

and union among men, that will not break the union betwixt Christ and the soul: *first*, Sin will do it; but no sin betwixt Christ and the soul. And, *secondly*, Adultery will do it; it will break the knot of marriage with men, but not with Christ, 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.' Christ will keep fast the grip though we lose it, I will tell you how precious Christ guides the poor sinner to heaven, it is by a cord of love, the one end of it is in heaven in his own hand, and the other end of it about our hearts, and he heaves us all along to himself: and O, but it be in a sure hand. *Thirdly*, Anger separates friends: but no passion will break this knot. O! precious Christ will never be so angry, as to break that knot, tho' sometimes he will overload and spread a vail over their enjoyments for a while, but he is not angry for ever. *Fourthly*, There is this will break the knot among men, and that is ingratitude; but ingratitude will never break the knot betwixt Christ and us. Though we prove never so ungrateful, he remains steadfast. There is that, *fifthly*, that breaks the knot of friendship betwixt men, that is, mistakes and prejudices; but, O blessed are we in this, no mistake will break this knot, no prejudice will dissolve this union. Ay, he that is once in Christ, shall be always so. Now what is your report? I beseech you speak your minds; for such an offer was never heard in Israel. Alas, I fear there are many dreadful dissenters within the doors of his house; and how many shall be marked so in heaven this day?

Now to him that is able to persuade you to embrace this excellent offer, be everlasting praise and glory for evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

PROV. x. 4.—*But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

PSALM xix. 2.—*Day unto day uttereth speech, &c.*

I Hope I may say with Ehud to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. 'I have a message from God unto you,' and it is this in short, that you would no longer cry; 'A little sleep, a little slumber;' that seeing you have your precious souls at the stake, you would set to work.

O expectants of heaven! what are you doing! I am sure much of your day is past; and I am sure much of your work is before your hands.

There are six sorts of diligence that Christ will not accept of you: *First*, Half-diligence. Our diligence is oftentimes like Jonah's gourd, and the morning cloud; and that diligence shall surely be cast off by Christ. But we must endeavour an equal and uniform way of seeking of God. *Secondly*, There is Jehu's di-

ligence, and that is, such as have self outward things for its end. *Thirdly*, There is the Pharisee's diligence, and that is it, that consists much in outward exercise, and no more. I trow, if we made no longer prayers than our hearts make, they would be exceeding short. I fear, many do more multiply, than rectify worship. *Fourthly*, There is a constraining diligence, and that is either by a natural conscience, or for applause. *Fifthly*, There is a hypocritical diligence, and that is, some do all to themselves, and that is it they serve God with: ay, such shall not be approved. *Sixthly*, There is Esau's diligence, and that is after the decree is gone forth, and the door is shut, we cry out, now I begin to prize time; diligence I love. Here Solomon does set diligence and sloth, the one before the other, that being before the other, we may behold the deformity of the one, and the beauty of the other.

We spake to several things here, and left at this, that there were four things in which a Christian ought especially to vent his diligence in. And, *first*, 'in making his peace with God,' Luke xii. 58. *Secondly*, 'To make his calling and election sure,' 1 Pet. i. 10. And, *thirdly*, 'in growth in grace, that you may be as a plant planted by God's hand. And, *fourthly*, 'keeping of his heart,' which is indeed the city that is often broken down, and is without walls: Prov. iv. 23. 'Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life.'

Now, because of the *first* thing, which is in making up his peace and agreement with God, I shall press it a little, and speak to these two things: *first*, Some things to stir you up to embrace Christ, and make your peace with him, and be married to him, I charge you stand not out against the precious offer.

The *first* consideration to press you to it, is, that it is Christ's great design in many of his actions; and ought it not to be our care to bide with it?

The *first* glorious act wherein it appears, is in his coming down from heaven, was it not, that he might speak and confer with us of heavenly matters? And, oh! shall he make so long a journey, and return a widow to heaven? Rom. vii. 4. *Secondly*, His sufferings in all the things he was put to while here. All his wounds are the silent voice of this, O sinners! be married to Christ. The wounds in his blessed hands cry this; his reproaches and buffets cry this. I shall shew you by the way, these two differences betwixt the first and the second Adam. *First*, Ye know, in the first Adam, a rib was taken out of his side, whence his wife was taken; but in the second Adam, a hole was made in his side, for his wife to come in, for the doves to flee to the holes of the rocks, even the sides of her beloved. *Secondly*, The

first Adam was sleeping while it was done; but Christ was sweating drops of blood. A *third* action is, his freeing us from the curse of the law, Rom. iv. He therefore takes away the reproach of your barrenness. *Fourthly*, There is his resurrection, Rom. xiv. 9. 'For to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' *Fifthly*, His precious and everlasting gospel, is not this its voice in short, O sinners! be married to Christ? This is all that is comprehended in this excellent book. This is the contract of marriage, and Christ has set to his hand, and requires ours. *Sixthly*, It is the end of the law: for that is it the law speaketh, O! be divorced to your lovers, and be married to Christ. *Seventhly*, It is the language of mount Sinai and Zion. *Eighthly*, It is the end of all the promises. That promise, "I will give you all things; and all that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out." And what is all that voice, but, O sinners! be married to Christ? *Ninthly*, It is the great design of all the threatenings of the book of God, What is the end of that, "That he that despises me, I will despise him, and he that will not have me to reign over him, I will kill him?" What are all these, in Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii. but this, he wooes thee both by mercy and judgment? *Tenthly*, It is the end of a settlement in his church; and if once acquired, we have no more to do. I tell you what will answer more objections of being married to Christ; this is it, that answers more than if ministers should preach to you all their days, and this is that, that is necessary, it is like money, that answers all things. *Secondly*, There is knowledge of Christ; and if you were needy, you would come over mountains and cry, 'If I perish, I perish.' *Thirdly*, I say, if you were so needy, and desirous to know him, you would not so dispute your coming to Christ, 'You would break through stone-walls,' as David's three worthies.

Now, the *second* thing I press here, is, that you would be married to Christ immediately, and that upon these considerations.

First, Is it Christ's desire to you? Then sit not still.

Secondly, There is this, 'That this is the acceptable time, the day of the Lord;' therefore set to, and be married to him. And is not every thing excellent in its season? And is not a word in season excellent? It is like Peter's sheet, in Acts xi. 5. that is immediately let down to him: therefore, if ye would not be excommunicated from him, come.

Thirdly, There is this, the sooner ye come, ye shall be the welcomer. O! blessed that person, that first subscribes the contract, Eph. i. 12. There is not a delay ye give to this blessed One, but it is as a sword to his blessed bones. O have ye brought this day a spear to pierce this blessed match, there is

not one that comes here with a delay, but he pierces him. 'Think ye it a little thing to be the King's spouse,' and two are better than one.

Fourthly, There is this, that the longer ye delay, the more unfit ye are. Shall God send up to you, and say, give your hearts to my Son in marriage; and shall this be our report, 'their hearts are lifted up against him?'

Fifthly, There is this consideration, that he is exceeding honourable; and if it be so, betwixt any, how much more betwixt you and Christ.

Sixthly, There is this, the excellency of that noble Person that wooes you: and is there any suitable array to him?

There are two wooers come to this place to-day, even Christ, the *first* excellent Son of God, the eternal admiration of angels, he is come. And there is, *secondly*, the devil he is come, and they have both one suit to-day, 'My son, give me thy heart.' And to which of them will you give it. And O! if ye knew how many give it to Satan, we might go away astonished. O sinners! therefore be married to Christ.

Seventhly, There is this, that it is the straight way to put Christ away, if you do not take him.

Eighthly, There is this, that it is the greatest act of indignity to refuse to subject yourselves to him, Jer. viii. 9. 'Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?' Now, are you content to take him in marriage? For we have moved so many considerations to you, to marry him immediately; and yet seeing he is offered, and ye have let so light of the offer, now will you not take him?

And there are these five light rates at which he is offered.

First, A look of salvation: and cursed be that eye that will not look to the Son of God, who may be had for a look.

Secondly, There is that, for the hearkening of your ear; and it is an ill vent, that will hear, and not receive Christ, who will be taken for hearkening. Isa. lv. 2. And you say, I will give him twenty looks, if I could, but I cannot. But I tell you, that look is in a promise, Zech. xii. 12. And,

Thirdly, There is this, even desire: and what desire have you for him?

Fourthly, There is willingness, Rev. xxii. towards the close. But I cannot look, say you: I will come lower: and so for one of these prices you may have him. But, alas! I cannot so much as look; I will yet therefore come a little lower, and there is half a look, in Song iv. 9. 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.' Oh then, I pray you take him.'

But there are two sorts of Esau's here to-day. *First*, Some

of Gallio's humour, that care for none of these things: and cursed are they from this day forth, that care for none of these things, if they remove not, but when they are going to their eternity. And, *secondly*, there are some of the Gadarene's frame, that said to Christ, *go away*; and O! what if your city be such, it is no matter though it were a heap; I say, you are doing what you can to put him away, when you refuse the gospel; and that is more than sufficient to do it. Now, young men and maids, and widows, are you content? O! I am content, but I cannot write my name. O! then draw a score for it, if thou canst not. But I cannot get up my heart; let then the mouth take him till the heart come up; and then, you have done it; and I obtest you all by the love of Christ, and the love of your souls, and by the promises and threatenings of the book of God, come and be content to marry Christ; then be of the number of those who have chosen him for their husband. To be David's wife, says Abigail, 'let me be the servant of his servants.' So dare you come, 'and with ropes about your necks;' but let us beware of that modesty and humility that puts us away from Christ: for in Rom. x. believing is there holden forth under the notion of humility; for it is said, 'they subjected themselves to the faith.'

Now, I shall shew some obstructions to the love of Christ, *First*, Immoderate love to the things of the world, 1 John ii. 15. There are five Isaacs and idols that we will not offer up to God. *1st*, Self-ease and indulgence. *2dly*, Pride and self-conceit. *3dly*, Misbelief and discouragement, that many do exceedingly entertain. *4thly*, There is the grand idol of the world. O! to see such a light as that, Rev. xii. 2. There is the church clothed with Jesus Christ, directed with the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and the ornament 'of the sun above her head, having the moon (the changeable world) under her feet.' *5thly*, Religious idols, that is, the idols that are truly loved indeed, but the immoderate love of them angers God; these I call religious idols.

A *second* obstruction, is their conceit of their former attainments, Phil. iii. 10, 11. A Christian ought to entertain a holy neglect of what is by his hand, and to eye more what is before his hand, than after it. I think, a Christian ought to have his eye more towards the mark than towards the break. O! woe to that Christian, that sits down when he is here away, and says, 'here is my rest.'

A *third* obstruction is, want of tenderness; I think that this speaks that tenderness is gone, want of Christian diligence.

A *fourth* obstruction is this, discouragement and misbelief, Luke xxii. 4. 'They were asleep for sorrow;' that is, for discouragement and anxiety, I say, misbelief is travailing great with

child of twins; that is slothfulness and apostacy. I think a man under misbelief, makes a more insensible apostacy, than under hardness; yet when our eyes are opened, we will see how far it puts us from God.

A *fifth* obstruction is, there is self-indulgence and sloth, Prov. xx. 4. O! if Peter should say to us, pity thyself, consider rightly; cursed be that pity that obstructs diligence.

A *sixth* obstruction is, there are many apprehended difficulties, Prov. xxii. 3. 'There is a lion in the way,' &c. Now, that is very unlike, for there uses not to be a lion in the way. There are few impediments, but what we imagine to ourselves; I think our hearts imagine impediments, when the devil doth not, and says, 'O sluggard! thou shalt be slain.' And, alas! I think the sluggard's religion is the rifest in this time: there are many convictions, and some resolutions, and some small desires, and no more.

A *seventh* obstruction is, there is the wanting of means, and places of tristing.

Now we shall press some advantages that Christians may have by diligence. *1st*, It would make great easiness in duties. We make prayer a burden; and why? Because we use it so little. *2dly*, It will give you a fair evidence for heaven; and, oh! but the convictions of sloth will be great: but Paul signs a testament, 2 Tim. iii. 8. 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day,' &c. And it is no wonder that Christians in our day do so die under a cloud, because we are so slothful. *3dly*, It is the best way to attain to Christian growth. O! but were we diligent, we should eat the fat of the land, our sloth to us is as Gideon's ephod, it is a sword to us, that cuts the sinews of endeavours. *4thly*, Diligence is the best way to make up your assurance with God, 2 Pet. i. 10. *5thly*, The diligent Christian is admitted to many precious enjoyments of God. Would you know the Christian that is dandled upon his knees, and gets the good of the land? It is even the diligent Christian, Prov. xxii. 26. 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business: he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.' *6thly*, He is the person that meets with many sweet returns of prayer, Acts xi. 26. Would you know the reason why we pray not so much to an absent, veiled, silent Christ? it is, you are not diligent. O! precious are the answers of the tongue, that are given to the Christian that is much in preparation of the heart. *7thly*, It is he that walks with most peace of conscience through the world, it is even the diligent Christian. *8thly*, It is he that prevents the morning, to meditate on God.

Now, I am come here to-day, to demand your last answer, if you will take Christ. I hope you are content to marry him. Now, what is your answer; are you content, young men and maidens? Old men and women, are you content? Is there none that will subscribe? Oh! shall this contract of marriage be sent back to heaven? Oh! let it not be. And this I press, that you marry Christ, in these five things. *First*, If all the saints of heaven were to give you their advice, they would say, it is good to be married to Christ. 'It is better to marry than to burn,' to marry Christ, than to burn in lust with the world. *Secondly*, Christ is very importunate in it to all within these doors: he is sitting down on his knees, and praying us to be married to himself, and shall we not? But must he steal away our hearts? Oh! will you embrace him, because he is importunate? *Thirdly*, There is this, I am sure we are not far from our long home, and then I pose you, on your consciences, what will you answer to this question? O sinners! why will you not choose me? We shall all get one sight of him, and that shall be in the day of his sentence of wrath. Think then on it, and let the terror of God persuade you. *Fourthly*, Will you consider the courtesy of the King, and let it allure you. O! what a sweet thing shall it be, when he shall say to thee, welcome, O sinner. Come, think on this, and he that waits on his master, shall find him. *Lastly*, There is this, there is a day coming, when there shall not be a word in heaven and earth, but go and come. And will it not be an excellent day, when all shall be crying, come? Christ, the Spirit and the bride, and heaven and earth, crying, come? And there shall be no speech betwixt Christ and the spouse, but, come, come. O that excellent invitation, Song ii. 10. 'Come, my sister, my spouse, my dove, arise, come, when we shall sit down on the throne of our beloved, and shall sing as Moses;' and Jeremy cries out no more now as in Jer. iv. 19. But, on the contrary, what a day shall it be, when it shall be said, 'Depart, depart, I know you not?' How doleful a thing will it be! Well, then, let us embrace him, and be content to be married to him; and the day shall be, when we will sing to him for ever and ever. And unto him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON III.

JOB xxiii. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat:*

THESE words hold out the breathings and longing of a soul, after the enjoyment and fruition of God; Job being