that discerning and comprehensive grace of the Christian, which taketh up most of God; it discovers the invisible things of God unto the Christian; and love is then provoked to exercise by the large and spiritual discoveries of faith.

Faith doth likewise help love in this, that when we meet with some sad and anxious dispensation, then our love begins to call in question, and debate the reality of His good-will, not knowing how to reconcile these two together, His good-will and His dispensations. I say, faith there doth eminently help love. Faith can read the thoughts of His heart and can behold His countenance under a vail, that though He seems to frown, yet He loveth. We confess, these characters, by which love is engraven upon a sad and anxious dispensation, are not easily read: it is only faith that can read them.

Secondly. Faith doth likewise help love in this, that it doth discover unto the Christian the accomplishment of

the most Precious and excellent promises that are given unto it, which doth provoke the Christian eminently to love Him, who hath given unto them such precious and excellent promises, by which we are made partakers of His divine nature. I conceive, if once Christians could attain to such a length, as to behold the accomplishment of all these promises that are given to it in scripture, they could not be but constrained to have their spirits breathing after Him. O what a divine necessity should that impose upon our spirits to love Him, who hath thus loved us?

Thirdly. Faith doth likewise help love in this respect, that it goes to Jesus Christ, upon whom our strength is laid, and does draw strength and furniture from Him, for the exercising of all the graces of the Spirit. And, we conceive, that love doth help faith in some respect; for the apostle Paul, Gal. v. 6, says, "Faith worketh by love": yea, it is impossible for the Christian to be in the divine exercise of faith, and not to be in the exercise of love. When love is in exercise, then faith doth increase with the increase of God. I confess, the languishing of the grace of love, maketh faith to groan within us, with the groanings of a deadly wounded man: then keep love in exercise, and ye shall keep faith also in exercise; and more we may say, keep faith in exercise, and ye shall likewise keep the grace of love in exercise.

Now that which we intended to speak upon at this time

to you is, upon the first ground and consideration, from which the apostle Peter doth commend these two graces, which is this:- That they act and exercise themselves about an invisible object, a Christ not seen. And, we conceive, this expression, "Whom having not seen, ye love," doth (not only) hold forth that they did exercise the grace of love, notwithstanding the want of His bodily presence, which, we conceive, is the plain and obvious meaning of this place. We confess the eye is the serious messenger of the mind, as likewise it hath very great influence upon the affections. And herein their love was excellent, that notwithstanding the want of His bodily presence, yet they did love Him; though they had not known Christ, and Him crucified, according to the flesh, yet their souls were bound to this spiritual object by a three-fold cord, which is not easily broken. This doth likewise hold out that they did not, in their exercise of love, seek for an eminent and sensible discovery of the divine power of Christ, in some miracle and extraordinary thing; their love was more modest and sober than to seek a sign and miracle to maintain it: they would clasp about an unseen Christ, notwithstanding the want of these discoveries.

We think likewise it holds out this. That they did exercise love about Christ unseen, even in the sensible arid gracious declarations of His presence and favour towards them; that though He did sometimes turn about the face of His throne, and veil Himself with a cloud, and so was not seen in this respect, yet they did love Him. It is, no

doubt, the eminent commendation of a Christian that, let Christ alter His dispensations as He will towards them, they will never alter in the exercise of love: let Him frown, yet be persuaded to love. This was the exercise of the spouse, Song iii, where under all her anxious disappointments that she meets with in her pursuit after Christ, yet four times she gives Him that glorious style, and loving epithet, "Him whom my soul loveth." A Christian hath no will to injure the noble object of His love, even so much as to call in question the reality of His love, because of His dispensations. This, we doubt not, is an eminent act of love, to love an over-clouded Christ, when wrath seemeth to look out at His eyes, and when He hath put on a change of apparel, coming with dyed garments of blood towards you.

And we think, lastly, this phrase, "Whom having not seen, ye love," holds forth this:- That Christ, in all our enjoyments we have of Him while we are here below, on this side of time, we may engrave that inscription upon them, This is not Christ seen, but Christ looking through at the lattice. And in this respect, we do but enjoy an unseen Christ, in respect of that complete and immediate fruition of Him, which those that are begotten unto a lively hope shall once have, in the immediate contemplation of Him, O what a sight shall that be, when your eyes shall be admitted to behold the King in His beauty! I confess, it is impossible to determine what joy a Christian

shall have in that day, when he shall receive the first immediate sight of God. In a manner, all your enjoyments that formerly you have had, shall then appear as nothing to the soul; your soul shall be wrapt up in a holy admiration of such an enjoyment. O blessed are those eternally who are living in the lively expectation and hope of such a day: then He whom ye see not here, yet afterward ye shall see Him.

We shall speak to some considerations that do commend the exercise of the grace of love about Christ not seen, and this invisible object. I am afraid that we are a barbarian to the most part of you, and speaking in an unknown tongue, when we speak of the exercise of love about Christ not seen, and this invisible object.

The first consideration by which we commend the grace of love acting about this object is this :- That act of the Christian is most permanent and durable. If your love to Jesus Christ be only when you see Him, certainly your love cannot long endure; and, I confess, it doth not deserve much thanks, such love as that, who would not love Him unless they do behold Him. Christ, who was the head, did remove from the members, He knowing how prone we were to idolize His bodily presence; therefore He saith, John xvi, 7, "It is expedient for you that I go away." He went up, thinking it was best to remove, and not to let us have the enjoyment of His bodily presence, till that blessed day shall be, which we desire to believe

is not far off, when we shall have the enjoyment of His bodily presence, and shall not be in hazard to idolize Him; though we confess Christ (so to speak) is the most suitable and divine idol for a Christian soul to have. But, however, that love is most divine and pure that hath its rise not from outward sense and appearance; it is the soul (as it were) closing both door and window, and retiring into the inner-room of divine contemplation and solacing itself with the sweet and desirable thoughts of Christ not seen; it is the soul of a Christian in a composed and divine frame, studying to have his love taking fire, in beholding Him who is far off, that he may meditate upon Him till he love, and love till he wonder, and wonder till he rejoice.

There is a second consideration by which, we think, the grace of love acting itself as about an invisible object, and Christ not seen is made commendable and eminent, and it is this. Love that is thus exercised, is most contrary to our inclination and humour. It is the natural disposition of all to love sense and sensible things, to have our eyes and our hands teaching us; and, no doubt, it must be an eminently attractive virtue of an invisible object, to make this impetuous current of our natural inclinations to turn back, and to provoke us to exercise love about that which we have not seen. We think Satan knew well what a prone desire men have to sense and sensible things, who hath brought down those things; therefore his precepts about the worshipping of idols and graven images, have

been so well taken off his hand. We think the way of our worshipping God by sensible types and signs, and figures under the law, had more near affiance and likeness to our nature, than that pure and spiritual way of the gospel, and of loving Jesus Christ ,now in the fulness of time. It is one of the most eminent contradictions of our natural inclinations and humour, to love an invisible object, and Christ yet not seen.

The third consideration that does commend the grace of love acting itself about this invisible object is this, it is a love that is most pure and divine. We think our love that hath its rise from outward sense and appearance hath most mud and dreg at the bottom of it. It was, no doubt, a blessed dispensation to Him; but herein is the eminency of the grace of love much manifested, to love Christ when He is under a vail, or when He is not seen. it is certain, that we cannot long persist in the exercise of love, if our love do flow and ebb, according as His dispensations do. O, to be kissing and loving the veil, or an absent Christ, when we are not admitted to behold His face! That our souls might be always breathing after an immediate conjunction and divine union betwixt our souls and Him. I think that which we speak in schools is eminently verified of a Christian, 'the soul of a Christian is more where it loves than where it lives'. We think the soul is acting in its proper element and sphere when it is breathing out love upon Jesus Christ not seen, or this invisible object. O but this is a mystery to many of us. Our

love is full of jealousies when His dispensations do not suit our humour. I think if Christ were as changeable as we are in the exercise of love, that contract of marriage that is between Him and us should soon be rent! But, O, blessed are changeable creatures in this, that they have to do with an unchangeable Christ, whose love doth admit of no variableness, nor shadow of change! O! who could ever engrave that imputation upon that living and gracious Person, that He changed? He keeps His grip on us, when we lose our grip of Him.

There is a fourth consideration by which we do commend the grace of love acting itself upon an invisible object, Christ not seen, and it is this. It is a love that does not rise upon any outward motive, or extrinsical consideration; it is a love rising from the exercise of a gracious frame of spirit, as the result of that union betwixt the head and the members: it would have Him, although, as long as it is within time, it never did behold Him. A Christian that is thus in the exercise of love, if he have the promise of the eternal enjoyment of Him, it will suspend all these things, if it seem so fit, (I mean all those enjoyments) till it be exalted above the reach of all diversion and interruption of that blessed fellowship. It will grant, (so to speak), an indulgence to our blessed Lord Jesus to be arbitrary in the dispensation of love, if so be that once he be persuaded that his Beloved is his, and that he is His. Ye know that the members ought to love the head; it is a conjugal motion and it is most suitable and

proper. Now love that hath its rise from this union, and not from an extrinsical consideration, no doubt, it is most eminent and excellent.

There is a fifth consideration which may commend the grace of love acting itself about that invisible object, Christ not seen, and it is this. The grace of love can never be brought to perfection, till once we be brought to this, to love Christ yet not seen, this invisible object. I think that which makes love to be under such a woeful and remarkable decay, even in the most serious and exercised Christians, is this, that when Christ is veiled, and they do not behold Him, their love begins to decay and languish. Believe it, if your love be not exercised when He is away and absent from you, as well as when He is present, and condescendeth to manifest Himself unto you, it is certain your love can never increase with the increase of God.

There is this last consideration that we would propose unto you, which may commend the grace of love to an invisible object, Christ not seen, and it is this. It is that love which maketh the Christian to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. O this is a paradox, and mystery unto many of the Christians of this generation, that the loving of Christ not seen should make them thus rejoice, even with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If the words of our text had run thus, "Whom seeing ye love," and then, "Rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory", no doubt ye might then have closed with it. Now

certainly here is a mystery, that the exercise of the grace of love on Christ not seen, should make the Christian thus exceedingly to rejoice; and it is certain, that when a Christian wins to exercise love under absence with Christ, that love is most eminent and most complete. It is impossible to determine what strange and most inexpressible actings of the grace of love a Christian doth receive sometimes, when he is exercising this grace and duty of love in Christ not seen, and this invisible object.

Now we shall only from this press this upon you, that ye may once be persuaded to confine your love and all your desires upon Him. O Christians, love Him, though He be in a far country; for it is not long before ye shall see Him. That is the sweet period and result of the sweet exercise of the grace of love about that invisible object, Christ not seen; for ye may comfort yourselves in this, that shortly, ere it be long, it shall be your eternal exercise about the throne, ever to love Christ seen, and shall also enjoy Christ seen; and may not that provoke you, while ye are here, even to love that invisible object and unseen Christ? O let your love always be travelling above in that higher land, and embracing Him whom (we conceive) ought to be the object of all your loves. O are there not many here among us who never knew what it was to exercise love upon this precious object, Jesus Christ? O be persuaded of it, that the day is coming and is not far off, when He, even He whom ye would not love, shall tear you in pieces, when there shall be none to deliver you

out of His hands; when ye shall see Him coming, with ten thousands of His saints, to take revenge upon those who would not obey the voice of His gospel. Believe it, ye shall then, with all the families of the earth, mourn for Him whom ye have pierced, and make bitter lamentation, as one for their only son. This day we do, as the ambassadors and messengers of Christ, once intreat you to love this blessed Object; and if ye deny this desire and command of His to you, it shall once be the matter of your eternal anxiety and torment, that ye were invited to love Him, but ye would not. I say, the day is approaching and drawing near, when ye would be content to love Him, but then He will not be loved by you; and no doubt it is a suitable retaliation from that person, that if ye will not love Him while ye are here below, when ye would love Him elsewhere, He will deny your desire unto you.

We shall likewise speak a word to the commendation of this grace of faith, upon this same account. That it is exercised about Christ not seen, and that invisible object. We think the grace of love and the grace of faith are indeed different in their habits, but are hardly distinguished in their exercise. All the graces of the Spirit are so inseparable and interwoven one with another, that when one grace acteth, all the other graces seem to move; they are like unto these wheels in a clock, which, at the motion of the upper-wheel, all the lower wheels seem to move; and certainly, it doth most clearly hold in the exercise of these two graces, faith and love, they are inseparable twins.

These graces are pleasant in their lives, and in their death they are not divided.

Now the apostle doth here point out faith, not only in its nature and properties, but even in its object. In its nature, faith is here pointed forth, that it doth discover these invisible things of God, and it is the evidence of things not seen, as likewise the substance, or rather the subsistence of things hoped for; faith giveth a life and being to things before they be, and brings them near to the Christian's eye, even while they are far off. O Christians, be much in the exercise of the grace of faith, even about things that are not seen; for believe it, ere long, faith shall die and vanish out into the exercise of the grace of love, and love shall be your inseparable companion in heaven, for there ye shall both love and be loved eternally, even without all intermission.

Now the object of love is here set down and that is, even Christ not seen, or bodily enjoyed: and we shall shortly point at some things by which the grace of faith may be kept in exercise, when ye meet with such a dispensation as this, to have Christ not seen unto you, and when He is vailing Himself from your eyes, and is, as it were, casting at you.

The first thing that we would give as a help to a Christian to keep his faith in exercise, and to exercise it in this estate, is this, look upon all these disadvantages and impediments that ye have in the exercise of the grace of

your faith, as opportunities and occasions given unto you to glorify God; and that will help to keep your faith in exercise. When faith hath the most impediments in the way, then there is the greatest occasion given for us to glorify Him, by being strong in the faith: and, to say it by the way, faith is never in its native exercise, till sense and reason contradict the accomplishment of the promises. Faith then is put to be deeply exercised and is in its native place; and know this, that the most adventurous acts of faith have had the most sweet and precious out-gates. Now, I say, though all his dispensations that we meet with, should be impediments and disadvantages to your sense and uptakings, for you to exercise the grace of faith, yet do not, because of these impediments and seeming disadvantages, desist from the exercise of these graces. I think a Christian hath then a most spiritual view of all these impediments and obstructions that are laid in the way, in order to the exercising of the grace of faith, when he looketh upon these impediments and obstructions as occasions given unto him, whereby he may glorify God.

There is this second consideration, or second help, which we would give to one that would exercise the grace of faith in such a case, and under such a dispensation, when Christ is veiled and is hid from your eyes, and it is this :—to look upon all these difficulties and improbabilities, that are in the way of the accomplishment of any promise, as commands given unto you to exercise faith. Look

upon all your difficulties, whatsoever, as so many voices, proclaiming aloud this duty unto you :-Believe in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent into the world. This was the practice and divinity of this holy man David, in Psalm Lvi, 3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." He thought no time so suitable for the exercising of the grace of hope as then, when he was encompassed with difficulties; and we think it altogether impossible for a Christian to exercise the grace of faith upon Christ not seen, except he look upon all these improbabilities and difficulties that lie in his way for the exercising of his faith, as exhortations and commands given unto him to believe, and adhere more strongly unto God.

There is this third consideration, or help, for a Christian to exercise the grace of faith upon Jesus Christ absent and not seen, that invisible object, and it is this :-Be much in the consideration of the unalterableness and unchangeableness of God; that He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever; that though He may alter His dispensations, yet ye may be persuaded of it, that He cannot alter His love toward you; for as He is, so is His love; and He is unchangeable, therefore His love must be unchangeable also, even according as He is in Himself.

Now, we shall shut up our discourse at this time with this, desiring that those precious and excellent mysteries, which, no doubt, are hid from the eyes of many of this

generation, to exercise those two spiritual and noble graces, faith and love, about an unseen and invisible object, that ye may once be prevailed with to set about that blessed exercise. We shall speak nothing to the encouragements that are proposed to these that set about this blessed and divine exercise; only I say, they do "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." O Christians, would ye know the most fit and compendious way for one to obtain delight and perfect satisfaction? Then be much in the exercise of these two excellent graces, faith and love. O but the grace of faith will furnish much matter of joy and consolation unto the Christian, when all things that are here below seem to be threatening ruin and destruction, when the foundations of the world are out of course, and when all things seem to be over turning; surely I would give the Christian no better counsel or advice than this, by the grace of faith and love, be settling yourselves even upon this invisible object not seen.

Certainly it is a great mystery to the men of the world, to see Christians rejoicing in the midst of all their straits and anxieties, to see them always flourishing and green under the saddest and most crushing dispensations that they meet with. But here, no doubt, is the Christian's life. He who is planted by that living fountain and well of life, shall be a branch that shall spring over the wall. I confess, if a Christian complain of the want of joy and delight in God, ye may reduce it to this cause, want of the exercise of the grace of faith in Jesus Christ not seen, this

invisible object. Believe it, ye may have your treasure kept safe, when all other things may be robbed and taken from you. I think that which once a philosopher spake, when the city wherein he dwelt was robbed and spoiled, being asked that question, if he had lost anything, answered thus, "That all that he had, he carried about with him,"

I think a Christian may keep all his treasures within him, and may be free from the robbery and spoil of the men of the world. This is a treasure which does not admit of any sequestration, neither can it at all be exposed unto theft. O make it your own by the grace of faith and delight yourselves in Christ as your own in love. Let love rejoice in Christ appropriate unto you. I shall say no more, but only this. We need not commend Christ to those that know him, but we are certain that all that we can speak to the commendation of Him is infinitely below that which He is. Therefore, O come and see this precious invisible object, Jesus Christ, and it will best resolve this question concerning His excellency. The angels and the souls of just men made perfect did never behold such an one. His countenance is like Lebanon, and excellent as the cedars. Now to Him who is love itself, and who only must persuade us to love Him, even to this precious object, we desire to give praise. Amen.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN S DEVICES

2 Cor. ii. 11—Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Who can comprehend or take up the way of this deceiver, whose way is more subtle than the way of an eagle in the air, than the way of a serpent on a rock, or than the way of a ship in the midst of the sea?

There are these two things we would mainly press upon you to know. First, the subtle devices and stratagems of the devil, by which he catches immortal souls. And there is that, secondly, that we would desire you to know, and that is, these precious deceits, these divine stratagems of Jesus Christ, by which He studies to catch immortal souls; according to that word, Hosea ii, 14, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness;" or, as the word may be rendered, I will deceive her. Christ hath a divine deceit, a precious guile, by which He studies to gain that excellent thing, the soul of man; He knows what key can best open our hearts. He that hath the keys of the house of David, knows what arguments will be most effectual to persuade us to embrace Him; and Christ knows what is the most suitable time to propose His divine deceit to catch our immortal souls.

And I would only say this one thing to persuade you to be caught by Him who hath been these six thousand years a fisher of men, and it is this, would you have satisfaction of all your senses? Then come and embrace Christ. And would ye have satisfaction to all your desires?- then embrace Christ. And would ye have eternal blessedness?- then come and embrace Christ. You shall have satisfaction to all your senses. Will not the sense of sight be satisfied, when ye embrace Him? O what a sight will it be to behold Him, whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars? And what a sight, suppose ye it will be, to behold Him whose face is as the sun when it shines in its strength? And to behold Him that is the light of the higher house, and is, and shall be, the eternal admiration of angels? Would you have satisfaction unto your sense of hearing? Then come and embrace this precious object, Christ. O what a life shall it be to hear His voice, and to hearken to these pleasant words that He shall speak!

If Christ never spake a word but that one, it might satisfy your sense of hearing, Song ii, 10, 11 and 12, "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'Is not that a pleasant song to satisfy your sense of hearing? - And would ye have sat-

isfaction to your sense of smelling? Then come and embrace Christ. o what a scent doth He cast, who is perfumed with all the powders of the merchant? What a scent doth He cast, who is the beautiful rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys? What a scent doth He cast, whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces? - And, would ye have satisfaction to your sense of taste? Then come and embrace precious Christ, and be caught with his deceits. O how much shall the sense of taste be satisfied, when ye shall be admitted to eat of these pleasant apples that grow upon the tree of life, and shall be satisfied with flagons, and taken into His banqueting house!

There is a great difference between the apples that first Eve hid eat, and these precious apples that grow upon the tree of life. The eating of these apples shall indeed make you as gods; ye shall be made partakers of a divine nature. - And would ye have satisfaction unto your sense of touching? Then come and embrace Christ. O what a life shall it be, eternally to enfold that precious object, Jesus Christ? What a life shall it be, to hold Him as a bundle of myrrh, all night to lie between our breasts? I would only say this, O expectants of heaven, comfort yourselves in this; there is no such inhibition served upon Mary in heaven, as that, 'Touch me not' That inhibition is now sweetly reduced. And would ye know her exercise? She is now enfolding and kissing Him that was the object of her desires.

2. Would ye have satisfaction to your desires? Then, come and embrace Christ. There shall be no end of your desiring, when once ye fix your desires upon Him that hath no end. Let Christ be the object of your love, let Christ be the object of your faith, let Christ be the object of your desires, and let Christ be the object of your delight.

3. Would ye have eternal blessedness? Then let Christ deceive you. O blessed are these eternally, whom Christ hath caught by guile, and hath taken into the bond of the covenant. I would only ask these three questions.

1st, Were ye never put to bless God for giving you wisdom to make choice of Christ? Were ye never put to bless Him forthis, that He did so wisely direct you, as to make choice of such a One? This was the practice of David, in that remarkable place, Psalm xvi, 6, 7. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel." He there sits down and magnifies the Lord that had directed him to this choice. There is this,

2ndly, that I would ask you, and it is this: Will ye rather believe the promises of him that is a liar from the beginning, than believe the promises of Him that is the faithful witness and the Amen? There is this,

3rdly, that I would ask of you, and it is this: Do ye put a higher account upon fellowship with the devil and his

angels, than upon fellowship with Jesus Christ, and the spirits of just men made perfect? I would seriously desire you once to consider Him, and then ye shall he forced to become His captive. There is this that I would say of Christ; there was never anyone that ever saw Him in His beauty, that ever turned his enemy. The first sight that ever persecuting Saul got of Christ, he said, 'Here am I, what wilt thou have me to do?' We have told you, that in the words was contained a threefold character of a complete Christian, of a Christian that hath gone on to a great length in godliness.

Firstly, the first character of a complete Christian from the words was, that he is not ignorant of the devices of the devil. He knows his stratagems, and from thence we proposed seven things to consider.

The first was the general devices of the devil by which he catches immortal souls, and studies to assault everyone; and of this we have spoken.

Secondly, we proposed to speak a little to these devices of the devil by which he keeps men in nature; and we have spoken unto these devices by which he keeps them that are more grossly profane in nature- There is this,

Thirdly, which we arc to speak unto, and it is this; these devices by which he assaults them that are under the exercise of the law before their closing with Christ. And we conceive there are these devices by which he assaults

such.

1st. There is this **FIRST DEVICE** of the devil, by which he assaults a Christian under the exercise of the law-, and under the terrors of God, and it is this; there are three things he makes them to misinterpret. He makes such a Christian to misinterpret sermons, to misinterpret providence, and to misinterpret scripture. That is the first device of the devil by which he studies to catch, and assault them that are under the exercise of the law. As for the misinterpreting of sermons, we would speak a little unto these things.

1. Consider this, how a Christian may know whether a word born in upon him, be from the Spirit of the Lord, or from the spirit of delusion. And, we conceive, there are these seven marks by which ye may know when a word is born in by the Spirit of the Lord.

(1) The word that seals a Christian's exercise, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord, and not from the spirit of delusion. As for instance, when a Christian, under the exercise of security, does meet with a word that doth awaken him, that is from the Spirit of the Lord. This is clear, 2 Sam. xii, 7, where the words that are spoken to David by Nathan, were from the spirit of the Lord, because they were blessed unto that end, to awaken David from his security. And that word, Matth. xxv, 6, where that voice that was raised at midnight, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh,' is from the Lord, because it was effectual

to raise them from their security. As likewise, ye may take this instance of it; a Christian, when he is under the exercise of unbelief, and questioning his interest, does meet with a word that strengthens his faith and confidence, that word is from the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion.

(2) Ye may know it by this, the words that are born in upon you from the Spirit of the Lord, have a more precious lustre and excellency than the words that are born in upon you from the spirit of delusion. And there are three things that point out the lustre of a word that is born in from the Spirit of the Lord,

[1] This points it out, and that is, it is a seasonable word; it is spoken in season. As for instance, when a Christian is like to give over his hope, and meets with a word that will strengthen faith: and Christ's words have that property, Isa. L.4. He hath 'the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to him that is weary,' and all His words are fitly spoken, and are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

[2] That which points out their lustre, is this, the words that are spoken unto you by Christ, are spoken with authority; so that ye cannot resist the power from whence they are spoken. This is clear from the words of Christ, Matth. vii, 29, He 'taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.'

[3] There is this also which makes out the lustre of the words of Christ, born in upon you, and it is this; these words do exceedingly affect your hearts, there is much tenderness and love that accompanies a word from Christ to your soul, Luke xxiv, 32, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?' The talking of Christ with them made their souls to burn within them. The words that are from a spirit of delusion, have not this tenderness.

(3) Ye may know when a word is born in upon you from the Spirit of the Lord by this; the word that is born in upon you from God's Spirit, increases your delight in duty. This is clear from that sermon that is preached by Haggai, Hag. i, 4. It is an evidence these words were from the Lord, because it put the people to a more serious building of the temple. So I would in short say this; that word that puts you from the exercise of duty, or makes you to lose delight in the exercise of duty, that word is from a spirit of delusion.

(4) Ye may know it by this; the word that discovers to a Christian both his sinfulness and his duty, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion. This is clear, Acts ii, 37. The words that were spoken by Peter were from the Lord because they had these two effects: the discovery of sin which is holden forth in that word, 'They were pricked in their heart.' Likewise the discovery of duty, they cry forth, 'Men and brethren what

shall we do?'And I would only say these two things from this:

[1] Satan may discover unto you your sin, and bear it strongly upon you, but he will never bear in a word upon you that will discover unto you your duty. So that word that hath these two best attendants, the discovery of sin, and the discovery of duty, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord.

[2] I would say this from it, question that word to be from a spirit of delusion that discovers your sin unto you, and withal causes you to give over hope.

(5) Ye may know it by this, from the scope and end of these words. The words that are born in upon you from the spirit of delusion, the end of them is surely sin; but the words that are born in upon you that are from the Spirit of the Lord, the end of them is surely duty. As for instance, the devil will bear in promises upon a presumptuous sinner, amid he will bear in threatenings upon a discouraged Christian, and the end of both of these is sin. But the end of Christ's speaking unto a soul, is one of these two: He will bear in promises upon a discouraged sinner, that his hands may be strengthened, and not hang down; and He will bear in threatenings upon a presumptuous sinner, that so he may see his state.

(6) Ye may know it by this; the word that removes a Christian's confusions and darkness, that word is from

the Spirit of the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion. As for instance, when a Christian is under debates concerning his interest, or concerning such a truth of the gospel, and meets with a word in a sermon that will clear that truth unto him, and withal affect the heart with the clearing of it, that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord. But, more particularly, if one were questioning concerning the nature of original sin, and had darkness and confusion about that sin and meets with a word in a sermon that would clear the nature of that sin; that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord. Likewise in this, when a Christian is under darkness and confusion, concerning the nature of the free grace of Christ, and meets with a word in a sermon that would clear the nature of the freedom of his love, and withal makes his heart to burn within him; that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord.

(7) We shall only add this, by which ye may know to distinguish between words born in upon you by the Spirit of the Lord, and words born in upon you by the spirit of delusion, and it is this; the words that are born in upon you by the Spirit of the Lord, they have the more constant impression upon your spirits, than these words that are born in upon you by a spirit of delusion.

2, Now the second thing we would speak to upon the misinterpreting of sermons is, to point out a little when the devil doth apply threatenings, and when the Spirit of

God doth apply them; for, it is certain, the devil may apply threatenings to a Christian under the exercise of the law. I would only say this. There are these three ends of the devil that he hath before him in applying threatenings.

(1) Either to make you to give over your hope and confidence, that ye may cry forth, My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord: that is the great end the devil hath in applying threatenings.

(2) To keep a Christian from the exercise of duty and to make the exercise of religion a burden unto him: that is the devil's scope in applying threatenings.

(3) There is this end of the devil in applying threatenings, that a Christian may have low and sinistrous (wrong) apprehensions of Christ, that your thoughts of Christ may be lower than they are; that is the devil's end in applying threatenings.

I would also speak a little to these ends of Christ's in applying threatenings; and, we conceive, there are these four ends in applying threatenings that Christ hath: He applies threatenings that we may awake from our security, that so He may rouse us up. When He applies that word of threatening, Song ii, 10, He challenges the bride, but the end of that challenge is, that she may waken from her present state. The second end that Christ hath in challenging and threatening is, that a Christian may be put to

the exercise of duty. He will apply threatenings to a Christian that neglects the duty of prayer, that so he may be put to pray more than he did. The third end He applies threatenings is, that we may be put to forsake our idols; that is the great end He hath before Him in applying threatenings, that we may be put to draw that conclusion, 'What have I to do any more with idols.' The fourth end that Christ hath before Him in applying threatenings is, to impose upon a Christian a divine necessity of making use of Him. There is not one threatening ye meet with, but this is the language of it, Embrace Christ, and that will answer the threatening; the end of threatening is to make you to make more use of Christ.

Now, to shut up this, upon the misinterpreting of sermons, I shall add these two words:

(1) It is a notable evidence of a complete Christian, to take up [to know] when Christ speaks, and when temptations and the devil speak. This is clear, Song ii, 8.10. The spouse takes notice of this, 'My beloved spake'; and this is 'the voice of my beloved': she knows it to be the voice of Christ. And Song v, 2, 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh': she knows Christ's voice from any other. And, John x, 4, 'The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.'

(2) I would only say this, the mistaking of Christ's voice in prayer, or in preaching, obstructs much of a Christian's communion with God. There is nothing that will obstruct

a Christian's fellowship with Christ so much as this, to want clearness to take up when Christ speaks; and when the devil and temptations speak. Something of this may be gathered, 1 Sam. iii, 7, the Lord appears to Samuel three times, and calls upon him; but the reason why Samuel doth not correspond with God is, because he knew not His voice, and was not acquainted with the Lord; therefore, if a Christian would have communion with Christ, he should study to know His voice.

Now, as for misinterpreting providence and scripture, I shall not say much; only I would speak these two things on the misinterpreting providence, that Christians, under the exercise of the law, ordinarily have.

1. Study to judge of Christ, rather by His words than by His providence. Judge of Christ rather by what He hath said of Himself, than by what dispensations say of Him. Believe it, as long as ye build faith upon providence, it will be changeable

2. I would say this, time meaning of providence is most dark. I can compare the meaning of providence to nothing so fit as the writing that Beishazzar saw upon the wall; he saw it, but he knew not the meaning of it. It would require the spirit of a Daniel to understand the meaning of providence. It is easy to know there is something intended in such a providence; but it is hard to know what is the particular intention of such a particular providence. It would require a spirit very well acquainted

with God to interpret providence; and I shall tell you the ground of misinterpreting. Unbelief, sense and reason, do oft misinterpret providence. All these three interpreters put a wrong gloss upon the meaning of providence. Unbelief will always read wrath in a cross; sense will evermore read wrath in a rod; and reason will never believe when providence contradicts a promise; but will say, 'This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait for the Lord any longer!' Therefore, I entreat you, do not misinterpret providence, but interpret providence more by faith, than by these three bad interpreters. I would also say this, if ye would interpret providence aright, take not providence by halves, but take the whole series of providences together.

Second, the SECOND DEVICE of the devil, by which he assaults Christians that are under the exercise of the law is this, he studies to bring those Christians into a spirit of discouragement. When once a soul begins to see its whoring and departing from God, and to see the terrors of the law, then the devil presses that soul into the spirit of discouragement; like that which is said, 2 Cor. ii, 7, 'Swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' And I would only, in discoursing of this device, speak a little to these three things. 1. I shall give you some evidences by which a Christian may know when he is under a spirit of discouragement, and is excessive in the thing.

(1) The first evidence by which a Christian may know he

is under a spirit of discouragement is this, when your discouragement leads you to the neglect of duty, then ye may know your discouragement is excessive, and ye are under the spirit of it. This is clear, Jer. xx, 9, where Jeremiah's trouble, no doubt, was excessive; and the ground of it is, because it put him from the exercise of duty. 'I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.' His discouragement was accompanied with a conclusion, that he would preach no more. So then, if ye would know when your discouragement is above the due limits and bounds, ye may know it to be this, when your discouragement makes you to neglect the exercise of duty.

(2) The second evidence of a person under the spirit of discouragement, and when he is excessive in it is this, when your discouragements lead you to cast at [to question] your comforts, and the consolations that are allowed you, and not to receive them; this discouragement is excessive. This was so in David, Psalm Lxxvii, 2, his 'soul refused to be comforted': he would not allow of, nor accept these comforts that were suitable for him to take. Jer. viii, 18, when Jeremiah is under the spirit of discouragement, because, when he would have comforted himself, his heart is sorrowful, his heart is faint in him, he could not apply the consolations of God that were suitable for him to take.

(3) The third mark of one that is under discouragement

is this, such a Christian as casts at [has doubts about] his faith, and at his confidence, that Christian is certainly under a spirit of discouragement; as is clear, Lam. iii, 18. Jeremiah was under the spirit of discouragement when he cried forth, 'My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.' Whenever your discouragements lead you to quit your faith, and cast off your confidence, ye may know they are excessive.

(4) The fourth mark of one that is under a spirit of discouragement is this; he hath wrong and sinistrous apprehensions of Christ. This was clear in David, when he was under the spirit of discouragement, Psalm Lxxvii, 3, 'I remembered God, and was troubled.' The remembrance of God was a trouble to David when he was under a spirit of discouragement. And also it is clear from that word, Jer. xv, 18, where Jeremiah, under a spirit of discouragement, cries out, 'Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? His discouragements led him to such a length, as to charge God with Lying. I would only say this, by the way, discouragement will sometimes speak falsehood, and discouragement will sometimes speak blasphemy, as Jeremiah's discouragement, which went such a length, that in a manner, it speaks blasphemy against God, and charges Him with lying.

(5) The fifth evidence of one that is under a spirit of discouragement, and whose discouragements are excessive, and above bounds is, when his discouragements make

him to have no delight in the exercise of duty. There is no piece of a duty that a discouraged person goes about, but this may be engraven upon it, 'This duty is my burden', and, 'This duty is my cross.' It is impossible for a discouraged Christian to go about duty with delight. Every duty he is called unto becomes a burden unto him when he is under the spirit of discouragement; he knows not what it is to obey; he knows not what it is to believe.

2. The second thing that we would speak to upon this device of the devils is this,

(1) That discouragement is big with child of apostasy, and departing from God. There is nothing that so much travails in birth of apostasy from God, as discouragement; according to that word, Lam. i, 8, 'She sigheth, and turneth backward.' All their exercises are to backsliding; for it is impossible for a discouraged Christian not to backslide and depart from God.

(2) Discouragement of spirit is one of the most damnable sins that a Christian can fall into; therefore, ye will see that among them that are cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, he that is discouraged is put in the first place, Rev. xxi, 8, 'The fearful and unbelieving'; that is, the discouraged creatures, and the unbelieving creatures; they are first in the roll of these that are cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone.

3. Lastly, I would say this, upon this device of the devil,

that a Christian will condemn himself rather for presumption than for discouragements; for discouragement seems to be a more gospel and spiritual thing than presumption. But, be sure of it, that discouragement is as great a sin in the sight of God, if not more, than presumption. Discouragement charges God with lies; it contradicts the truth of the scripture; it makes a Christian cast at duty.

Now, there is this **THIRD DEVICE** of the devil by which he assaults Christians that are under the exercise of the law, and it is this; he studies to kill their convictions. When a Christian is under the exercise of the law, it is impossible for him not to be convinced. And I shall tell you six convictions of a Christian under the exercise of the law that the devil studies to mortify.

1. When ye are convinced of your former evil way and all your iniquities are presented unto you, and, in a roll, set before your face, the devil studies to mortify that conviction.

2. The second conviction of a Christian under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction of their lost and desperate estate. When once ye come to draw this conclusion, woe is me, I am undone; then the devil studies by all means to mortify that conviction, and to kill it in the birth.

3. There is that third conviction of a Christian under the

exercise of the law that the devil studies to mortify, and that is, the conviction of their utter inability to save themselves. When once ye come to sing that first song of the gospel, the first line, as it were, of the precious tidings of salvation, which is this, There is no name under heaven, by which I can be saved, but by the name of Christ, then the devil studies, by all means, to mortify that conviction, that ye may be brought back to make mention of your own righteousness, and to seek salvation through a covenant of works.

4. The fourth conviction of one under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is this; the conviction of the necessity of the advantage, and of the beauty of believing. When once a person comes to that length, 'I will never be made up till I believe!' then the devil studies, by all means, to have that conviction mortified; for when ye are brought to this conviction, ye are upon the utmost lines and borders of Satan's kingdom, and are stepping into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

5. The fifth conviction of a person, under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction that he hath, how unsupportable a burden sin is. When once ye begin to cry forth, who would bear the burden of iniquity?; then the devil studies, by all means, to make sin to appear exceeding light unto you.

6. The last conviction of a Christian under the exercise

of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction how sad and woeful an estate, how intolerable a lot it is to live under the wrath of the living God. When a Christian is brought to be convinced of sin, and of the burden of sin, and of the burden of wrath, then by all means that he can, he studies to mortify and kill these convictions. And, I would only speak these two things unto this device of the devil.

(1) The first is this, oft times a Christian, under the exercise of the law, helps to mortify his own convictions. We have a cursed correspondence and harmony with the devil in mortifying these convictions; for when we are convinced of the excellency of believing, we mortify that conviction, through the apprehended difficulty that is in the exercise of that grace. When once we begin to believe, if it succeed not presently well with us, we cast at faith and the exercise of believing, as that which is impossible to be done.

(2) I would say this, that though a Christian hath won up [attained] to these convictions, he is not to rest upon these, but to press forward unto closing with Christ, and would study to have his peace and union made up with Him.

There is this **FOURTH DEVICE** of the devil by which he assaults Christians under the exercise of the law, and that is, by darkening the freedom of the gospel, and the offers of the everlasting covenant. He makes you believe

the gospel requires more of you than it doth. I would only say this to these that are assaulted with this, which is a most ordinary device, to wit, the darkening of the freedom of the gospel; I would only desire them to take along with them these five things, by which they may destroy all his temptations.

1. Upon this: know that there is no impediment put in your way of closing with Christ, but the want of willingness. If ye be willing to have Christ ye may have Him; the gospel requires no qualification, but only to have a willing mind, Rev. xxii, 17, where the gate of the gospel seems to be cast open. The gospel is proposed in these terms, 'Let him that is a-thirst come'; but lest this should be the subject of this discouragement, he casts the gate a little more open 'And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;' if ye have a will to close with Christ, ye may close with Him.

2. I would say this farther, your unbelief proceeds from the want of willingness, rather than from the want of qualifications. I know some Christians who will not close with Christ because they were never in such a measure under the exercise of the law. They never knew what it was to mourn for sin, and they never knew what it was to sit down and lament over themselves, because of their sinful state; and therefore, they will not close with Christ. Know this, ye may father your unbelief upon the want of willingness, and upon no other thing, John v,

40; Christ fathers their unbelief upon this, 'Ye will not come to me,' it is not said, ye are not able to come to me, but ye will not do it. If ye had a will, then certainly ye might come forward.

3. I would say this, to answer any temptations that arise from the devil in darkening the freedom of the gospel, and it is, that all the promises of the gospel that hold out the qualifications of those that come unto Christ, are to be interpreted this way; that they hold out the qualifications of those that will come, but do not hold forth the qualifications of these that should come, as Matthew xi, 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' for your souls. It is not to be supposed that weariness and being heavy laden are the qualifications of those that should come to Christ, but are the qualifications of those that will come to Christ. As if Christ would have said, there are none that I need bid come, but only these that are weary and heavy laden; for it is only these that will come; but if ye would come otherwise, He would not receive you. And,

4. I say this, I never read (which may make the disputers of this age ashamed), of any, who after they were invited to come to Christ, that stood up and disputed, 'Will ye embrace me? Am I fitted to come?' Are there any such disputes as this recorded of any, when there were so many converted at the preaching of the gospel, Acts ii, or anywhere else? 'I am not fit to come to Christ, I have

not been humbled for my sin, I have not been under such a measure of sorrow for sin.'No, they embraced Christ without debate. I would pose these that delight so much in disputing, if they have any such practice of any of the saints in scripture, before their closing with Christ, to be a pattern of their walk? Did the three thousand Jews ever mention such a dispute; and yet some of them did consent unto the killing of Christ. But when the gospel is offered unto them, they stand not to debate their qualifications, but they close with Him offered unto them in the gospel.

5. Lastly, I would say this unto you, by which ye may answer the temptations of the devil, when he darkens the freedom of the gospel unto you, and it is this; he will say, ye dare not close with Christ, because ye are such a sinner. I tell you, the devil calls a Christian under the exercise of the law, 'legion, for ye are many'.

But I would have you making use of that argument of the devil, which he uses to hinder you from closing with Christ, and make it a ground of your closing with Him. Would ye know how to improve aright the discoveries of your sin? It is even this, to lay upon yourselves a necessity of closing with Christ. Would ye know how ye should improve the discoveries of the multitude of sins? To cry in faith that word, Psalm xxv, 11, 'O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.' That divinity will not hold out at the court of men; but it holds out well there, where

love sits as arbitrary judge. That is a strong argument at the court of love, 'Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great, though it be not a strong argument at the court of justice; that argument justice will cast out but love will take hold of such an argument.

There is this FIFTH DEVICE of the devil, by which he assaults Christians under the exercise of the law, and that is, he studies by all means to make you to fall asleep. The great scope of all his temptations is this, to bring you from a spirit of discouragement to a spirit of security. This is a most ordinary and most fruitful device of the devil. I would only say this, if ye improve not your discouragements for making use of Christ, your discouragements will end in security, and in hardness of heart; therefore, ye would beware to dwell long in the place of the breaking forth of children. But when Christ gives you the first summons, to go out of the land of Egypt, and to go into the land of Canaan, ye should study to obey the summons.

I shall, at this time, shut up our discourse; only I would have you take notice of these things.

1. That it is the duty of a Christian, if he can, to observe the month, and day of the month, and year of God, when first Christ brought him out of the land of Egypt; that is, a Christian would study to observe the first day when love began to overcome him, when he was made a captive unto Christ. We conceive in this we may fitly allude

to that word, Deut. xvi, 1, 'Observe the month Abib; for in the month of Abib, the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt'; keep it in perpetual record. I confess it is undeniable then, there are some Christians whom Christ doth overcome at unawares; so that if ye would ask them when they did begin to believe, . . . "they might say with that blind man, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see,'but of the time I know not.

2. I would say this, the observation of the month and day when Christ brought you out of the land of Egypt, will be a notable help to answer many temptations of unbelief. I tell you what is the mother of much unbelief among Christians; they can never pitch upon the day when first they began to close with Christ, but if that day were once well known, we might better answer the temptations of unbelief. We might say, I know Christ was once kind to me, and once He took upon Him my iniquity. Would ye know the first song of a Christian, when he is planted in that pleasant land, it is this, Jer. xx, 7, 'Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed'against me. O to be a captive of Christ, it is a noble captivity. When seventy years are accomplished ye should not cry out, 'Turn about our captivity, as the streams in the south.'

3. There is this, thirdly, that we would say upon what we have spoken, and it is this, that it is the concernment of a

Christian, as he would not wrong his own peace and satisfaction, that he would not needlessly dwell at mount Sinai. There are some whom we cannot get persuaded to touch mount Sinai, and some, when they have once touched mount Sinai, they will not venture to touch mount Sion; though Christ held forth to them the sceptre of His love, they will sit down and say, He hath a controversy with me, I dare not adventure to go unto Him. I would only ask this question of you, did ye ever know that Christ killed a contrite soul? Was there ever any that could leave that imputation upon precious Christ, that He is a hard master, and will not easily condescend to take in these that are strangers unto Him?

4. There is this, fourthly, that I would say unto you, and it is this; think ye this good divinity, that because ye are sinful, therefore ye will not close with Christ; because ye are sick, therefore ye will not go to the physician? This was Peter's divinity, Luke v, 8, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man.' But I would pose you with this, think ye it good reasoning that because I am filthy, therefore I will not go to the fountain; because I am sick, I will not go to the physician; or think ye it good arguing, that because ye are under bondage, therefore, ye will not go to Him whose name is the Redeemer of His people? Think ye it good divinity, that because ye are holden captive by your own lusts, ye will not go to Him whose name is Jesus, who saves His people from their sins?

5. There is this, fifthly, that I would say unto you, and it is this; I would desire and seriously adjure you, that you would not be found despisers of the precious offers of this everlasting gospel. I would wish that some were no surer of heaven than some, if not many of you, may be certain of hell, and eternity of pain, and seclusion from the presence of the Lord.

I would only say these five words, and shall close, unto these that despise the precious offer of this everlasting gospel, and who account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

(1) I would say this unto you, that despise and never knew what it was to lay hold upon the precious offers of Christ. Know this of a certainty, Christ is either the best friend or the worst enemy. The vengeance of a crucified Saviour is the most terrible vengeance, as the love of a dying Christ is the most sweet, the most conquering, and the most refreshing love. Think ye, ye will be able to endure that war, when Christ shall enter the lists with you? I would say this, every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood; but the noise of this battle and war that Christ shall eternally wage against your immortal souls, shall be with scorching and everlasting pain.

(2) I would say this to the despisers of this everlasting gospel: Behold, behold, the day is approaching, when instead of the doctrine that ye now hear, 'Come unto me all

ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,'ye shall hear that sad doctrine from heaven, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'Ye that will not obey that precious invitation, Come unto me,shall, of necessity, obey that sad sentence, 'Depart from me.' There is no sitting of that command; ye may sit [treat with carelessness] the precious offers and invitations of Christ, but that sentence ye shall not sit.

(3) There is this I would say unto the despisers of this gospel, and it is this, what will be your exercise, O reprobates, when ye shall behold Christ sitting upon a white throne? I tell you four things that will be a reprobate's exercise when he shall behold Christ upon the throne.

1. He will be much in the exercise of prayer. I tell you two prayers ye shall pray then, and pray them most fervently; and believe it, the day is coming when ye shall indeed pray that prayer, if ye embrace not Christ, when ye shall be standing before the throne. The first prayer is this, 'O call time again! O call time again! O call time again!'O reprobates, what would ye give for an hour in that day, when ye shall appear before the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ, and shall see Him passing sentence upon you, whom so often ye have dishonoured and undervalued? What would you give for one hour? 'O, ten thousand worlds for one hour! Ten thousand worlds for

one sermon to embrace Him, whom so often I have despised!"The second prayer that ye shall pray in that great and terrible day of the Lord, is this, 'Hills and mountains fall on us, and cover us from the face of the Lamb, and from Him that sits upon the throne!'Ye that never knew what it was to pray seriously, ye shall pray seriously, and with much zeal in that day. O to hear your prayers in that day of the Lord! How will ye lament over, and exceedingly bewail your abusing of sermons, and the precious invitations of the gospel, and your selling of your time into the hands of your enemies?

2. This will be your exercise, and that is the exercise of shame and confusion of spirit. I will pose your consciences with this. See if you can remember it? What will be your thoughts of Christ when ye shall see Him clothed with majesty as with a robe, and with righteousness as with a garment, when you shall see the same Christ to whom oft times ye have spoken that word, 'Depart from me, we will not have this man to reign over us'? O will you not condemn yourselves for folly in that day, that this so precious and excellent object should have been so oft despised by you?

3. This will be your exercise, and that is, the exercise of fear. In that day your knees shall smite one against another, and ye shall be fearing that dreadful sentence of separation from God that shall come out against you. Did you ever see the leaves of a tree shaken in a windy day?

So shall the knees, and all the joints of the stoutest-hearted sinner in Sion shake in that day, when Christ shall render up the kingdom unto His Father.

4. The exercise of hope shall be much your exercise in that day. Ay, ye shall be much in the exercise of hope and expectation; ye shall be waiting at His throne till the sentence he passed against you.

5. I would say this unto you, know that within threescore and ten years, ye shall once judge and determine, whether ye did right in refusing Christ or embracing Him. O if ye heard the screechings of the souls that are in everlasting chains! If a minister of the gospel could possibly go down to hell, and preach that doctrine, 'Upon the embracing of Christ, ye shall win out,' we conceive if they could exercise any grace in hell, there would not be one inhabitant of that place that would refuse these offers. And, believe it, we do now summon you in His great name, who is the great master and author of this gospel, that ye would take Him and embrace Him; and, therefore, this shall meet you in the day of the Lord, if ye take Him not, that he hath once been offered unto you, and ye would not embrace Him.

6. Lastly, I would say this unto you, and it is this; it had been better for you that ye had never been born, if ye do not embrace Jesus Christ. The curse of all the three blessed persons of the glorious Trinity will light upon you. The curse of the Father, the first person of the

blessed Trinity, the curse of the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity, and the curse of the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity; and the curse of the four beasts, and the curse of the twenty-four elders, and the curse of all the angels that are in heaven, and the curse of all the patriarchs, and the curse of all the blessed apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, will light on the head of them that undervalue Christ. And, O, will ye refuse Christ, since ye may get Him for a look; for one look ye shall get an infinite object, Christ; and will ye not give one look for Christ? Ye shall get Him for a look; according to that word, 'Look unto me all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved.' O, take precious Christ at so low a rate. Now to Him that can persuade you, we desire to give praise. Amen.

STRANGERS CALLED TO BEHOLD CHRIST

Isaiah lxxv, 1 - I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name.

Would ye know what is the exercise of the saints above? They are even giving obedience unto this text, 'Behold me, Behold me.' There is not an eye in heaven that is not taken up in the beholding and contemplation of Him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb for ever and ever. This text, which we have read, is one of the greatest mysteries that can be. Is not this a mystery, that we should be invited to behold One who is invisible? Who can resolve that mystery? But, O to behold Him, and touch Him, who calls us to behold, and draw near unto Him! I think, if once we had attained to a satisfying look of Christ, we would be content to depart and begone. Believers, and expectants of the crown, are ye not longing to be away, that ye may have these precious, immediate, and uninterrupted sights of Christ; and that, if it were possible, ye would take the sand-glass of your time, and shake it, and cry out, 'O time flee away? Is there such a desire as this among you, that you are crying out, 'O when shall my night be gone, and all my shadows flee away, when I shall enter in through these blessed gates, and walk upon these streets that are paved with gold! Old men, are ye longing to have the immediate sight of Christ? Ye that are nearest eternity, are ye longing to be carried home?

Old women, are ye longing for the immediate sight of God? Young men and maids, are ye longing for the day when ye shall be above all these vails that are between us and Christ, when ye shall take Him in your arms and cry out, 'He is mine, He is mine?'

O the draughts of love that are among the saints who are above! May we not say, 'O time, haste and flee away! I am sure, if ye knew Him, ye would not but count the hours and days of your time, and desire Him to rend these clouds and cry out, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'. Would ye know what is the reason that it is said of these that are round about the throne, they are full of eyes within and without, or behind and before; but they are not said to be full of tongues? I tell you the reason of it. I think the saints round about the throne are more taken up in looking than in speaking; they are more taken up in admiration than expressing their thoughts of God. I would have every one of you asking yourselves, 'O am longing to be gone and have the sight of Christ that shall never have an end? Believe it, there is no wearying in heaven.

But, to come to the words, and, O, to look to them. Believe it, Christ's heart is with them, and they are perfumed with love. Ye have in them these two things.

1. Ye have the excellent desire that Christ presents to sinners, and it is this, 'Behold me, Behold me.' I desire no more of you but to give me one look. And think ye not

this is a poor desire? Ay, it is both the poorest and richest desire Christ hath to present to you. O Glasgow! wouldst thou satisfy Christ? Then, I say, behold Him. Old men in Glasgow, would ye satisfy Christ? Then, I say, behold Him. Young men and maids, would ye satisfy Christ? Then, I say, give the Son of God one look before he go away. O! do ye resolve to give Christ a look before he go! Will ye ask at your own heart? Believe it, if once we saw Him, we would never part with Him. I cannot tell you what He is, neither think I angels could tell you what He is. O come and see, and that will best resolve the mystery.

2. Ye have, in the words, these considerations by which He presseth home this desire and command upon you who are here. The first consideration from the words is in that ME; 'Behold me, which consideration is taken from the excellency of the object that we are invited to behold; as if Christ should say, 'Behold transcendant ME; Behold spotless ME; behold beautiful ME; Behold dying ME; Behold compassionate ME; Behold glorified ME. Ay, I think all the rhetoric and oratory of heaven is comprehended in that word ME; 'Behold ME, and will ye not take a sight of this precious and excellent object?'

The second consideration in the words, to press this home, is, that Christ is exceeding serious with you this day. O Glasgow! His seriousness is pointed out in doubling and repeating this command, 'Behold me, behold

me, as if I should say, 'Behold me'; and, if that will not serve you, I will even say it over again, Behold me; I have so good will to the thing, that I would fain have you considering to obey. Believe it, Christ is serious with you; and cursed be the person who will not be serious with Christ.

The third consideration in the words to press home this command, is this, that Christ hath interposed much of His authority for bringing you to the obedience of this command; therefore He sets this preface before it, 'I said, Behold me, behold me'; as if He would have said, 'Omnipotent I said 'Behold me'. I, who cannot be resisted, said 'Behold me'; I, who will tread in the wine-press of my fury all undervaluers of this command, said 'Behold me,' 'Behold me'. And O blessed are we in this, that ever this blessed sentence proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, 'Behold me, behold me'. Now, will ye not stir up yourselves to obey? Think ye not this is a most excellent word? What word of Christ will relish to your heart if this word will not, 'Behold me, behold me'?

A fourth consideration from the words is taken from the freedom of this offer; for the offer is given to persons who were not called by His name.

The fifth consideration from the words is, that there is strength covenanted for those who resolve and endeavour obedience to this command of beholding Christ. Are there any persons within these doors who resolve, before

they go home, that they shall get a sight of Christ? I say, there is power covenanted for thee, and thou shalt get a sight of Him. Know ye not that word, 'Where the word of a king is, there is power'. And I say the word of the King is here; therefore there is power. I have this word to say unto you, and, if it were my last word, I may say it unto you; Christ is serious with you and ye know not how long he will be so; therefore, I adjure you, by all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, be serious with Him. And know this, if we could preach the heart of Christ, as it is, I think we could persuade stones to love Him; but know it, we cannot commend Him half enough. O precious Christ, commend Thyself, for we cannot commend Thee. I think, if we do not commend Christ, if He were to come here Himself, He would not commend Himself. Know it, there is not an undervaluing of the offers of Christ from us, but it is as much as if He were here Himself intreating you to behold Him, and ye should say unto Him personally, 'We will have none of thee'.

Now, may we say to Him, 'Persuade this people that thou art serious.' Christ is precious company, O will ye take a sight of Him.

3. The last thing in the words is, the persons to whom the command is given, and it was to 'a nation that was not called by his name'; that is, to a people who neither knew Christ by name nor surname. These are the persons who are invited to take Christ. I say to thee, be whom thou

wilt, the greatest adulterer within this house, I obtest thee and charge thee, in His name, to behold Him.

Now, before we speak to any of these things fully, we shall speak a little to these two questions.

First, what is here meant by the beholding of Christ, which is the great voice that is cried to you this day? We conceive, that by beholding Christ, nothing else is to be understood but faith; and there are these three grounds why faith is called a beholding of Christ.

1. The first ground is, because faith is a thing that may be exercised on Christ at a distance; therefore faith is called a beholding. Ye know, a person may look at a thing far off before he come to take hold of it; so a Christian, when he cannot get a grip of Christ, may get a look of Him. And I would say this, O Christians, when Christ departs, cast a greedy eye after Him, and that is the best way to bring Him home.

2. There is this ground why faith is called a beholding, because the discoveries of faith and of Christ are as certain and sure as the discoveries of sense. There is nothing that faith says of Christ, but it is as certain and sure as if ye had seen it.

3. The third ground why faith is called a beholding and looking unto Christ is, because faith is the grace that hath

sense waiting upon it; sense is the excellent and inseparable companion of faith; and, for that cause, faith is called a beholding of Christ. Secondly, the second question in the words is, what can be the reason that Christ doubles this command, Behold me, behold me? What needs the doubling of that command? Might not one word have served? No, I say, we are so desperately wicked that a thousand words will not serve the turn; though Christ should cry unto you till the breaking of the next day, there are hundreds here that would not give Christ a look!

1. The first ground why He doubles the command is, to point out, that a Christian should not be satisfied with one look of Christ; therefore He cries, Behold me; and, when ye have done that, ye must even then take another look; He is content ye should give Him a look, and another look. And,

2. There is this second ground why He doubles the command, and it is this, to point out the cursed frame that is among many. We are content too soon with the looks we get of Christ; some of us are content with half a look of Christ. No (says Christ), be not content till thou gettest two full and broad looks of me.

3. The third ground of it is, to point out the unwillingness of the greatest part of the hearers of the gospel to give to Christone 'behold"! Doth not this speak that Christ is, as it were, constrained to cry out unto you twice, 'Behold

me, behold me"! Ay, there are some of you, we may as soon persuade the stones of the wall to look unto Christ, as persuade you. Ay, when we cry unto you to give Christ a 'behold!' the devil stands at your elbow and he cries, 'O give me a behold! And, O that ye would obey Christ as soon as ye do the devil's desire. Now, I intreat you, ask yourselves, 'O shall I go away and not get a behold of Christ? Shall I not get one look of Him?

4. The fourth ground of doubling the command, is to point out Christ's exceeding seriousness and earnestness in this thing, that we should behold Him. Know it, O Glasgow, Christ is not complimenting with you; therefore, He says, 'Behold me, behold me! Old men, do ye think Christ is complimenting [exchanging compliments] with you? I charge you, old men, to know it, and believe it, that Christ is not complimenting with you; and if ye will not believe and obey this precious saying, 'Behold me! ye shall once obey that saying, 'Depart from me, I know you not.

5. The fifth ground of Christ's doubling this command: in this place, is to point out the excellent advantages that lie in the duty of beholding Christ. 'O! (says Christ), take a look of Me; yea, again take a look of Me; for I cannot tell what advantage lies unto you in this. I have but one word to say unto you, by the way; I intreat you, what think ye you will do before the other half hour be done? Are ye resolved to obey this command? O sleepers,

waken and study to endeavour obedience to this command. I would say this to you, O Glasgow, know it, if thou disobeyest this command today, I defy all the ministers of Scotland to assure you that ye shall meet with another behold; therefore harden not your hearts, even in this day, as in the provocation; and since Christ entreats you to behold Him, I entreat you close not your own eyes.

Now, in speaking to this excellent exhortation, I propose this one thing, that it is the duty of all them that hear this excellent gospel, to whom the glad tidings of salvation are preached, to behold and look unto Christ. This is clear, in that Christ urges this home with a twofold command, 'Behold me, behold me'; and it is clear from Song iii, 11, 'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon. And I shall turn over the command, and say unto you, Go forth, O daughters of Glasgow, and behold King Solomon. This is Christ's command to you to-day, that ye would go forth, and behold Him; and it is clear, Isa. xlii, 1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold'; and John xx, 27, where this is pressed upon Thomas. Now that this may be pressed home upon your consciences, I shall propose these eight considerations.

The first consideration that I would propose to press you to give one 'Behold' is this, that it is His command that we should look unto Him; therefore, I say, behold Him; for where the commandment of the king is, there is

power, no doubt, to revenge them that disobey Him. I say that word unto thee, that is in Eccles. viii, 2, 'I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment and that in regard of the oath of God. Now this is the commandment of the great King, that ye should give Christ one 'behold', and who will refuse Him. O that we could make a covenant with our eyes that we might never look upon another object but Christ. I would give you that counsel which Abimelech gave unto Sarah in another sense, Let Christ be the covering of thy eyes among all with whom thou conversest. Now is not this a pressing consideration, that it is Christ's command. O will you take this excellent command, and kiss it, and send it home again.

There is a second consideration to press you to look unto Christ, and to behold Him, and it is this, ye shall get salvation for a look. Is there a person here that would have freedom from the wrath of God? If thou wouldst have it, then I say give Christ one 'Behold' Now is not salvation offered unto you at an easy rate? Give Christ but one 'Behold, and thou shalt get salvation, Isa. xlv, 22, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth'. The gospel, the eternal, the full, the complete, the ravishing, the transcendent salvation, is offered unto you for a look. O Christian, wouldst thou have all the purchase of the death of Christ, come and take but a look of Him and have it. I am sure that is aim easy market; ye shall get all the wares of the everlasting gospel for a look. I shall yet go a little lower, thou shalt get salvation for half a look; is there a

person here that cannot look unto Christ with both his eyes? I say, look unto Christ with one of thy eyes, and thou shalt get salvation. Know ye not that word, 'Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. I say unto every person, will ye give Christ but half a look and ye shall get all the riches of the everlasting covenant. And I charge and obtest you, as in His sight, that ye would not despise His offers.

The third consideration to press you to look unto Christ, and to give Him one 'Behold,' is this, if thou couldst pray forty years, and weep other forty years; if thou couldst make thine eyes dim with weeping, and thy knees weak with fasting, and hadst been at all the communions that ever were in Scotland; if thou couldst be at them all thy time; and if thou couldst be at all the fasts, and preachings, and meetings that are in Scotland, it were to no purpose, if thou givest not Christ a look. Thy forty years weeping, and thy forty years praying, shall be but the aggravation of thy punishment if thou givest not Christ a look. Therefore, this may provoke you to give Christ a look; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Know ye not, that all the actions of these who are out of Christ are but abominations.

There is this fourth consideration that I would propose to press you to look unto Christ, and it is this, that there are many sad disadvantages that attend the persons who will

not look unto Christ, and behold the Son of God. O persons, know it, know it for certainty, there is not one curse written within the book of the covenant (and O! there are many broad and everlasting curses in it), there is not one curse in this book, from the first of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, but it shall come upon the head of the person who will not behold the Son of God. O what will you do when Christ shall begin to read the curses in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, 'Cursed be he that despiseth me; and all the congregation shall say amen'. I charge you, what will ye do, when Christ shall be sitting upon the throne, and shall judge, and say, 'Cursed shall be the undervaluers of me'? And there shall not be a saint on His right hand, in that blessed congregation, but shall say 'Amen'. O will ye think of it?

There is this fifth consideration to persuade you to look unto Christ, and to behold Him. Would ye have a heaven upon earth? Then, I say, behold Christ, for what is heaven? Is it not the beholding of Christ? If ye would have a heaven upon earth, then give obedience unto this command 'Behold Christ'. O, know it for a certainty, there is not an atheist that is here but shall give Christ one look. Ye shall get one look of Christ, all ye that are here; yea, ye that are strangers to Christ, shall get one look of Christ, and that shall be then, when ye shall wish ye were blind, and did not see Him. It shall be in that day, when He shall sit upon the white throne, and thou shalt

lift up thine eyes and see Him whom thou hast pierced; and thou shalt then cry out, 'O that I had no eyes to see Him whom I have pierced so oft.' The greatest atheist that is here shall get one sight of Christ. But, O, pass not beyond death without taking a look of Him.

The sixth consideration to press you to look unto Christ is this, that of all the exercises of a Christian, none hath so great advantage waiting upon it as this, of looking to the Son of God; and I shall name but these eight advantages that wait on looking unto Christ.

The first advantage that waits upon the beholding of Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to increase the grace of love. O Christian that art under this complaint, 'O how shall I get my love increased!' I say, give Christ a behold, and believe it, it would make thy love to burn as a fire if thou wouldst but take a broad sight of Christ, Isa. xvii, 7, 'At that day shall a man look to his maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel'. There is none of them that look unto Christ, but their heart shall follow their eye, and their eye shall affect their heart. O, if this were Glasgow's day of looking to its Maker! What know ye but this is your last day of looking to your Maker! O will ye be provoked, as ye would have the excellent grace of love increased, to give Christ one look? O shall Christ be here, and there shall be none of us that will take one look of Him? I pray you to think of

it. What if this day, O Glasgow! what if Christ shall report this in heaven? I came to two great congregations under one roof in Glasgow, and there was (perhaps) none that would behold Me. I charge you to give Him one 'behold.' Old men, will ye behold Him? Did ye never desire to see a wonderful sight? O come, and take a sight of the Son of God.

The second advantage that waits upon these that look unto Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to win to the mortification of our idols. Would ye know a compendious way to mortify your lusts, then give Christ one look. This is clear, in Isa. xvii, 7, compared with the eighth verse, 'At that day, shall a man look unto his Maker, and shall cast away his idols, and defile the covering of them'. If once ye had a sight of spotless Christ, ye would cry out, 'What have I to do any more with idols? Says Paul, 'I look not to the things that are seen'; what aileth thee, Paul, mayest thou not take a sight of the world? 'No' (says he), 'I look for better things that are not seen'. The looking unto an unseen Christ made him forget to look to the transient vanities of the world. Is there a person here that is complaining he cannot get victory over his idols? Give Christ one 'behold, and thou shalt have victory.

The third advantage that accompanies and waits upon beholding of Christ is this: It is the most compendious way to win to repentance. Impenitent Glasgow, wouldst thou

win to repentance? (and I think we are indeed a generation of impenitent people), and would ye then win to repentance? Then give Christ one 'Behold'. This is clear, Job xlii, 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. The first sight that I got of God, made me to repent, and to sit down in the dust, and abhor myself. And Zech. xii, 10, 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. Believe it, I think if we were looking to Christ at this time, there would not be a person within these doors, but would be weeping for Him whom they have pierced. I charge you, if ye would have repentance, then look to Christ. One look of Christ would make our frozen hearts to melt; one look of Him would make all our bonds to break; one look of Him would make all the bars of our doors that hinder us to repent, break. Would ye have repentance? Then give Christ a look, 'behold Him.'

The fourth advantage that waits upon one that gives Christ a look is this: Thou shalt have a victory over the grand idol of pride. Are there any persons here that are complaining of this, that they cannot have too low thoughts of themselves? I say to such, give Christ a look, Isa. vi, 5, 'I have seen the Lord of hosts'; and what of that? 'I am a man of unclean lips'. And Job xlii, 5, 6, 'Mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes. If we may allude to that word, 'Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not', Job vii, 8. O, but a sight of Him who

is invisible, would cause us to make our dwelling-place in the dust, and never to have high thoughts of ourselves anymore! -

The fifth advantage that attends beholding of Christ is this: Thou wouldst recover from thy apostasy and defection from God. Are there not many Christians that have this complaint in their mouths, O to be as in the days of old, and as in the months past? I say to you, give Christ but one 'Behold'. This is clear, Luke xxii, 61, 62. Believe it, a look of Christ is even as a cord about our necks, to draw us home to Him. A look of Christ makes a person to cry out, 'I never had a good day out of Christ's company, therefore I will return again to Him. A look of Christ will make a Christian forsake his lovers, after whom he hath gone, and return again to Him. Would ye then recover from your apostasy? Then give Christ a look..

The sixth advantage that attends the beholding of Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to win above thy discouragements. Is there a person here that is under the feet of discouragement? If ye would win above it, then give Christ a 'Behold. O! a sight of Christ would make us a city of joy; 'they rejoiced when they saw Jesus'; ay, a sight of Him would make us 'a city of praise', and 'the voice of thanksgiving should be heard in it. Is there any person here that would have the garment of praise, instead of the garment of heaviness? Then give unto Christ

a look and obey this text.

There is this seventh advantage that attends the beholding of Christ and it is this: It is an excellent way to win to steadfastness of spirit. Are there not some persons here that cry out, 'I am unstable as water, and that mars my excellency; how shall I win to a composed way of serving God? Give Christ a look and that is the way to win to stedfastness. This is clear, Psalm xvi, 8, 'I have set the Lord always before me. That was a strange word, 'I have set the Lord always before me''; was it not a pleasant object? But what of that? Therefore, 'I shall never be moved. My stability depends upon this, I have God always within sight. And I would say this, if ye be not within speaking to God, O be within looking to Him. Is there a person here that is not within gripping or speaking unto God? Yea, O be within looking to Him; for, though He were far off, ye may take a look of Him.

The eighth advantage that waits upon looking unto Christ is this: Give Christ a look and that is an excellent way to attain to tenderness. Peter's heart, in a manner, was like a rock before Christ gave him a look, and then, as it were, ye might have melted it to water. O tenderness! whither is it gone? And what is the reason we are so untender? It is because we are not much taken up in looking unto Christ. This is clear, if there be a person here that hath gotten a look of Christ, he will 'water his couch with tears'

The seventh consideration to press you to behold Christ is this, that the look ye get of Him here is but the fore-runner of a more excellent, transcendent, and permanent look of Him hereafter. Any person that hath given Christ a look here, O that satisfying look that he shall have of Him hereafter! I tell you nine differences between the look that a Christian hath of Christ here upon earth, and the look that he shall have of Him in heaven.

1st. The look of Christ that a Christian hath here is but a look through the vail, but there we shall see Him face to face.

2ndly. The difference between the look of Christ that a Christian hath here, and the look of Him which is above, is this, the look of Christ that we have here admits of interruptions, but the look of Him which is above, shall never be interrupted. A Christian will get a look of Christ here, but presently a cloud comes in between and interrupts the enjoyment; but there is no cloud in heaven. Blessed are the congregation that stand about the throne, they never cease to behold Him.

3rdly. A look that a Christian hath here of Christ, doth not complete his joy and satisfaction, but the look that a Christian shall have above, O, how shall it complete his joy and satisfaction! All the looks a Christian gets of Christ here are rather to provoke his appetite than to satisfy it. Would ye know the first day of a Christian's satisfaction? It is in the morning of the resurrection. This is

clear, Psalm xvii, 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. Might one say, 'O David, were you never satisfied? Were you not satisfied when you sang the sixty-third, the one hundred and forty-seventh, and the one hundred and forty-eighth psalms?' No, says David, 'I shall never be satisfied till the morning of the resurrection.

4thly. Here a Christian gets a look but of Christ's back parts; but there he shall see Him face to face. All these excellent sights we have of God here, are but a beholding of His back parts; but there we shall see Him face to face (Exod. 33, 23).

5thly. All the looks of Christ that we have here are but, as it were, the beholding of the picture of Christ; but there we shall see Him as He is. There is a great difference between the picture of Christ and the real substance of Him, and all the sights of Christ that a Christian hath here are but, as it were, His picture. This is clear, Numb. xii, 8, where God says of Moses' beholding Him - "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. And Ezekiel, giving account of the sight he saw, says, 'It was the appearance of the glory of God. But there we shall have a sight of an unvailed, of a real discovered Christ.

6thly. There is this difference between the look of Christ that a Christian hath here and that which he shall have of Him hereafter; the look that a Christian gets of Christ here may be abused; but the look that he gets of Him

above cannot be abused. Do we not often abuse our looks of Christ through pride? Do we not often abuse our looks of Christ through formality? And do we not often abuse our looks of Him through security? But these looks of Christ that are above cannot be abused; there is no abusing of enjoyments in heaven.

7thly. The seventh difference is this, all the looks of Christ that a Christian hath here doth not complete his conformity; but the everlasting and broad, immediate look of Christ that a Christian shall have above, shall complete his conformity. Our beholding of Christ in a glass makes us to be changed, in some measure, 'from glory to glory'; but, when we shall have an immediate sight of God, we shall be completely conformed to His image; there shall not be a spot in all our souls.

8thly. The eighth difference between them is, all the looks of Christ that a Christian hath here, never put him from that, 'O give, give; that is the language of a Christian; but, when once he shall get a sight of Him above, he shall be forced, in a manner, to cry out, 'Hold thy hand, for I have abundance now'. Do ye not long to get these looks of Christ that are above?

9thly. The last difference between them, is this, the sight of Christ that we have here doth not complete our love; but the sight of Him which we shall have above, shall complete our love. Then shall we have light and love of 'a large extent;' hope and faith shall then leave us; and

light and love shall walk in with us, and divide the spoil. There is this eighth consideration to press you to look to Christ: I entreat you to think what ye will do. O what intend you to do? Do you intend to let Christ go away, and not give Him one 'behold'? Think ye that this shall indeed be that which shall be told in heaven of you, 'I came to Glasgow, and Glasgow would not give Me one 'behold'.

The ninth and last consideration is this: If once thou lookest unto Christ, and beholdest Him, there shall be a knot of marriage made up between thee and Him, which all the world shall not be able to untie. O young women, young women, I entreat you, come and give Christ one look, and this shall be an eternal and excellent marriage knot that shall be cast between you and Him. I will tell you five things that do break the most near and intimate relations that are imaginable, and yet cannot break this knot of union.

1. Are there not many persons that stand in very near relations, that ingratitude will make to loose their knots? Then brethren, or intimate friends (a great relation), will say, 'Will I love an ungrateful friend any more : ' But, be thou never so ungrateful, it shall never break the knot of union between thee and Christ; it may well get thee many strokes from Christ, but it will never break the union.

2. The second thing that will break knots of union and time most near relations among men, is sin. It will break

the knot of union between man and wife; adultery will break the marriage-knot; but no sin, O Christian, shall break the knot between thee and Christ; if thou shouldst play the harlot many hundreds of days, that will not break the knot. Blessed are we in this, that no sin shall break that knot of marriage.

3. This breaks knots of friendship between persons that will not break it between Christ and a soul, and that is, distance of place. When once we are long out of sight of such a friend, we forget him; but, O blessed be precious Christ, who, though He be living in heaven, distance of place doth not make Him to forget us. Blessed are we in this, that distance of place doth not break the knot of union with Christ; His heart is in Glasgow, if your hearts would be in heaven.

4. What breaks the knots of union among persons is passion and anger. Nothing would divide two friends sooner than passion and anger. However, Christ may be angry with thee, but He will not break His covenant. Let Him be angry at thee, and thou at Him, yet it shall not break the marriage-knot; yea, if ye should take both hands to break it, it should not be broken.

5. What breaks a knot of union that will not break it between Christ and thee, is this, prejudice and jealousy. Is there anything that makes persons to grow sooner heartless, one with another, than to have a suspicion and jealousy such a person doth not really love them? But, O,

blessed are we in this, for Christ hath no jealousy, and, as for us, no suspicion. Though it were our desire, we shall never come the length as to break the knot; yea, although thou wouldst break the knot, and scrape out thy name out of the marriage-contract, Christ would say, 'Thou shalt not get leave'. Many persons that have been married to Christ, have been brought to this, 'Give me a pen and I will scrape out my name out of thy contract'. 'No, says Christ, 'thou shalt not get leave, it shall stand there. Sir, now think what you shall say to it? I entreat you, think what you shall say to this bargain? And, being loath to leave it without gaining your consent to this excellent bargain, I shall tell you these four things, and I entreat and charge you, remember them.

1st. I say, know this, remember ye heard this once preached in Glasgow pulpit, 'Behold me, behold me'. And know it, the day is approaching when that verse shall come to thy mind, and thou shalt cry out, 'What was I doing that I would not give Christ a look- Yea, know it of a certainty, that when thou shalt be passing through the threshold of the doors of thy everlasting prison, this word shall come to thy mind, once I was bidden look unto Christ, and now whither am I going. When thou shalt cry forth with a dreadful lamentation, 'Whither are the undervaluers of Christ now going'? O I would never disobey that preaching if I heard it again.

2ndly. Know this, that all the persons within this church

shall be witnesses one against another, if they embrace not Christ. I make the supposition that you are the person to whom Christ should say, 'What was the reason that you would not give me one behold? I pray, what would you say, if Christ would come here tonight and ask every one of us, before we depart, 'What is the reason that you would not give Me one look? I pray you, what would you say? Think of it, what you shall answer unto Christ in that day, when He shall thus pose you?

3rdly. I would say this, there are two times approaching when you shall cry out, 'O for a preaching upon the first verse of the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. Shall not that be a day when thou shalt cry out, 'O, for a look of Christ, when thou shalt be standing near the gates of death, thou shalt cry out, 'O, for a command to look unto Christ? The second time is, when thou shalt be standing before thy judge. I know that a multitude of words will not persuade you.. There are these four things that I would say unto you; there are four sorts of persons that I fear are within these doors. Now the broad and everlasting curse of the eternal God will be upon the person, be he who he will, that is among these four. And,

(1) There are some of the Gadarenes among us, that cry out, 'O Christ depart out of our coasts! Are there not many here that would be content to give Christ a bill of divorce? I say, cursed art thou, be thou whom thou wilt. And,

(2) There are a second sort of folk that will be here today that will cry out, 'We care for none of these things; you press us to look to Christ, and what of that? I say, cursed is that person that is of Gallio's frame, who, let Christ and the minister press you never so much, will never give Christ one look. I say to thee, be it according to thy desire, thou shalt never get a look of Christ.

(3) I think there be many of Pilate's humour here today that cry out, 'I know nothing against the man whom you press us to behold; but, at last, you will consent to crucify Him. O know ye nothing against Christ, and will ye consent to crucify Him!

(4) There will be some here today of an Athenian frame, that will say, 'This man feigns to be a setter forth of strange gods. 'No, say I, 'I am no setter forth of strange gods; it is Jesus of Nazareth that I preach unto you, O Glasgow! Un-persuadable Glasgow! Will you not be persuaded to give Christ one look?

4thly. Now there is this, lastly, that I would say unto you, to press you to give Christ one 'Behold,' and it is this, if you - would ask all the angels in heaven, and all the saints that are round about the throne, they would all say this, O give Christ a 'behold'. Do not all that are round about the throne say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Adam and Eve say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Abel, and Enoch, and Noah say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob say, it is good to behold

Christ? Do not the twelve patriarchs say, it is good to behold Christ? Do not the twelve apostles say, it is good to behold Christ? And do not all His saints that have tasted of the sweetness of Christ say, O it is good to behold Him? And ought not our souls to say, and all in us to cry out, O it is good to behold Him? Now, will ye go away without giving your consent? O speechless Glasgow! hast thou that one word to say, I am content to take Him? O speechless and unpersuadable Glasgow, wilt thou once come to this length, to say that word to Him, I am content? Though thou cannot say it heartsomely, thou shalt never rue it; that word shall afford to thee everlasting joy. Some folk will be ashamed to speak their consent to a husband that is suiting them; but wilt thou speak thy consent to Christ with a look, if not with thy mouth. Christ desires no more, but that ye would now speak your consent to Him with a look, if not with thy mouth. Christ desires no more, but that ye would speak your consent to Him in a broad look, if thou cannot do it otherwise.

Now, are you persuaded? I shall say no more, but this book will be a witness against you. I am sure it is but a poor work, if ye will do no more, to give Christ a look. Shall I use any more arguments? Or shall I take it for granted that ye will not give Christ one look? I do not think Christ is to be beheld with bodily eyes; hut I think ye will do this, as if one were desiring another to behold a pleasant object, which they desire not to behold; they would put their hands upon both their eyes that they

might not behold. So, I think, ye will do with this intimation to behold Christ; for, if Christ were coming here Himself tonight, ye would put both your hands upon your eyes, that ye might not behold Him. Now, if this were the last word that I were to speak in the name of the Lord, I might say Glasgow is an unpersuadable and speechless place. O Glasgow, wilt thou not know the things that belong to thy peace, and begin a pursuit after the Son of God? I have three words to say unto you, and shall close.

(1) Believe it, though ye have undervalued Christ forty years, He is content now to take you. Old men, ye have your names, old undervaluers of the Son of God, will ye be content now to take Him? And, I say, though ye had never given Christ a look before, ye are welcome to give Him a look now.

(2) There is nothing should be pleasant to us, till once we have given Christ a look. And,

(3) I would say this to you, perhaps Christ is going away, and we are as great strangers to Him as before. O Glasgow, if thou couldst sing the fifth verse of the forty-second chapter of Job, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. O if thou couldst say that, then thou mightest indeed cry out, Now I wish I were, in a manner, blind, that I never saw another sight. To Him who can anoint your eyes with eye-salve, to see Him, we desire to give praise. Amen.

STRANGERS CALLED TO BEHOLD CHRIST

Isaiah lxxv. 1 - I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name.

We told you that Christ was presenting a great desire to you, and are there none of you presenting a desire to Christ? I shall tell you two great desires to present to Christ.

The first great desire that ye ought to present to Him should be this, "Lord ,Jesus, help me to receive my sight."

And there is a second great desire that ye ought to present to Him, and that is in Psalm xiii, 3, 'Enlighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." I would give you the advice that Abimelech gave to Sarah, let Christ be "the covering of your eyes," with whom you converse. I would say but this one thing, Christ is willing to satisfy all your senses. Will ye come? Will ye have the sense of sight satisfied? Does not Christ invite you in the text 'Behold me?" Would you have the sense of tasting satisfied? Is not this commanded in Psalm xxxiv, 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good?" Would you have the sense of hearing satisfied? Is it not His command, hear my Son and his gospel? Would ye have the sense of touching satisfied? Is it not this great command to Thomas, John xx,

27, Come, and 'reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side"? And would ye have the sense of smelling satisfied? Come to Him that is 'perfumed with all the powders of the merchant." I do think, the most part of us shall die strangers to Christ. I think, if we would ask the angels, what is Christ? they would say this, they could not tell. All the saints about the throne would say so, and all that have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, ask all of them, what is His sweetness worth? They would say they could not tell. Would ye ask the depth, as Job xxviii. 14. It would say, the price of Christ is not in me. Yea, all the gold that lies in the bowels of the earth says, it could not buy Christ. Wherewith then could ye buy Him? I say, with one look ye shall get Christ.

Now, in the forenoon, we spake a little to the first thing in the words, which is, that great command given to the Gentiles, 'Behold me." O wonder that ever there should have been such a word! What would ye have thought if all that is in this book had been in this frame, "Cursed be he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law"? What if all had been like that in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus? Angels wonder that ever there was such a command, and all the saints that are about the throne, wonder; and let all who are here, wonder, that ever there was such a command.

I have some things to add upon this command. I shall

Speak to two or three things.

The first thing is, to point out a little the difference of the look of Christ that the saints have above, and that which is here. We are calling you to behold Christ, but they that are in heaven, have another look. I shall point out these eight or nine differences.

1. The first difference is, that look we have of Christ here is but a mediate look, but that which the saints have above is immediate. Here we behold Him but thro' the vail, thro' the dark vail of duties, and ordinances, and promises, and dispensations. O! but behold, above we shall have an immediate look; there shall not any thing intervene betwixt Christ and the soul; there shall be an immediate embracement of the Son of God. And, we think, these that have seen Him through the vail, will be longing when they shall have these immediate looks of him, when all these veils that are betwixt them and Christ, shall be rent from top to bottom. Are we not longing and groaning for that day when ye shall behold Him in glory?

2. The second difference is, that look we have here doth admit of interruption, but that which we have above shall have no interruption in it; there is no cloud, no night, no desertion there. There are no such complaints in heaven as this, 'Why hidest thou thy face?' Or as that, 'It is thirty days since I did behold the king,' and 'I have lived two years in Jerusalem, and have not seen the king's face.' O

that look that shall admit of no interruption! It is an endless look that the saints shall have above. And think ye not that the naming of our looks to Christ should make us look and long for that day?

3. The third difference is, that look which we have here may be abused, hut that which is above, cannot. Here a Christian may abuse his look to Christ, through the pride of life. O! there is no abusing of that spotless look that we will get of Christ above.

3. The third difference is, that look which we have here is hut a beholding His back-parts; but there, we shall behold His face. Here we but see (as it were), 'the skirts of his garments', but there we shall see him face to face. And is not that a great difference?

5. The fifth difference is, that look which the Christian hath here doth not complete his joy. As long as he is here, he is spending his life in bitterness. Would ye know the first day that a Christian hath his joy complete? It is in the blessed morning of the resurrection; 'When I awake, I shall see thy joy,' saith David. O what joy the Christian shall have when Christ and he meet together; and He shall take the Christian in His arms, and say, 'Welcome, O friend,' even in that day when Christ and he shall meet together in the streets of the new Jerusalem!

6. The sixth difference is, that look which the Christian hath here doth not complete his conformity to Christ. O,

but the look we have above doth abundantly complete our conformity to Him! Know ye not that word, 1 John iii, 2, 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him'' (why so?) 'for we shall see him as he is.' That look of Him as He is, makes a complete conformity betwixt Christ and the soul, but all these looks that we have here do not complete our conformity. We must go to heaven, trailing a body of death; but the time approaches when we shall take our everlasting farewell of all our lusts and idols, and shall say, 'Farewell' with our hearts, we shall never meet again.

7. The seventh difference is, that look of Christ which we have here doth not complete our graces, hut that which we shall have above shall complete all our graces. Shall not love be complete, when we shall get our look of Christ above, and joy complete? O! then that which is in part shall be done away, when that which is perfect is come. O Christians, what a day shall it be, when faith shall say to love, I give my place to thee; and sight and love shall be the eternal company of the Christian?

8. The eighth difference is, that look that the Christian has here, is not perfect in its degrees. When we shall be able to behold Christ, and shall fall into a sight of Him; when we shall first see the Lord, we shall begin a song that shall never have an end. It is an endless look, a satisfying look, a soul-refreshing look. There is no work so

much as this in heaven. Would ye know what the saints in heaven are doing? They are said to be full of eyes, and not of tongues; for this reason, because they are more taken up with looking, than speaking; more in wondering than expressing; therefore, it is that they are said to have many eyes, and but one tongue.

9. The last difference is, that look of Christ that we have here, is but the look of an unknown Christ, of a strange Christ, of an unconceived Christ; but then we shall have a look of a known Christ, of an unveiled Christ, of a Christ that shall be well taken up and understood. These are the differences betwixt the looks here, and the looks that are above. When shall it be that the exercise of heaven and earth shall be all one?

I shall, in the next place, proceed to answer some objections of those who think they have never looked to Christ. Objection 1. 'O,' says some, 'I have never looked to Christ because I know not the day; and some folks can tell the time and place, when they have looked to Christ.' I would say these four things to such: -

1st. There are few that win that length, John ix, 25, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.' You can say, 'Though I know not the time and place, yet sure I am, I see these things that were hid from mine eyes before.'

I would say, 2ndly. It is not (may be) for your advantage to know the time that Christ keepeth in His own hand. It

is not always for your advantage to know the times.

3rdly. It is not absolutely necessary for a Christian to know the time when Christ and he first met. There are some that have met with Christ, and they neither knew the time nor place, nor the first discourse that passed betwixt Christ and them.

4thly. What knowest thou but He hath stolen away thy heart?

Objection 2. 'I know not if I have looked to Him; for since I began to look to Him, 'my bonds are strong'.' I would say these three things to that person: - -

1st. Do not cast off thy faith because of that, nor dispute thy love; because there is nothing more ordinary to a Christian than this, to have the spirit under bonds, Heb. x, 32, 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions.'

2ndly. I say, the best way to win above these bonds, is not to reject thy faith, but to hold it fast. It is a poor thing in Christians, whenever they lose their feet, to let their hands go; when they begin to misbelieve, they run out of the land of the living.

3rdly. I say, comfort thyself, the day of the liberty of the sons of God is coming, when these bonds shall be taken

off thee; when it shall be said, O prisoner come out!

Objection 3. Some say, 'I have not these great attendances of the Christian's light and joy.' Psalm xcvi, 11, 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' I would say these two things to thee: -

1st. Thy light and thy joy may be under ground until both appear together. May be Christ is trying the reality of thy faith, whether thou lovest Him rather than sense or sight. I will tell you what it speaks in Christians, if they get not all they sought for when they began with Christ, then they reject all. The reason is, many think more of sense than of Christ; yea, many professors think more of knowledge than of Christ. And,

2ndly, I will say this also, Christ is (may be) teaching thee to love Him more by faith than by sense.

Objection 4. 'O,' says some, 'I cannot pray, I never go to prayer but my tongue is still.' I would not have you mistaken, for there is a threefold silence a Christian may have in prayer, and ye may have greater liberty in them, than if ye would speak like an angel.

1st. There are some, when they are enjoying most of God, then the heart is enlarged with love; prayer has little upon the tongue that they can speak. Think ye Daniel was straitened when he saw the angel, and stood trembling; and John, in the Revelation, when he fell at

Christ's feet? Know ye not how a Christian, through a sight of Christ in prayer, will leave off speaking and wonder? A Christian sometimes will not get his enlargement expressed.

2ndly. It is divine silence when he has a deep impression of God's greatness and his own sinfulness. A Christian is never more enlarged, than when he cannot speak one word but that, Psalm lxxvii, 4, 'Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak'; i.e., when his heart wrote uncleanness against himself, and his tongue could not speak. Sometimes his guilt seemed staring him in the face, that he was stricken with dumbness, and could not speak one word. Ye would know, that sometimes, when Christians cannot speak their confession to God, they must roar. Then they are so put to it sometimes, that put a spear to their hearts, they could not speak one word. Know ye that word of David, Psalm xxxviii, 8, 'I have roared, by reason of the disquietness of my heart.'

3rdly. It is divine silence when a Christian is going to commend Christ, and, as it were, so silent a discovery of Christ is let out on him, that he charges himself with presumption, 'Shall I speak?' We are never put to question Christ thus, 'Shall I pray?' Know it, there is more expression in a little while's wondering, than in ten hours praying. There is, I confess, a silence that proceeds from a spirit of bondage; and, I think, a look of Christ is the way

to help it. I tell you, if your tongues speak no more than your hearts think, they will be oftentimes short. There are some folks' prayers that are nothing but a lying to the Holy Ghost; and in their prayers and confessions they lie, and as for their desires, they care no more for them than the dirt under their feet. It is a wonder we are not stricken dead in prayer, both ministers and professors. It is strange that Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for one lie, and we are not for so many; yea, may he for fifteen lies in one prayer. Will ye examine yourselves, O Christians, before whom ye speak!

Objection 5. Says the Christian, 'If ever I had looked to Christ, I would have had some desires to Him,' for, no doubt. they will be longing for these immediate looks of Christ. I would say these five things.

1st. There may be some Christians that may have ten desires for death, when not one desire for heaven; for thou mayest desire in reality death oftener in ten days, than thou wilt desire heaven in a month. And what is the reason of it? It is not from our hope, but from the cursedness of our heart, as Jonah desired rather to die, than to live; it was not for heaven he did it, but from the corruption of his heart, being disappointed by God.

2ndly. The second thing I would say is, one may have forty desires for death, when not one for the death of sin. Ye should desire the death of the body of death more.

3rdly. I think, a Christian may long to go away, and so to get his pass.

4thly. I entreat you, Christians, when you get a look of Christ, study to improve it. Would ye know what makes the Christian long so little? It is because he doth not improve his looks to Christ.

5thly. I confess, I think it no wonder that Christians long not for a look of Christ. Were ye never put to these three things? (1) O time, time, that passeth not away to let eternity come! Were ye never put to that, that ye would be content to shake the glass of your time, to win to eternity? That if it were in your own hand, ye would not lay it down upon the side, that it might not run, but would shake it?

(2) And were ye never put to that, to long for your light? 'Arise, my dove, my love, for your winter is past.'

(3) Were ye never like Sisera's mother, looking out at her windows and saying, 'Why stay his chariots so long?' And when death comes, ye would take it in your arms, and say, 'Welcome, O friend'? Know ye not what death is to a Christian? It is the putting off of your burdens; the day of death to all your sorrows, to all your iniquities, and to all your idols, to all your anxieties; it is the door whereby you must enter into all good eternally; and it is like Joseph's chariot, which was sent to bring Jacob down into Egypt. Where is your heart, O Christians?

Ought it not to be up in heaven? Where is your faith? Is it not there? I have but two or three things to persuade you to give Christ one look.

(1) I have nothing in commission but this. Now, what will ye send me away with? Will ye send me away with a blank? O that this congregation, that is much destitute of knowledge, would begin this night! For I defy all the ministers of the world to assure you that ye shall live to look to Him tomorrow; therefore, look to Him today.

(2) What know you, but one of you may break your neck? What do you know, but that it may be said this night, 'Rise, undervaluers of the gospel, and of the Son of God, and give an account in judgment'? What would you say if that voice were heard this night? And what do you know but it will be? With what countenance would ye look Christ in the face? Ye would desire that ye were ground in pieces.

(3) I say, this very night, will ye be content to take Him? What arguments can be used more to persuade you? Is there any argument under heaven that can persuade you to take Him? O you despisers and slighers of the Son of God! I charge you, as ye will answer one day, to take Him; and beware that that word shall not come upon you, 'His blood be upon us, and our children.' And know ye this, that the curses of one side of this book are able to smother ten thousand worlds? What will ye think then, when all the curses in this book shall light upon you?

Where shall ye flee in that day, when all that is in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and 26th chapter of Leviticus, shall light upon you, and, and there shall be no redemption? Is there any redemption where Christ turns to be your enemy? Therefore, I say, this night look to the Son of God. Is it nomatter wherein ye trifle over your time? I say, be serious in this thy day. Old men, what say ye to it, ye that are near your graves? I would say this, 'I set life and death before you'; which will ye choose? It is Christ that is offered to you. Know this, that be what ye will, sirs, that are slighers of the gospel, that word in Isa. lxv, 1, shall gnaw your consciences. Ye shall remember that day when ye shall be crying for mercy and ye shall cry out, 'Where now is the sligher of the gospel? I shall never any more have another offer. The day was when I was bidden take Christ, and give Him one look.' Therefore, before ye go, close the bargain this night. Ye know not, if ever Christ shall come again, and send His message to invite you to take Him. So again, what is your last report? Speak to Him, for ye know not but they may be His last words; let us, therefore, be entreated now to take Him Cursed be the person that will never see Him all their days. It had been better ye had never heard a word of Him. O! shall Christ in His face, and in His beauty, and in all the excellent offers of heaven, be slighted?

Now, know ye, the day is approaching, that thou shalt wish thou hadst never been born. Ye slighers of the great

salvation, ye shall cry out 'O that I had never been born!' Therefore I say, seeing Christ is in your offer, take Him, and take witnesses in heaven, that ye shall never have another. Now, old men, will ye take witnesses of this ye shall never have another but Christ? Young men, and young women, look to the Son of God, and it shall be one of the days of the Son of man to you. O, that look that Christ shall give to His own children when time shall be no more, when they shall be led with the Lamb about the rivers of living waters! Are ye all content? Will ye say nothing against it? Then I say, if it be so (which I fear is not so), blessed be he who embraces the Son of God; and cursed be the man or woman which takes Him not. Since ye are standing before the mountain of cursing or blessing, I entreat you, look to the Son of God, who, like the brazen serpent, can heal you from all your stings and iniquities. Now, to Him that can persuade you, and will one day stand to judge you, be praise for evermore. Amen.

THE INDISPENSABLE DUTY OF GIVING THE HEART TO CHRIST

Proverbs xxiii. 26 - "My Son, give me Thine heart."

How beautiful upon the mountains ought their feet to be, that bring glad tidings, and publish peace? I have glad tidings from a far country to declare to some of you this day; and what are they? There are two great suitors come to Bothwell kirk this day, suiting you all; the one is Jesus Christ, that noble Plant of Renown, He is suiting you; and He says, 'Son, give me thine heart.' The other is the devil that is suiting you, and he says, 'Son, give me thine heart,' likewise. Now which of these two will ye answer and hearken to? I do conceive, that it may fill us with astonishment, that He that is infinitely perfect in Himself, should suit the like of us, and that He who lacks nothing, should seek from us.

Now, we would ask these three questions of all of you.

1st. Did ye ever behold such excellency in Christ, that ye were forced to cry out, 'O, for a thousand hearts to give to Christ, O, for a thousand eyes to behold Him, and O for a thousand hands to do Him service, and O for a thousand feet to walk in His ways.' Were ye ever at this'?

And the second question is - what think ye of this desire,

that heaven puts forth to you this day? It is a question difficult to determine, whether this text speaks more love, or more condescendency in Christ; but it breathes forth both. O that such a Noble Plant of Renown as Christ is, should seek us sinners!

And a third question - what can be the reason that heaven should put forth such a desire unto you this day? This is the great petition of the great King to you, 'Son, give me thine heart'; and we have no more ado, but woo you to Christ, and ye have no more ado but give Him your heart. O, if once we saw Him in His beauty, there would not need to be much preaching to persuade us to give Him our hearts! Now, in the words that are read unto you, there are three things to be considered.

1. The suit and desire that Christ puts forth to sinners, and that is, "Son, give me thine heart."

2. There is this consideration from which Christ presses this desire on sinners, that they would grant Him this desire, to give Him their hearts; and, we conceive, there are these six considerations in the words to press this on sinners.

The 1st is taken from the excellency of the person that asks this suit, that is ME; give dying Me, Crucified Me, excellent Me, give glorified Me, thine heart. All that can be said, is here said when He says, 'give me'; and there is great reason for it, that we give such an excellent person

our heart.

2ndly. If ye would give Christ your heart, and make a resignation and deliverance of it over unto Him, He would look upon it as a gift, although it be our debt and duty to do it; therefore, He says, 'Give me thine heart.' O who will refuse such a gift to precious Christ! Blessed be the giver of this gift.

3rdly. Consider the smallness of the gift or thing that He asks. It is thine heart. Would He say, 'Give spotless Me thy spotted heart, give holy Me thy profane heart, give glorified Me thy foul, loose, black heart? There is no more here, but 'give me thy heart'; 'me' and 'thy,' and yet there is a great difference between them, though not expressed in these words.

4thly. Consider that loving and soul-conquering way that Christ takes with folk to gain their hearts. He comes not by charge and command, as He might do, but by way of humble supplication, as it were, sitting on His knees, and asking sinners' hearts, although He might command them.

5thly. Consider the noble and excellent dignity unto which he is advanced, who gives Christ his heart, in that word 'my son.' Although they have been all strangers to God before, yet now they shall have the state of adoption, and shall be God's sons, that give Christ their hearts. And,

The 6th consideration by which He presses it, is this, that if we give not Christ our heart, it is impossible but we must give it to some other thing. This is clear in the text, comparing it with the next verses (verses 27, 28, etc.), that the whorish women will get their hearts, if Christ do not get it. Would He say, 'The devil will get thy heart and give it to whoredom, if I get it not?'

Now, 3. The third thing in the words, is the time when the heart should be given to Christ, and it is in the morning of their days, for the word in the original is 'My young man, give me thy heart.' Now, we spake before to the commendation of young religion; I shall only propose six or seven considerations whereby to commend young religion, and the early giving of the heart to Christ.

1. Christ's earnest desire to have the heart at that time, Eec. xii, 1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth", that is Christ's earnest request to sinners, to remember Him in their youth.

2. A second consideration is, because thy work is great, and thy journey long; therefore give Christ your heart in your youth, that ye may begin this long journey in time.

3. Ye have but a short time to work that great work, and to go that long journey in; yea, there is much of our precious time gone by, and but little of our work done; yea, we are scarce begun to it. And yet, I may say that word, that the husbandman said to the vineyard dressers, 'Why

stand ye here all the day idle?' Matth. xx, 6. Now, will ye give your hearts to Him?

4. Consider, that the giving of your hearts to Christ in your youth, will help you to escape ills, that ye and your hearts are ready and apt to fall into in time of youth, as Eccles. xi, 10, 'Childhood and youth are vanity.'

5. Consider, that if ye give Christ your hearts in your youth, it shall be more acceptable and welcome to Christ, than when ye are old, or when ye come to sixty years old; therefore, do it now in time, when Christ will take them.

6. Consider, that the sooner ye give your heart to Christ ye are the sooner admitted to the partaking, and fruition, and enjoyment, of many excellent things in Him, and in His company, that, if ye do not, ye shall want.

7. Consider, that if ye delay to give Christ your heart to-day, you shall be the unfitter to do it tomorrow; for there is not one hour's delay, but it indisposes you the more for giving your hearts to Christ for many days again; therefore, I say to you, young men, give your hearts to Christ: I have no better advice to give you all than this. O shall we send Him away with a refusal on the first day of the feast? O will ye refuse Christ all the three days? I charge you do it not, but give it to Him.

Now, we come to the first thing in the words, and I shall speak a little to it, and it is this, that Christ puts forth this

suit, and desires sinners to give Him their hearts. In further discoursing of this, I shall speak to these four or five things.

First, what it is to give Christ our heart; and I shall hold it out in these four or five things. And,

1st. It is to give the thoughts to Christ. There are some that will give the devil their thoughts, but they would give Christ their affections; but I say, thou must think on Christ when thou sittest down, and when thou risest up, and in the Right seasons, and in the day when thou walkest in the way; but I may say Christ is not in all our thoughts.

2ndly. It is to give our desires to Christ, that so thy desires, that before were running in so many different channels, may now all run Christward, and out in Him.

3rdly. It is to give all our affections to Christ, our joy and delight, and our love and patience; yea, all affections to Him.

4thly. It is to give Christ our mind, the light of our mind, and all the knowledge that we have, to improve it for His glory.

5thly. To give our heart to Christ, is the giving of our soul unto Him, the whole soul and faculties thereof.

Now, in the second place, we shall propose some considerations to press this home upon you; and I charge and adjure you, as ye would not despise that noble Plant of Renown, Jesus Christ, to give Him your heart.

1. The first consideration is this, that if thou wouldst weep forty years, and pray other forty years; yet, if thou givest not thy heart, it will be said to thee, who required these things at thy hand? This is clear, Mark xii, 33. To love God is better than sacrifice; and see 1 Cor. xiii, 2, 3. If I have not love, I am nothing, though I should give my body to be burnt, it is nothing. So then, as thou wouldst not have thy prayers, and communicatings, and fastings counted thy dittay [ground of accusation), give Christ thy heart.

2. The second consideration is this, that if thou givest thy heart to Christ, He will give His to thee; and is not that a sweet exchange? John xiv, 21, 23, 'He that loveth me, my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him.' O but these are sweet guests to lodge with thee, and they shall lodge with thee, if thou dost so.

3. Consider, that your heart which He seeks is not much worth, Prov. x, 20, 'The heart of the wicked is little worth'; and I may say so of all men's hearts, therefore give it to Christ.

4. Consider, that Christ is exceedingly pressing and earnest to have you giving Him your hearts. Cursed be the

man and woman that will not give Christ their hearts, and let all the congregation say amen; yea, the broad gospel curse and malediction will be upon that person.

5. Consider, that the giving Christ your hearts, will set you free from a great fivefold burden that ye lie under.

. (1) From the great burden of desires; for the desires of one that is a stranger to Christ, are like the grave, that cries ay, 'Give, give,' and will never be full. The desire of the sluggard slays him; but, if once thy heart were given to Christ, it would do, as it is Psal. xxvii, 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.'

. (2) This would deliver and set thee free from a burden of fears; for persons, as long as they are strangers to Christ, fear such a curse, and such a loss, and such a sad dispensation; but, if thou hast given thy heart to Christ, it will be a grave to thy fears, to bury them in.

. (3) The giving thy heart to Christ, would deliver thee from a burden of sorrow; for, as long as a person is a stranger to Christ, he has no cause of joy but sorrow; but when the heart is given to Christ thou shalt rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The believer may have sometimes bitterness indeed, but not for his lot; Prov. xiv, 10, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger

doth not intermeddle with his joy.'

. (4) There is the burden of doubts; but the giving the heart to Christ, would set us free from all our perplexities, and our anxious cares would be sweetly resolved in this freedom, if Christ had our hearts.

. (5) This would set free from a burden of anxious hope. The stranger to Christ has many imaginary and vain hopes, but when he gives his heart to Christ, he has it set free from all these; so then, consider this, to stir you up to give your heart to Christ, that it will set you free from all these.

. (6) Consider, that all thy other gifts that thou canst give to Christ, can never, nor will never, be acceptable, till once thou givest Him the gift of thy heart. And there are these five gifts that an hypocrite may give to Christ, and yet not give Him the heart.

1. An hypocrite may give Christ the tongue, yea, he may speak very excellently to any religious purpose. Now, there are many here that have never given their tongue to Christ; and therefore, know this, that thou art one step below an hypocrite, that hast never given thy tongue to Christ.

2. The hypocrite can give Christ a profession; he will put on Christ's robe, but not His graces; yea, he will cast lots for Christ's coat, ere it be long. Now, are there not many

such here? Then thou art one step below an hypocrite, and hast never given Christ thy heart.

3. An hypocrite can give Christ the outside of all outward duties; yea, he can pray, communicate, fast, and read, and meditate, yea have the outside of all duties, and yet never give his heart to Christ.

4. An hypocrite may sometimes give his conscience to Christ, and let it speak for him and his honour, and yet never give Christ his heart.

5. An hypocrite may give his outward man to Christ, his eyes, hands, and his feet, so that outwardly he will do nothing but what Christ bids him; yea, many give Christ their tongue, face, eyes, feet, and hands and yet never give Him their heart. Now, all these gifts are unacceptable to God, till once thou givest Him thy heart; therefore, let this stir you up to this duty.

6. Consider, that except thou givest Christ thy heart, the march-stone betwixt thee and an hypocrite is never rightly laid; because there may be a change in an hypocrite that has not given Christ his heart.

And there is a sevenfold change that a hypocrite may win to, that has never given his heart unto Christ. 1st. There may be a change in his light, 1 Cor. xiii, 2, 'And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' How many glorious

speakers of Christ are in hell this day. Read the 23rd of Numbers and see this. I doubt if there be a minister in Scotland that can speak of Christ like Balaam, and yet he is in hell this day; yea, an hypocrite may solve doubts and cases that a Christian cannot solve, such may be his light, and yet he will never give his heart to Christ. 2ndly. There may be a change in an hypocrite's conscience. Believe it, his conscience may challenge him for neglect of duty, and for wrongs done to Christ, as Judas' was; yea, they sometimes come as far on in this, as the truly godly, if not further.

Now, there is a three-fold change that may be in hypocrites' consciences. As (1) It may challenge for committing of sin, and that very deeply, see in Judas, Saul, and Cain; Saul wept for it, and Judas hanged himself; and Cain cried out by reason of this, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' And (2) an hypocrite's conscience may be convinced, that when he meets with a sad stroke, it is for his sin, and he will acknowledge that God is just in it. 2 Chron. xii, 6, where Rehoboam cried forth, 'The Lord is righteous,' and yet otherwise he was but a bad man, 'he did evil in the sight of the Lord.' (3) An hypocrite's conscience may lead him to reason, and dispute his interest in Christ, from some reasons, and yet never have given his heart to Christ.

3rdly. There may be a change in an hypocrite's affections: There are places to prove this; one is Isa. lviii, 2,

'They take delight in approaching to God.' Now I pose you, if ye dare say this? and if thou never delightedst in approaching to God, thou art one step below a hypocrite, and so hast not given Christ thy heart: O tremble at that! Another place to prove that, is Rom. ii, 18, "Thou knowest God's will, and approvest the things that are more excellent." And yet it is said, they rested in the law, and never gave their hearts to Christ: O but that is a fearful thing.

4thly. An hypocrite may have a change in his will, and that is one of the strangest changes that can be; yea, he may have a half desire to take Christ, as Balaam had, when he cried out, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' Numb. xxiii, 10.

5thly. An hypocrite may have a change in his conversation. Believe it, many of our walks are like painted tombs; many have on Christ's coat, but not His graces; and therefore, let no man judge after the outward appearance, but of the giving of the heart to Christ.

6thly. An hypocrite may have a change in his expressions: O to hear some hypocrites pray, how finely will they talk of Christ; Solomon says, Prov. xxvi, 26, 'Cursed be he whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.'

7thly. There may be a change in an hypocrite's experience, and there are some great steps of experience that

an hypocrite may win unto, that has not given his heart to Christ. (1) He may distinguish betwixt Christ's absence and his presence; that presence of God that he useth to have, he may distinguish betwixt it and absence; Saul could do so, 1 Sam. xxviii, 15, 'God is departed from me,' and He is absent. (2) A second step of experience that an hypocrite may have, is this, he may know when his prayer is not answered: 1 Sam. xxviii, 15, says Saul, "God answers me no more." (3) A third step of the hypocrite's experience, which is a strange one, is this - he may be anxious and sorrowful under absence, and for the want of return in prayer; in the forecited place, says Saul, 'I am sore distressed'; what ails you Saul; what ails you, atheist? 'God answers me not', says he, 'and that is the thing that ails me.' Are there not many here that the want of the return of prayer did never put them to their feet, nor yet made them sore distressed? Thou that art so, art one step below that atheist Saul, and so hast never given thy heart to Christ. (4) An hypocrite may be convinced of the insupportable weight of sin; Cain cried out, Gen. iv, 13, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear'; here, then, is an atheist convinced of the insupportable weight of sin, that never gave Christ his heart. (5) A hypocrite may have some small experiences of the joy of heaven, Heb. vi, 5, there are some who have tasted of the powers of the world to come, and yet these may fall away. Hence, they are but hypocrites, that have not given their hearts to Christ. (6) A sixth step is this, an hypocrite may discern betwixt a good preaching and an ill, as these in

Heb. vi. They can discern and tell when they find sweetness in the word, and when they find it not. (7) This crowns the hypocrite's experiences; he may have some small desires to have Christ, and yet never give his heart to Christ. See Heb. vi.

Now since the hypocrite will win so far, and does so in these days, let this press you to give your heart to Christ, because it is the march-stone betwixt you and an hypocrite. Now will ye answer to this? Old and young, have ye gone that length that the hypocrite may reach? O vile and profane atheist, have ye come this length? O stand in awe, lest ye be disappointed of your expectation of heaven. I shall only mention these three steps that the hypocrite may come; and I shall ask you, if ever you came that length, and if ye have not, ye are far below an hypocrite, that never gave Christ his heart; and they are these things that may be most convincing to you.

1. Didst, or durst thou ever say, that thou delightedst to pray, and to hear preachings? And thou delightedst in approaching to God? Now, if thou hast won to these, thou mayest be an hypocrite for all these; but if not, thou art one step below an hypocrite, and hast never given thy heart to Christ.

2. Didst thou ever mourn for the want of the return of prayer? I ask your consciences, if ever ye durst say that ye did this in earnest? Will ye answer, did ever this affect

your heart? But although it did, yet ye may be an hypocrite in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; and if ye dare not say this, ye are one step below an hypocrite, that never gave his heart to Christ.

3. Did ever this befall thee, that thou couldst put a difference, and distinguish in thine own condition, betwixt absence and presence; but thou that understandest not this, then thou art one step below an hypocrite, that never gave his heart to Christ. Now, beloved, since the hypocrites may win this length, be stirred up by this to give Christ your hearts, and that will lay the march-stone [boundary; dividing line] betwixt you and them.

(8) Consider the excellency of the person that pleads for your hearts; it is the eternal Son of God that desires to have your hearts; Psal. xxiv, 7, 8, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors,' etc. This is the great argument that He uses to persuade them to open; it is a noble guest that would come into them even the King of Glory. O shall there be a person here, that shall hold excellent and precious Christ at the door? O let Him in.

(9) Consider this, to provoke you to give Christ your hearts, that He has waited exceedingly patiently for this, that ye would condescend to give your hearts to Him; see this, Song v. 2. Christ prayed His bride for this; 'Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, etc., for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.'

This is His own argument that He uses with her. O will ye open and let me in. But let me ask all of you, how long has Christ courted you to get your heart? Now will ye let Him in? For Christ's sake give Him your hearts, for He has waited well for you.

(10) If thou givest not thy heart to Christ, the devil shall get it. There is a contest, if we may speak so, between the two wooers, to wit, Christ and the devil; but I fear Christ may return his contest alone from the kirk of Bothwell. O shall the devil prevail more with you, than Christ ? Shall this devilish. courtier prevail with you! I charge you, by Him that is white and ruddy, that ye would give your hearts to Christ . O what arguments can we use with you to persuade you to give your hearts to Christ? I intreat you to give Him your hearts. And though I have spoken much of the length that an hypocrite may come, yet will ye also venture upon Christ, for He will not put you away, if ye come to Him and offer your hearts to Him. O will ye do it, I beseech you.

(11) Consider, that if ye will give Christ your heart, He will look upon that petty small gift as a reward to Him for all the travail of His soul; yea, He will think it good enough recompence to Him for all His sufferings. Now shall the Son of God be content with such small recompence and reward for all that He has done, and will ye not give Him that? O precious Christ, wilt thou return at this time without dividing the spoil, and taking the prey

from the strong? Now, ask your own souls, O shall I give away my heart to Christ, or not?

(12) Consider, that till once ye give your hearts to Christ, all that ye do, communicate, fast, pray, read or whatsoever it be, it is but an abomination unto the Lord. O how much more when it is done with a wicked mind! Now let all these considerations press you to give Christ your hearts.

Now, in the third place, we shall propose some evidences, whereby ye may know whether ye have given your hearts to Christ or not. And we charge you to search and see whether ye have done it or not; and if ye have not done it, make haste and do it.

And, The 1st evidence of it is this, Christ will have many of your thoughts; the thing that has our hearts, has most of our thoughts. Now, whereon are thy thoughts first in the morning? Are they on Christ? I fear they are on some other thing, when thou sittest down, and when thou risest up, then, and in that ease, Christ has not gotten thy heart.

2ndly. These that have given their hearts to Christ, their eyes will observe His ways; these two are joined together in the text. Now are there not many here, and commanded duties are a burden to them? That is an ill token that thou hast never given thy heart to Christ.

3rdly. The man that has given Christ his heart, Christ's

absence 'will be his burden', Song iii, 2. It was Him whom her soul loved, that was gone, and therefore she mourns for His absence.

4thly. The man that has given Christ his heart, he answers all temptations with this: "O temptations (says he), I am not mine own, now I am in Christ; ye must go and seek me from Christ, if ye get me"; that is a noble way to answer assaults from Satan; 'I am Christ's, and not mine own.'"

5thly. He is the person that will be lothest to offend Christ, Song iii, 5, 'I charge you (says the spouse), that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please'

6thly. When once he is admitted to taste of the sweetness of Christ, he endeavours, by all means, to keep Christ and soul together, Song iii, 4. 'I held him, and would not let him go.' Now are there any here that have not these evidences, and that are convinced that they have not given their hearts to Christ as yet? I shall speak to these impediments, which, I conceive, hinder their giving of their hearts to Christ. 1. We are not convinced of, and do not believe the excellency that is in Christ. Durst we stand out so much against this command of Christ's, 'My son, give me thine heart,' if we knew Him. Ignorance of Christ is that indeed which hinders the marriage with Him; for if we had known the Prince of life, we would not have crucified Him, who is the King of Glory. But,

he is both unknown and despised amongst us. 2. The second impediment is, the perverseness of our will. There are many who cry out, 'We will have none of Christ,' like that in Psal. lxxxi, 11, 'Israel would have none of me.' But I say to thee, what knowest thou, but Christ will say, 'I will have none of thee'? And what knowest thou but that sentence is passed against thee, be it according to thy word, thou shalt have none of Christ, and He will have none of thee? O but that is a dreadful sentence! 3. A third impediment is, the whoring of our hearts after things of a present world, has taken the heart from Christ. O but that is a great hindrance of giving our hearts to Christ, when our hearts run out on the things of this life, and take pleasure in them. 4. We are not convinced indeed of the necessity, and advantage, and pleasure in giving our hearts to Christ. O stout-hearted and far from righteousness, will ye not give your hearts to Him, there being so great a necessity of it, and advantage in it? 5. The fifth impediment is, the soul-union and heart-conjunction that is betwixt us and our idols.

There are three words in Scripture that speak this heart-conjunction, that is betwixt us and our idols, Hosea iv, 17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols,' it is in the original, "Ephraim is married to idols"; Ezek. xiv, 2, 5. Consider these two places at your leisure; for there is such a word as union betwixt us and our idols, so that we cannot get our hearts given to Christ. Now I charge you to answer this, whether ye will give Christ your heart or not, in this

last and great day of the feast. What argument will persuade you and what argument has not been used with you? O unpersuadable creatures, will nothing persuade you? I say this one thing to him that gives his heart to Christ, believe me, he shall never rue it, nor yet have cause to rue it. O but Christ is well worthy of your heart! and that knot of union that is casten betwixt you and Christ, that golden indissolvable knot, shall never be loosed again.

There are four things that break bonds, and loose knots between dearest friends; and yet these things will not dissolve this knot of union with Christ. (1) The sin of whoredom, will break the bonds of friends, and yet it will not break the knot of union with Christ. See Hosea ii, 7, 'I will return to my first husband,' says she, when she had been playing the whore, yea and had been married to some other lover since she went a-whoring from Christ; and yet this breaks not the knot of the first marriage with Christ; therefore she is made welcome when she returns unto Him again. (2) Ingratitude will break the knot of friendship amongst dearest friends. If one friend did a great courtesy for another, and that other friend proved ungrateful, O how would this break their friendship one to another; but O how ungrateful have we been to Jesus Christ, and yet it will not loose this knot of union betwixt Him and us. But as it is in Zeph. iii, 17, 'He will rest in his love.' (3) Mistakes will break union betwixt dearest friends and choice friends, and yet this union betwixt

Christ and us cannot be broken thereby; although we mistake Him, it lies not in our power to get this knot broken, and it is not possible that He can mistake us. (4) Passion and anger, Solomon says, separate chiefest friends; but anger cannot separate betwixt Christ and these that have once this knot of union casten. O blessed are we, that the knot is in His hand; for any anger will not make Him break it; yea, He will hale us to heaven, before He breaks this knot with us.

Now, shall I leave you without giving your consent to Christ? And shall we return to Him, and have nothing to say? O will ye give your hearts to Christ, because He is importunate with you? I think, Christ must steal away your heart, before He get it; but, if ye would give Him this gift, it would blind your eyes to all other things. Then give it to Christ. O what say ye to it now? We are to leave you and go away, and ye know not when ye will be wooed so much to Jesus again, as ye have been at this time; but, if we have gained our point, we labour not in vain; and, I say, whether ye grant or refuse, Christ will have His honour. Angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, will praise and glorify Him, though ye do it not. I shall close with this:

Let all the angels praise Him, and let all the congregation say, Amen.

Let all the saints in heaven and earth praise Him; and let all the congregation say, Amen.

Let the sun, moon, and stars, fire, hail, stormy winds, vapours, frost and grass, fowls in the air, and fishes in the sea, old men and young men, old women and young maids, praise Him; and let all the congregation say, Amen.

Yea, let all our souls, and all that is within us praise Him that wooes us; and yet is, by infinite degrees, exalted above all our blessings and praises; to whom be everlasting praise, and glory, and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE OF LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Isaiah xlv.22 - Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

It was said by Solomon, that "light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun"; and is it not most comely to behold the Sun of righteousness? Yea, the light of the eyes is better than the wandering of the desires. There are two looks that the soul may get; one is of Christ, and the other is of ourselves; and if ye once got a look of Him, I might give you the counsel that Sarah got concerning her husband Abraham, "Let him be to thee a covering of the eyes," Gen. xx, 16. We told you that, in the duty commanded, there are seven things holden forth.

(1) That it is incumbent for all the members of the visible church to look unto Christ for salvation.

(2) That all persons, when Christ begins first with them, have their eyes turned off Him, and on something else.

(3) That we ought to do this immediately, to look unto Him.

(4) That there is such a thing attainable as looking unto Christ immediately for salvation.

(5) That faith is a thing that may be exercised on Christ at a distance. Faith is accompanied with a look, and so it can cast an eye to Christ afar off.

(6) That there are some special times and seasons when a Christian ought to look unto Christ for salvation and seek to be saved by Him.

(7) That the discoveries of Christ that He makes to the soul, are as certain as if we had seen Him with our eyes; therefore, it is called a looking. We shall now show that there is such a thing attainable as looking unto Christ immediately for salvation. For clearing of this, I shall first propose these four considerations. That He is a noble Physician, and can heal all diseases and plagues that a soul can have. I will tell you of ten heart plagues that one look of Christ will heal in you, and set you free from them all.

1st. There is the plague of ignorance, so that you know nothing of God, nor of Jesus Christ; then labour to get a look of Jesus Christ, and that will clear thee and cure thy ignorance, Isa. xxxii, 3, "And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim"; and Psal. xxxiv, 5, "They looked to Him and were lightened," etc. O, but a broad look of Christ would make the mist of darkness to flee far away from us. Now, if this be thine errand (to the table tomorrow), that thou mayest get thine eyes opened, I say, one broad look of the Son of God will be a remedy to thee, and cure thee of the plague of thine ignorance.

2ndly. There is the plague of hardness of heart, which is the plague of many of this generation. I say, one broad look of Christ will heal that, Luke xxii, 61. When Christ turned and looked upon Peter, he remembered himself "and wept bitterly." If thou couldst get one look of Christ, he would make thine eyes rivers of water, and thy head a fountain of tears, as Zech. xii, 10, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." O but the embracement of a wounded Christ would melt and wound thy heart strongly! O that we could weep tears of blood for our wounding of the Son of God! Believe it, there are many such here that have pierced Him; and now see that you do not bring a spear with you to thrust Him through at this time also.

3rdly. There, is the plague of apostasy and defection from God. Are not our hearts gone a-whoring from Him in all things? And will anything bring us home again, but one broad look of Christ? Then this sore plague will be healed, when Christ will come and stare you in the face, it will make you come home again, Luke xxii, 61. Here is a sad apostasy of Peter, an eminent Christian, both to his spiritual light, his experience and diligence; and what cures all? Even one look of Jesus Christ cures all. Christians, your light, and grace, and experience, and diligence, are exceedingly decayed; and what would heal all this? One look of Christ's face would do it. O for one look of Christ's fair face today to do this!

4thly. The plague of coldness and little love to Christ in exercise. Now, one look of Christ would cure this, Isa. xvii, 7, "At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." Ye have but low thoughts of Him today; but, O if ye saw Him, then ye would wonder and cry out, "Is it He! Is this undervalued, contemned, and crucified, He!" Yea, a sight of Christ would kindle a glow of love in our hearts to Him that would not be put out again. Cry to Him to heal this plague of coldness.

5thly. There is the plague of self-conceit and pride;" O (says the soul), if I could get my self-pride brought low, then would I sit down and bless Him for One look of Him would do this, Isa. vi, 5, "Mine eyes have seen the Lord"; and what of that? I say, even, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips"; and if we may allude to that, Job vii, 8, "Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not." Job xlii, 5, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." Verse 6, "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Believe it, the pride of professors speaks their distance from Jesus Christ. Now labour to get a look of Him to heal this plague.

6thly. There is the plague of impenitency. "O, (says the Christian), how shall I be set free from this, that so I may mourn in secret and take up a lamentation for my wrongs done to Jesus Christ? O, for a clear sight of Him." Job

xlii, 5 and 6, "Mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I repent in dust and ashes." One sight of Christ would make you go through all the ten commandments; and ay, when you read them over, ye would weep; and when ye read over that word, Exod. xx, 3, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," ye would sit down and weep over that commandment. What is it that makes us weep so little, but the want of sights of Christ? For a look of Him would be both law and gospel to us.

7thly. The plague of lightness and unstedfastness, so that we cannot bide at one thing a moment. We will have some resolutions tonight, it may be, and some others tomorrow; but all these are as the morning cloud and early dew, they pass away; yet one look of Christ would heal this, Psalm xvi, 8, "I have set the Lord always before me," and what of that? - 'therefore I shall not be moved.' One sight of Christ would make us cry out in humility, "Our mountain stands strong." O Christians, what can ye compare yourselves unto? There is nothing we can be compared unto for instability.

8thly. There is the plague of little growth. Believe it, nowadays Christians are like old merchants, Christians are like old traders that are fallen back, that cannot trade, but live upon their old stock. Now, one look of the Sun of righteousness would heal this plague, as Mal. iv, 2, "Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." And what of that?

O great of that, "and ye shall grow up as calves of the stall." But, if this question were put home to us all round about, "When saw ye Him last?" we could not answer one word.

9thly. There is the plague of worldly-mindedness, and love to the things of a present life. O (says the Christian), I would fain be like the kirk in Rev. xii, 1, "that had the moon under her feet," that is, the world. "The world and victory over it is what I want." And also, II Cor. iv, 18, "We look not at the things which are seen," says the apostle. What ails you, Paul, at the things that are seen? "Even I have another thing to Look unto" (says he), that is, "the things which are eternal." Christians, your love to things in the world speaks your great distance from God, and your little looking to Jesus Christ.

10thly. There is the plague of the dominion of our predominant sins amongst us. "O (says the Christian), what would heal me of that? In effect, I know no predominant sin but it is an idol. Now, what would heal me of that ill?" Even one look of Jesus Christ will do it, Isa. xvii, 7, compared with the 8th verse, "At that day shall a man look to his Maker," and what of that? Verse 8, "And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made." What would make this place the grave of our idols? One sight of Jesus Christ would even make a clean sweep of them; one look of Him would heal all their plagues.

And here now I shall clear this a little, what it is to look unto Jesus Christ, and it doth comprehend these four things. (1) A soul, turning away its eyes from all its other idols, and to pray that prayer, to turn away his sight and eyes from all other things beside God, (2) To be convinced of his lost estate without Christ and of his inability to help and save himself out of that lost and hopeless estate. (3) When the soul is under the conviction of all this, to cast up his eyes to Jesus Christ in this case; for, believe it, our eyes pray to him when we cannot speak; yea, tears have a voice unto God: yea, when we can do none of these, our breathing has a voice unto God and He counts it prayer, Lam. iii, 56, "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." (4) It comprehends this - for a soul to wait upon God and depend on Him for an outgate from soul-straits or troubles, either inward or outward; see Psalm cxlv, 15, "The eyes of all wait on thee," etc. O will ye cast up your eyes to Him and say, "O Master, Son of God, save me lest I perish!" But, in the next place,

II. Consider this to provoke you to look unto Him, "All ye ends of the earth look unto me, and be ye saved," says my text. Believe me, there are many that He calls to look to Him, and I charge you to answer to your name when ye hear it called upon, as ye shall answer to Him at the great day.

And, 1st. All that are weary, we call you to look unto Christ. Are there none here that are weary? Deny not

your name, we obtest (adjure) you to look unto Him, search your bosom, answer the call if this be your name.

2ndly. Heavy laden. Are there none here called by this name and that are groaning under the power and stirring of a body of death? O embrace this call and look unto Him! Are there none here called heavy laden? O do they not call you so! Old and young, is not this your name, will ye answer? I obtest you to look unto Him.

3rdly. Are there none here called naked? Are there none here that are without the righteousness of Christ to clothe them with? Are there none here who have any necessity of Jesus Christ? Mistake not your name, but answer to it, as ye would not come under the eternal curse of God, we call you to look unto Jesus Christ and embrace Him.

4thly. Are there none here called poor? Are there none here destitute of grace and all the excellent gifts of Heaven? As ye would not be declared rebels to Christ, answer to your name and embrace the call.

5thly. Are there none here called foolish, blind and ignorant? Yea, are there none such here that are destitute of the saving knowledge of the Most High? Come to Him, "I counsel thee to buy of me eye-salve and gold tried in the fire," Rev. iii, 18. This is my counsel to you this day, that ye come to Him and embrace Him.

6thly. Are there none here called thirsty? Will ye answer

to your name, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," Isa. lv, 1. O come ye thirsty to the waters of life; or will ye be like Hagar, to cast away the child of hope for thirst beside the waters? Now, will ye answer to your name, we obtest you? Are there none so called? Are there none in this side of the house, nor in that side of the house? O will ye not answer? We pray you, embrace Christ.

7thly. Are there none here called money-less folk? But who are these? Even these that have no righteousness of their own and have no confidence in the flesh, or doing of duty, or in their own light, or in their own gifts. Now, I say to such, will ye look to Christ for salvation?

8thly. Are there none here called willing? And, if this be not your name, I know not what it will be. "Whosoever will, let him come," etc. Is it not your will to come; now, is not your name in all these? Then,

9thly. Are there none called strangers to God here? Now, if this be thy name, here thou art commanded to look unto the Son of God. Now, have you missed your name among all these? Cursed be the person (in eating and drinking) that has not his name among all these, and hath his name here and will not answer to it. This is the great proclamation of peace that we proclaim, in the first day, of the feast, that this roll that we have called would look unto Christ. Old atheist, answer to thy name. This is the roll that our Master has sent us to call; and, who knows

if ever this roll shall be called amongst you again. Now, there are none here, but they have heard their names called on. Will ye answer me? Are ye deaf? It shall cost the person dear that will not answer. He shall be forced to answer one day, when he shall be cried unto, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire"; and, when this question comes to be asked at thee, that was asked at Adam, "Adam, where art thou?" Then shalt thou not be able to avoid answering. Thou shalt be forced to answer then, when all these curses shall be read in your hearing, saying, "Cursed be the man that would not take Christ and serve Him"; and all the congregation shall say Amen. "Cursed be the man that despised Me"; and all the congregation shall say Amen. "Cursed be the man that loveth anything better than Christ"; and all the people shall say Amen. O think ye that ye shall escape then? Will ye read these two places and consider them?

(1) Read Job xxxi, 14, "What then shall I do, when God riseth up? And when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him?" Consider what thou wilt do when God riseth up, and chargeth thee to answer for treading Christ under thy feet.

(2) Consider and read that place, Isa. x, 3, "What will ye do in the day of visitation? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?" Is there any city of refuge to hide thee in from Christ when he cometh and reckoneth with thee? If Christ were to come through

this house tomorrow, and to read over all your names that are under- valuers of Him, there would be few left behind. I shall say now unto thee, if thou betrayest the Son of God with a kiss, O shall there be such a traitor at Bothwell-feast* to do such an evil turn to the Son of God! O will ye look unto Him for salvation!

III. Consider this to provoke you to look unto Christ, that He is the most excellent physician that ever was. He has four singular properties of a physician, that no physician in the world beside Him has. 1st. He can cure all diseases with a look and no physician in the earth can do so but He. Now, will ye undervalue such an easy cure as this? 2ndly. He can cure all diseases by His word;"speak the word, and thy servant shall be whole," says the centurion. Now, no physician can do so but Christ. 3rdly. He can heal all diseases by a touch of the hem of His garment: "If I might touch but the hem of His garment, I shall be whole," saith faith, and no physician can do so but Christ. 4thly. He can heal all diseases by His shadow. Never a physician in the world can cure like Him; therefore look unto Him, for there must be much begging, but little buying. Ye must beg much, but ye must not think to buy anything from Him, for He cures for nought; and if ye be willing, ye shall need to do no more, but ask and have from Him, Isa. lv, 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat ;yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

IV. Consider this, that Christ is exceedingly importunate and serious, to have you looking unto Him for salvation; Song iv. 8, "Come with me from Lebanon, (says Christ), my love, my dove, my fair one"; that is, come with me from the places of estrangement; withal it says, come from your beastly lusts and natural estates, from the lions' dens. See Isa, lxv, 1, "I said, behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name"; the thing is doubled because it is certain. Now, will none of these things move you to look unto Him? O look unto Him for salvation, and let these considerations that we have named move you to this.

Now, in the second place, I shall propose some evidences of the persons that never looked to Christ for salvation. 1st. These that never mourned for sin, for these that look to Christ, mourn for Him whom they have pierced by their sins, Zech. xii, 10, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." 2ndly. Was never Christ 's absence your burden? Then thou art a traitor to the Son of God, and an enemy to the cross of Christ. Are there any such here, that never mourned for the body of death in themselves, nor yet for an absent Christ? Then they never looked to Him for salvation. 3rdly. These that give not Christ the pre-eminence in all things, and he that loveth his idols more than Christ; for he that looks to Christ has respect to Him above all things, Isa. xvii, 7, and see also Acts vii, 56. Behold, says

Stephen, he could not speak without wondering and crying, behold! What ails you, Stephen, to wonder so? Even, says he, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"; he got a look of Christ, and he wonders at Him. Will many of you see the like of this tomorrow? I say if you get a look of the Son of God, ye will esteem Him above all things that ever ye saw. 4thly. Ye never got a look of Christ, that never knew what it was to discern when Christ was present, and when He was absent. O but a person that has looked to Christ can tell these things well; they can write a weekly journal of Christ's motion, so to speak. The spouse in the Canticles can write this journal well, Song ii, 3, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." This is the news of one time, but what news the next week? O sad news and a sad journal, Song iii, 1, "I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not." If ye have looked unto Christ, ye can tell, "Such a day I was in the spirit, and such a day I sat by the river Chebar, and had such a piece of communion with God." But thou that knowest nothing of this in less or more, thou hast never looked unto Christ for salvation. 5thly. These that were never put off their own righteousness, these who could never be taken off from trusting in the covenant of works; and could never say this, if I go to heaven, I must sing that song, Psalm cxv, 1, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." If thou never won to this, to be dug out of thine own righteousness, and to sing the song of Christ,

thou never lookedst to Him for salvation.

Now, in the third place, we shall speak to this, that a person may be very near Christ, and yet not know of it: John xx, 15. Mary supposed Christ to be the gardener. Now there may be four or five reasons for it. 1st. Fear and anguish of spirit, Luke xxiv, 37. The disciples were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit when Christ appeared unto them. And likewise, when they saw Him walking on the sea, they knew Him not; so fear may make a soul misken Christ, when He is at their hand. A 2nd reason is, they would so fain have Christ, that when they see Him, they cannot believe it is He. Even like a loving wife whose husband hath been long absent, when she sees him, she can scarce believe that it is he, she would fain have it true; as Jacob would not believe that Joseph. was alive; and Luke xxiv, 41. It is said of the disciples that they believed not for joy. Yea, sometimes they will say folk are mad that tell them good news, they would so fain have it true, and yet think it impossible: Acts xii, 15, these that were in Mary's house said that the maid was mad when she told them that Peter was standing at the door knocking. 3rdly. Their mistakes of Christ makes them misken Him, that they cannot know Him. 4thly. Christ will sometimes be very near us, and He will close our eyes so that we cannot see to know Him: Luke xxiv, 16. It is said of the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, that their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him. 5thly. If Christ alter the way

of His manifestations, we are presently mistaken; yea, if He but change His clothes, we will misken Him. The kirk did not know Christ because He was clothed with red garments, Isa. lxiii, 1, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" There Christ comes very near folk, and yet they knew Him not.

In the fourth place, we shall obviate some objections that might be made.

Objection 1 "But I fear I have never looked to Christ, because I knew not the time when I did it."

Ans. 1. Canst thou say that word of the blind man, that I was blind once, but now I see? If thou canst say this, thou art happy, though thou knowest not when. Ans. 2. Perhaps it is not for thy advantage to know the times and seasons of it; for sometimes He steals away the heart, and makes the soul to say, "Or ever I was aware, He made me as the chariots of Amminadib"; or, as the chariots of my willing people, as it is in the original. Ans. 3. Sometimes the kingdom of God comes not with observation, so that folk may discern it. Ans. 4. It is likewise to be observed, that it is thy duty to be more in searching whether thou hast really looked to Christ, than in searching into the time when thou didst look to Christ for salvation.

Objection 2. "But since my coming to Christ, I think that my corruption has gotten more advantage of me, than the first day that ever I looked to Christ; my corruptions stir

me more than ever they did before."

Ans. 1. I say to thee, that is even as Pharaoh with the Israelites; he made them and their tasks heavier, to make them fear to ask going away from him; it is so with you. The devil puts this in your head, that thou mayest be tempted to lie in the old security and not look unto Christ for an outgate. Ans. 2. Impute not that to thy faith and looking to Christ, for it may be from some other thing that thy corruptions stir more, and not from thy looking to Christ. This is a fault among Christians, that cry when anything goes wrong with them, they impute it aye [always] to their faith, and call it unsound, while it is from some other thing, if they tried it well. Ans. 3. Perhaps thy corruption is not grown worse, but thy eyes are more opened that thou scest it better than thou did before thou lookedst to Christ; and therefore mistake it not. Ans. 4. Wrestle against thy corruption. If thou be really wrestling against it, thou shalt have a period of an outgate; therefore keep thy hands well, and hold a grip with them when thou lovest thy feet; bide aye by it.

Objection 3 ."But I have less delight in duty since I looked to Christ than I had before I looked to Him."

Ans. 1. Take that place for your answer, Heb. x, 32: "After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." It may be by reason of the fight of affliction, that all the duties may grow dry and dreary to thee after illumination, and so it may come to pass, that ye have

less delight in duty than before. Ans. 2. The change of a Christian 's exercise makes great alteration in a Christian; and some Christians will wrestle against absence, that will not wrestle against unbelief, but let unbelief overcome them; and from this, their delight grows less to duty than it was before they looked to Christ. Ans. 3. It may proceed from this, that thou knewest not before thou lookedst to Christ, what it was to delight in duty, but from some carnal principle, and now it is abated and therefore thou mistakest.

Objection 4. "But since I looked to Christ, I think I have lost my tenderness, and am more gross than before." Now to this I answer in these two things.

Ans. 1. Christ is trying thee, if thou lovest Him better than these, if thou lovest Him better than tenderness, if thou wilt bide with Him for a whole heart, when it seems not to be so soft as it was. Ans. 2. Christ does so try thy faith, if ye come to Him because ye are not tender, and it may be ye looked not unto Christ when ye lost your tenderness; which says that ye lippen [trust] more to your tenderness than to Christ; therefore He abates it afterwards, that He may try your faith in this.

Objection 5. "But I have none of these sweet effects that folks use to have after they have looked to Christ, such as light, and joy, and comfort, and consolation. I think, therefore, I am not right."

Ans. Comfort thyself with that word, Psalm Kcvi, 11, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart"; it is sown for you.

Objection 6. "But alas! I fear I deceive myself in the matter of my looking to Christ, because many have deceived themselves with it, and may not I also be deceived."

Ans. 1. Fear and presumption are not always sib [nearly related] together, but are contrary one to another. Ans. 2. Ask always the highway to heaven, and go straight forward in it, till thou be on thy march, and beyond the hypocrite, that thou mayest be out of all doubt of it, and not be beguiled, because many are beguiled. Now, what think ye of it? This is the fourth call that we are sent from heaven with to you; will ye not answer to your name? Will ye say this of it once, I am marked four times for non-compearance [not appearing] these eight days? What say ye to it?

Now, this is the last time that we are to preach upon this text, expectants of heaven by profession, shall this be the answer we shall give for you, that ye are marked for non-compearance? What is your answer: Will you look to Him tomorrow? I say, as He has given us commission, cry, O cry to Him, "O Son of God, come and visit us with thy salvation"; and bring Christ with you, or else come not here. This will be a pleasant kirk tomorrow, if He comes with you; it is Christ that has made the loaves to multiply. If all the saints in heaven were admitted to give

advice to you, they would say, bring Christ with you; yea, Abraham, Enoch, Noah, and the twelve apostles, would all say this; yea, and all that ever were in the banqueting-house would say this, bring Christ here. O Bothwell, shall we say this of you, that ye are sick of love? Is there such a thing among you? If ye had this sickness, it would not be unto death; but there are some here that are sick, loathing of Christ, and that is a sickness unto death; yea, there are some that will be here tomorrow, that Christ will propose these three questions to, when they come here.

Question 1. Friend, how camest thou hither? How durst thou come here without a wedding-garment? O stand in awe that this be not the question. O, but this challenge from the Son of God is dreadful; yea, it has been the challenge of many. O lairds and ladies, take heed to this, I love it not when Christ begins to compliment, and call strangers to God, friends. Question 2. Dost thou betray the Son of God with a kiss? Ye that offer to kiss Christ, what will ye answer to this question, when Christ asks it at you?

Question 3. How durst thou come here, that hast lifted up thy heel against Me? Search yourselves with candles, and try that it be not so with yourselves, lest He come to you awfully, and ask these questions of you. O, but it will be dreadful if he do so! Now, Let the Lord bless this word unto you. Amen.